Chapter 9.... Adolescence

Adolescence defined….The transition period between CHILDHOOD and ADULTHOOD. In our society the age span is 12 to 18.

Adolescence is when the teen grows the most MENTALLY, EMOTIONALLY, PHYSICALLY and SEXUALLY (MEPS)

Psychologist have divided Adolescence into 3 stages

1) PREADOLESCENCE…. Childhood ends and Preadolescence begins with a rapid growth spurt and the first signs of sexual maturation.

The typical ages of Preadolescence:
GIRLS…ages 10 to 14
BOYS…ages 12 to 15

During Preadolescence there are various behavioral changes. Parents often note their children becoming Moody, Rebellious, and Withdrawn. These emotional changes are normal and occur due to the rapid and overwhelming release of hormones.

2) Adolescence…. Between the ages of 14 to 18.

3) Young Adulthood…In the US this begins at the age of 18 and extends thru the early 20’s (the end of the college years.) Though adult in name other adults won’t consider them full fledged adults until they: move away from home, get a job to support themselves, marry, have children, etc.

RITES OF PASSAGE…. A rite of passage is a formal ceremony that marks the end of adolescents and the beginning of Young Adulthood. This ceremony varies by society. In the US this ceremony is high school graduation.

Actual adulthood comes in small pieces to the teen. You can go to R rated movies at 13, drive at 15 or 16, enlist in the military and vote at 18.

PHYSICAL CHANGES
The growth spurt that marks the beginning of Preadolescence is the most obvious sign that Childhood has ended.

The growth spurt originates in the hypothalamus that tells the Pituitary gland to begin releasing vast amounts of hormones into the body.

This sudden release of hormones brings immediate results:
The average girl grows 2 to 4 inches and gains 20 pounds.
The average male grows 4 to 6 inches and gains 40 pounds.

The girls begin their growth spurt earlier and usually stop by the age of 17. Boys start later but can continue their growth into their early 20’s.

Girls have their growth spurt earlier and can often be larger than their male classmates for awhile. This ends quickly when the male growth spurt begins.
The physical changes that take place during the high school years are evident and can be seen easily by looking at yearbooks. Check out the seniors when they were freshmen!

PUBERTY or sexual maturation is another sign that Preadolescence has begun. This is a biological event that is another indicator that childhood has ended.

**COPING WITH PHYSICAL PROBLEMS**
The physical changes that occur don’t always go smoothly. The 3 main problems teen must deal with include:

1) ACNE… Few teens escape this problem and it may seem to worsen before every major dance or social event. Acne is caused by hormones released in preadolescence and cause glandular issues. Soap, sunlight and medicine is the best solution. This is more of a psychological issue for teens rather than a true physical problem.

2) RAPID GROWTH… Adolescents is known as the “AWKWARD AGE” for a good reason. The rapid growth spurt simply occurs faster than muscle development. If you can’t chew gum and walk at the same time without stumbling, falling or tripping this is probably your issue.

3) EARLY OR LATE MATURATION… Occurs when the teen either grows much too early or is late in their growth. You all know kids who were huge in 7th grade and were much bigger than you. Today they are the same size but you and your classmates grew later and are now larger. This can also work the other way. The issue also occurs with sexual maturation, especially for girls.

**SEX IDENTITY and SEX ROLES**
Your SEX IDENTITY is a result of biological inheritance. It simply results in you being a male or female. You have no choice in this matter.

Your SEX ROLE is determined by your SEX IDENTITY, but is really influenced and defined by the society in which you live. In the US males are supposed to look, feel, act, and behave in a certain way. The same goes for females.

In other words your SEX ROLE is the standard for how a MALE or FEMALE is supposed to behave.

Males are supposed to be Dominant, Competitive and Emotionally Reserved.
Females are supposed to be Submissive, Cooperative and Emotionally Responsive.

These once were traits considered appropriate for males and females at a time when the division of labor was necessary for survival. Families used to be much larger and men typically did physical labor.

This has changed over time due to: 1) your recent move to a technology based work force which involves little physical effort and 2) Improvements in birth control methods now allow for smaller families.

**FAMILY INFLUENCE ON DEVELOPMENT**
One of the main goals of teens is to gain independence from their families. The way in which teens do this successfully depends on the type of family life they had. There are 3 general types of families. While each family probably has a little of each one, one family type is usually dominant with the other 2 playing a smaller role.

1) AUTHORITARIAN FAMILY… The parents are “THE BOSSES”. They don’t feel that the teen should have any say in family life. It is their way or the highway. These parents don’t feel like they have to explain themselves or their reasoning to their children.
2) DEMOCRATIC FAMILY…. In this family the teen participates in decisions that affect their life. Parents listen to reason for what the teen wants. There are still rules but parents make the effort to explain their logic. This type of family lets the teen learn to negotiate, a major part of learning and growing into adulthood.

3) PERMISSIVE FAMILY… In this family the teen always has the final say and parents always “give in” if they care at all. Parents let teens set their own rules about their behavior; they make no demands, voice no expectations and generally ignore their children.

It is obvious that teens from a predominantly DEMOCRATIC FAMILY are best at gaining independence from their family and move on into adulthood successfully.

They do this because they learn and gain responsibility little by little. In the AUTHORITARNA family no responsibility is given and in the PERMISSIVE family too much is given. In the DEMOCRATIC family teens learn to communicate effectively to get what they want. Respect is earned and shared among family members. In the PERMISSIVE family the teen feels unwanted, uncared for and will doubt their self worth.

But no matter what family you are from their will always be some conflict between parents and their teens.

FRIENDS AND PEER GROUPS FOR TEENS

The people teens feel they can trust the most is their friends.

How do we choose our friends? Where do we meet them? How do we come into contact with them?

1) School  
2) Sports  
3) Other Friends  
4) Hobbies  
5) Parents  
6) Neighbors  
7) Social Events  
8) Age (14 to 21)  
9) Work  
10) Same Sex