

WHY DON'T PARENTS GROW UP!

By Estelle Safier McBride

If someone should ask whether your parents were good to you, chances are you would answer, "Well—yes, sure." But if he were numb-brained enough to ask, "Are they too good to you?" you'd probably reply sharply, "Don't be silly. How could parents be too good?"

Actually, you've probably never thought much about it. It's true that your parents have been on the giving side ever since you were born. Come to think of it, a few crocodile tears or a bit of high-pressure coaxing always seemed to get you what you wanted. True, there are some people who think you're spoiled, but you don't believe it for a minute. As far as you're concerned, your parents have just been behaving like parents. They love you and show it. There's nothing extra special about that!

How can you tell whether your mother and father are the "my child can do no wrong" variety? Well, let's take a look at the typical too-good mother.

She won't let you do a fair share of work around the house; she wants you to have nothing

but fun while you're young. She scrimps and denies herself so that you can have an extra party dress. She smiles tenderly when you fret that your allowance is gone by Wednesday—and dishes out more money when dad isn't looking. She soaks you in singing lessons, dancing lessons, skating lessons, sessions at the hairdresser'—anything your little heart desires. She joins with you in verbally mauling the teacher when you come home with low-gear grades. (This description does *not* fit your mother? Good!)

There are fathers who try to fix things for their young, too. Son thinks it would be a good idea to get a job in the bank during the summer. Dad says, "You just sit tight, son." Then father sees somebody who knows somebody who did a favor for somebody at the bank—and, chances are, sonny gets the job without lifting a finger.

Then there's the father who has a way of covering up for his children. John or Jane gets into a scrape; dad puts on his most affable "well, kids will be kids" manner and works it so that John

or Jane avoids the curative after-math.

Offhand, it sounds as if any teen who has parents like those is Miss Lucky (or Mr. Lucky) in the flesh. But it isn't so. Parents who make it too easy for you when you're young make it too hard for you when you're older. The girl and boy who are consistently allowed to shirk responsibilities, squeeze out of jams and generally get their own way at home, often go to pieces when they meet up with the outside world, because the world can't be bothered catering to them the way mother and dad do.

Coaxing won't make a math teacher give you a passing grade when your work doesn't entitle you to it. A future employer won't smile tenderly if you decide to take the afternoon off because there's something you'd rather do than work. Department stores won't laugh it off if you forget to pay your bills.

We know that your parents believe they're doing their best for you. They're simply misdirected. And there's a reason for it. Father may have had a struggle in life. Maybe he was denied an education or had to work so hard for it that he missed the fun of being young. Now his greatest ambition is to see that you have all the good things he missed. So he

makes it easy for you. He doesn't want you, his daughter, to work after school or during the summer. He doesn't want brother to struggle for a "good" job later in life, so he builds up a business that son can walk right into after college. He's all for handing out success, ready-made.

But father's early experience is blinding him. He is giving you only half a loaf, just as he had only half a loaf. His was all difficulty. Yours is all ease. But what you and everyone needs is a balanced diet to grow strong and happy on.

Then there's mother. Perhaps she wasn't as pretty and popular as some of the girls. Perhaps her family was poor and she rarely had the thrill of a new dress. It's easy to understand why she is willing to scrape and squeeze, so that you, her daughter, can get all the glamour out of life that she missed. For in a way, mother is trying to relive her youth through you. Alas, it can't be done, and her heavy dose of kindness may merely clog up your life.

Obviously we're not talking about parents who help you out of an occasional, innocent jam—who sympathize when you don't make the basketball team, who hand out some extra cash once in a while when you've burnt up

your weekly stipend in a day. We're talking about parents who take all the starch out of you by trying to make your life one long feather bed.

What can any of us do about these confused, well-meaning parents? We—and you—can encourage mother to be more kind to herself and not overly kind to you. You can startle dad by telling him that from now on you'll

fight your own battles, get out of your own scrapes. You can explain that, although you're grateful for his help and generosity, you'd like to stretch your own muscles a bit. He and mother may be momentarily hurt (because the protector loves his role), but once they're over the shock, they'll be awfully proud of you. And you'll be proud of yourself.

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PRESENCE

By Adoracion C. Trinidad

All paths lead to Thee.
 I walked the way of laughter
 Down to its shining end. I found Thy Face.
 I turned to trace a path of tears
 Across what keen wound-edge of grief
 To stop at last, transfixed.
 (Long, long ago You wept
 As only God can weep.)

All songs fly to Thee.
 Once I loved a red rose so
 I sang its hue away,
 Only to find Thy Heart, Love-broken,
 Bleeding "red" for me!

And in the lean blue realm of aloneness
 Where no tears flow, no laughters ring
 And songs die young,
 Before their moon-tipped wings begin to grow,
 Even here where loneliness is food
 I could not run away. I found
 That loneliness was You.