



Escaping the Endless Adolescence: How We Can Help Our Teenagers Grow Up Before They Grow Old

Joseph Allen, Claudia Worrell Allen

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Do you sometimes wonder how your teen is ever going to survive on his or her own as an adult? Does your high school junior seem oblivious to the challenges that lie ahead? Does your academically successful nineteen-year-old still expect you to “just take care of” even the most basic life tasks?

Welcome to the stunted world of the Endless Adolescence. Recent studies show that today’s teenagers are more anxious and stressed and less independent and motivated to grow up than ever before. Twenty-five is rapidly becoming the new fifteen for a generation suffering from a debilitating “failure to launch.” Now two preeminent clinical psychologists tell us why and chart a groundbreaking escape route for teens and parents.

Drawing on their extensive research and practice, Joseph Allen and Claudia Worrell Allen show that most teen problems are not hardwired into teens’ brains and hormones but grow instead out of a “Nurture Paradox” in which our efforts to support our teens by shielding them from the growth-spurring rigors and rewards of the adult world have backfired badly. With compelling examples and practical and profound suggestions, the authors outline a novel approach for producing dramatic leaps forward in teen maturity, including

- **Turn Consumers into Contributors** Help teens experience adult maturity—its bumps and its joys—through the right kind of employment or volunteer activity.
- **Feed Them with Feedback** Let teens see and hear how the larger world perceives them. Shielding them from criticism—constructive or otherwise—will only leave them unequipped to deal with it when they get to the “real world.”
- **Provide Adult Connections** Even though they’ll deny it, teens desperately need to interact with adults (including parents) on a more mature level—and such interaction will help them blossom!
- **Stretch the Teen Envelope** Do fewer things for teens that they can do for themselves, and give them tasks just beyond their current level of competence and comfort.

Today’s teens are starved for the lost fundamentals they need to really grow: adult connections and the adult rewards of autonomy, competence, and mastery. Restoring these will help them unlearn their adolescent helplessness and grow into adults who can make you—and themselves—proud.

From the Hardcover edition.



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