



PARENT/TEEN COMMUNICATION

For parents, the idea of adulthood is more likely to be associated with the notion of *responsibility*. For the adolescent, adulthood is more likely to be associated with the notion of *freedom*.

This does not mean that parents never see the importance of freedom or independence for their children. Conversely, it does not imply that teens are blind to the notion that they must develop into responsible adults. Each group, though, does tend to be more fixated on one notion rather than the other.

Transition to adulthood takes place over the space of years. It does not happen instantly. This presents challenges for both parents and teens. No two adolescents mature at exactly the same rate. Even in the same family siblings have very different personalities. On top of this, families have to deal with cultural influences that may mislead and harm family members.

Someone once said that it's the job of parents to set limits and it's the job of teens to test them (or at least complain about them). Often communication problems arise because each person, teen or parent, does not empathize with the other's situation.

Within families, anger and resentment result not so much when a person thinks the other doesn't understand, as when a person is convinced that the other doesn't care enough to *try* to understand.

Teens and parents can improve their communication and their relationships by recognizing that each has a different role to play in their relationship and each has the responsibility to try to put himself/herself in the shoes of the other. All should remember that there will inevitably be disagreements. Communication need not break down when disagreements arise.