

# PCA Parent Pages

*Valuable information for parents intentional about raising godly and responsible children.*

## **How Do I Talk to My Children about Sex & Dating?**

As a parent, there is no more dreaded talk, and no more important one, than the old “birds and the bees.” That talk is NOT this material – instead, this material was presented to parents over a three week period, each session lasting 90 minutes. In short, there is a lot of material in this particular document!

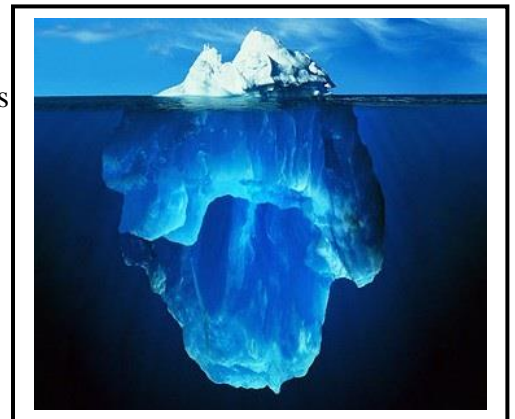
The goal of this *PCA Parent Page on Sex and Dating* is to give you, the parent, information to help you as you guide, instruct, inform and direct your children on this topic. There are three very important things to remember as you embark on this journey.

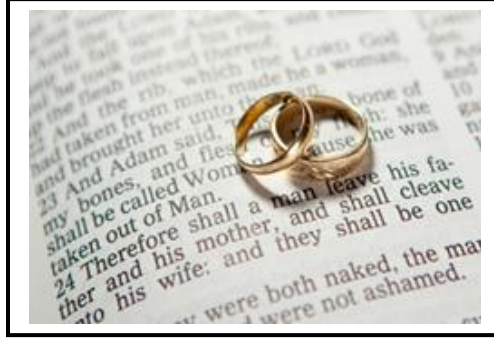
- First, that this topic is a journey, not a one-time “birds and bees” conversation that so many of us received from our parents as our only instruction on all matters of a sexual nature. In fact, I’ve broken the information down into age categories (birth to 13, 13 to 16, 16 to 21, 21 to 26 and 26+) and presented information that corresponds to the issues that each of these age groups will be facing.
- Second, this ongoing training is best done at home by you the parent. Contrary to what some parents believe, your children DO listen to you and value what you have to say. While you are wise to surround your children with a concert of voices, your voice as mom and dad resound the loudest in their ears (for better or for worse).
- Finally, the reality is that your children will hear information regarding their own sexuality and the nature of sex and marriage from a variety of sources – and most of those are not going to present a Biblical perspective on this subject. Parents, we must inform and direct our children to think Biblically on this topic – it is essential to the well-being of the family and their spiritual development.

As I think about how important this topic is, I am reminded of the passage in Nehemiah chapter 10. As the exiles return to Jerusalem and make a covenant with God not to make the same mistakes their parents did, the very first thing they commit to is to marry people who know and honor their God. The institution of marriage is vital to the foundation of a nation. G.K. Chesterton once quipped, “This triangle of truisms, father, mother, and child, cannot be destroyed; it can only destroy those civilizations which disregard it.” Alexis deTocqueville wrote about how important the marriage union was to the stability of a young America and Francis Schaeffer foretold how ferocious the attack would be on this crucial institution. As parents, we need to equip our children with a strong and Biblical apologetic/defense of marriage and help them make difficult decisions to run counter to their culture when they are young so that they can enjoy the holy bonds of marital bliss as a blessing not merely for themselves, but for their children and for society as a whole.

## How to Use This Information

1. Begin my reading through the entire document. I know...it's long. But you will get a better view and perspective on the nature of this document if you have read it from beginning to end.
2. Depending on the age of your children, honestly assess what issues need to be presented to your children. A recent article in *USA Today* recommended that parents sit down with children “at ages 6, 7, 8 and start to inoculate them against this insanity” (talking about pornography on the Internet). The longer you wait, the more your children will already be exposed to – you want to help shape their worldview from the very beginning to keep them from harm and heartache.
3. Each age group is presented with different information, but the information at the beginning is foundational for all ages – respect for authority, impact of divorce, spiritual foundation in Christ, gender identity – those issues apply to all ages and need to be addressed first.
4. Use each new topic and the information presented as a launching pad into a conversation with your child. I've talked with dozens of students about not starting to date exclusively until the age of 16 and when they ask why, I talk to them about the research presented in *Teenology* (see p. 15 of this document).
5. Most of the information presented includes various statistics – and teens are notorious for believing that they are always the proverbial “exception to the rule.” While this may be true in some situations, you need to inform your children that statistics are generally an adequate representation of the situation simply because they are in fact, statistics – not opinions! So while they may believe they will be the one in a million...only one person is actually that one in a million!
6. Finally, each of these “snippets” is just the tip of the iceberg. As you engage your children to think about each topic, understand that there is much more to discuss and much more to learn on each topic – which is why additional resources are referenced and included along the way. While the highlights of each resource is mentioned, the foundational principles are not always spelled out and you may wish to dive deeper into a particular issue or topic with your children than what is presented in this resource.





**TELOS** – the Greek word for end goal, purpose...in other words, what are you striving for, what does success look like for your family?



*...rather train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:7,8*

**Physical Training goals:**

- a. General health and well-being
- b. Greater flexibility
- c. Weight loss
- d. Strength and conditioning
- e. Preparation for a particular sport or event

**Additional Factors to Consider:**

- a. Age
- b. Experience
- c. Ability
- d. Desire
- e. Season



**What is the TELOS of raising children?**

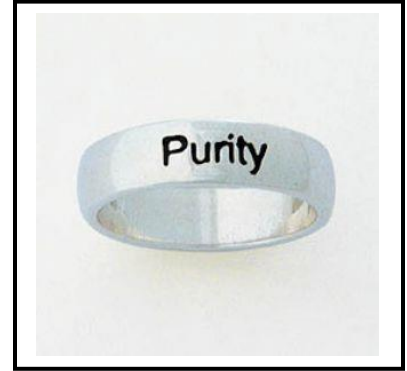
- a. Survival
- b. Popularity
- c. Success by the world's standards
- d. Success by God's standards



## Biblical Perspective on the TELOS of Raising Children:

### a. Purity

- Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Hebrews 13:4
- Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 1 Cor. 6:18



### b. Unity/Oneness

- Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. "I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel. Malachi 2:15, 16



### c. Legacy

- ...so the next generation would know [God's commandments]. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. Psalm 78



*The family is the cornerstone of our society. More than any other force it shapes the attitude, the hopes, the ambitions, and the values of the child. And when the family collapses it is the children that are usually damaged. When it happens on a massive scale the community itself is crippled. So, unless we work to strengthen the family, to create conditions under which most parents will stay together, all the rest -- schools, playgrounds, and public assistance, and private concern -- will never be enough.*

—USA President Lyndon Johnson (June 4, 1965)

*This triangle of truisms, father, mother, and child, cannot be destroyed; it can only destroy those civilizations which disregard it.*  
G.K. Chesterton

**Question – if the goals are PURITY, UNITY, and LEGACY, what must the Christian parent do to promote these for their children?**

1. **Model – show them what it looks like**
2. **Train – teach the principles how to achieve it for themselves**
3. **Protect – keep away those things that distract or destroy**
4. **Enforce – establish and enforce proper boundaries**
5. **Encourage – help them as they struggle on their journey**



# Timeline of Teachable Topics

## LESSON 1: Birth to 13 years old

- Connection to Parents
- Respect for Authority
- Grounded and Growing in Christ
- Effects of Divorce on Children
- Proper Gender Identity
- Address Pornography Issue
- Begin List of Godly Traits for Spouse
- Involuntary Sexual Encounters
- Learning How to Work for Something
- Self-centered vs. Other-centered
- Proper Body Image/Desire to Be “Liked”



## LESSON 2: 13-16 years old

- Dates vs. Dating
- Purity Leads to Intimacy
- Plans to be Successful in Dating
- Progression and Power of Touch
- Texting vs. Talking
- Influence of Alcohol
- Boys II Men
- Girls Pursuing Boys
- Definition of “Sex”
- Importance of Knowing Friend Group



# LESSON 3: 16-26 (+) years old

## Ages 16-21

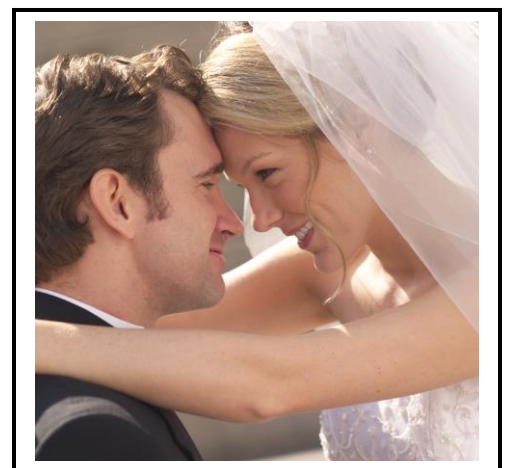
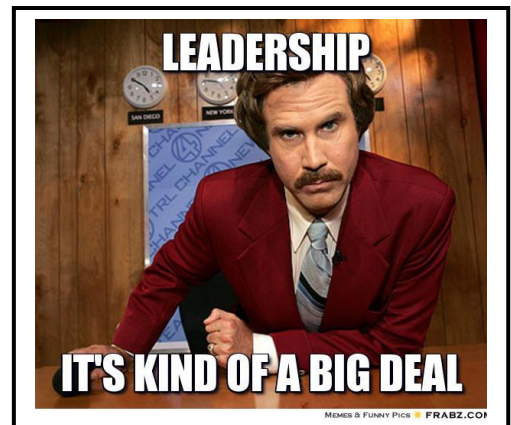
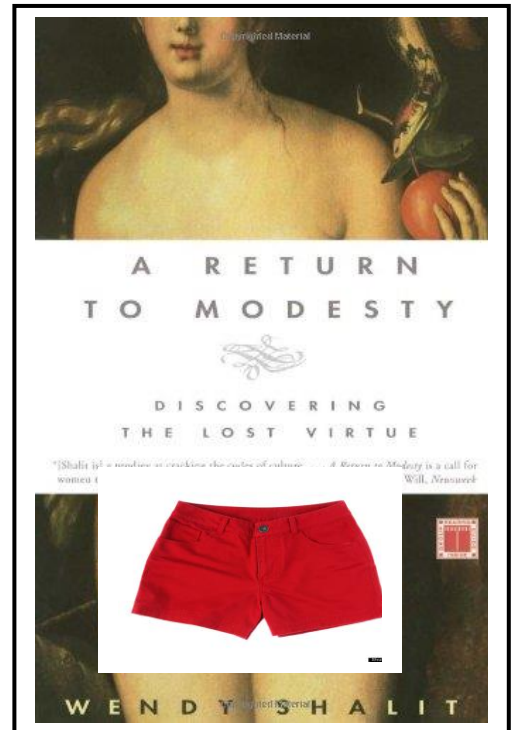
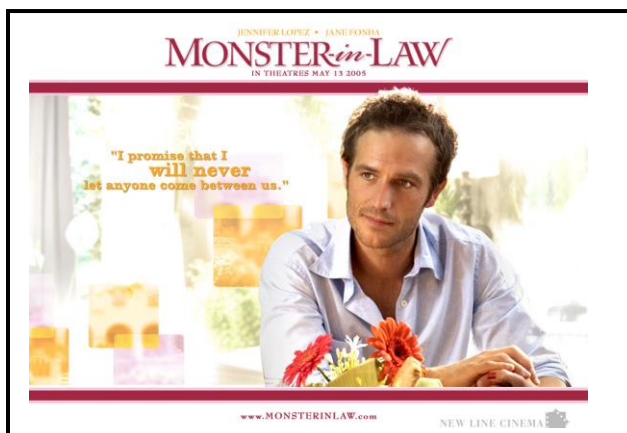
- Importance of Modesty
- Role of Parents as Buffer Zone
- Learning to Limit Sexual Activity
- Treating Dates as Future Spouses
- How Does a Boy Treat His Mother/Sister
- Isolation Kills
- Dabble in Spiritual Word, Immersed in Physical World

## Ages 21-26

- Run Hard After Christ, Not Marriage
- If He Can't Lead You Now...
- Relationship vs. Rules

## Ages 26+

- In-law Issues
- Holiness vs. Happiness
- Christian Counseling
- Influence of Friends/Family/Community
- The Case for Marriage



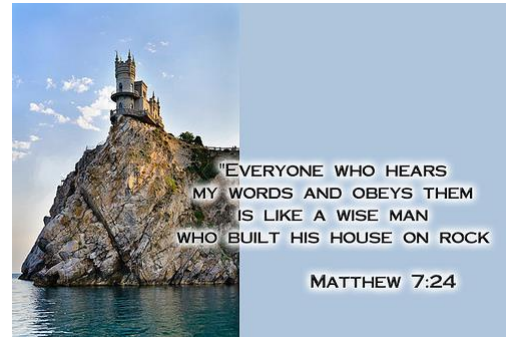
## Birth to age 13

## The Foundation

### Establish a Strong Bond/Connection with Children

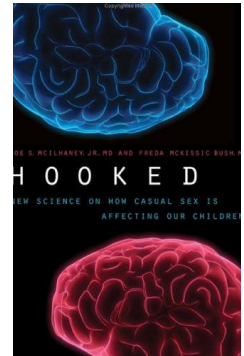
It has been found that in situations with **poor or unhealthy parent-teenager relations**, teenage boys with high testosterone levels were more likely to engage in risky behavior of all kinds, including sex.

Teenage girls with poor parental relationships were more likely to engage in similar risky behavior. Yet in each case, research has found that **home environment had greater influence on behavior** than hormone levels and if parent-child relations were good, hormone levels do not seem to matter at all regarding risky sexual behavior. (p. 19, *Hooked*)



Studies clearly show that **parental involvement** has a definite impact on a young person's behavior choices. For instance:

- Teens whose parents express disapproval of non-marital sex and contraceptive use are less likely than their peers to have sex.
- Adolescents who perceive parental disapproval of sexual activity are less likely to become sexually active.
- Teens who talk to a parent about initiating sex tend to wait and ultimately have fewer sexual partners. (p. 116, *Hooked*)
- Parents who attend church more regularly have children who are less likely to engage in promiscuous sexual activity.



### Develop a Respect for Authority

Children should be able to respect parents and other figures of authority so that when they are confronted with information that is counter to their own personal feelings and assessment, they learn to listen and respond positively.

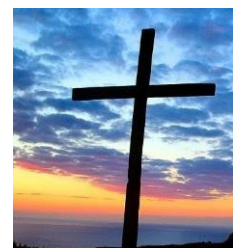
Children who seek approval from the world, peers or other avenues place themselves in jeopardy. Parents must be aware of this desire to attract attention and praise and find ways to fill their children's "love tanks."



Parents must be careful about developing a self-centered child who is unable to listen and value constructive criticism. In preparation for life and marriage, children must develop a healthy and honest sense of their own imperfection. Marriage is a constant exercise in examining our own faults and selfishness and if children are unable as adults to admit they are wrong and actively seek reconciliation with others, their marriage relationship will be rocky at best. Francis de Sales calls this the "spiritual exercise of mortification" – learning to put to death those deeds of the flesh that are undesirable to the pursuit of holiness. Activities that seek to build self-esteem in children and do not give a proper self-awareness can be dangerous to their proper development.

### Grounded and Growing in Christ

Barna research shows "that nearly half of all Americans who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior do so before reaching the age of 13 (43%), and that two out of three born again Christians (64%) made that commitment to Christ before their 18th birthday. One out of eight born again people (13%) made their profession of faith while 18 to 21 years old. Less than one out of every four born again Christians (23%) embraced Christ after their twenty-first birthday.

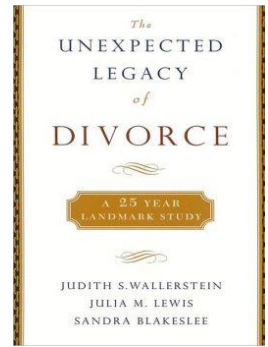




## Effects of Divorce on Children

The greatest emotional factor in a person's life is the divorce of their parents. Here are some statistics about divorce in our culture today:

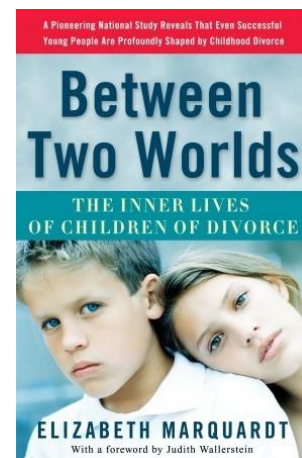
- Half of all American children will witness the breakup of a parent's marriage. Of these, close to half will also see the breakup of a parent's second marriage." (Furstenberg, Peterson, Nord, and Zill, "Life Course")
- Forty percent of children growing up in America today are being raised without their fathers. (Wade, Horn and Busy, "Fathers, Marriage and Welfare Reform" Hudson Institute Executive Briefing, 1997)
- Studies indicate that daughters of divorced parents have a 60-percent higher divorce rate in marriages than children of non-divorced parents, and sons have a 35-percent higher divorce rate. If your parents married others after divorcing, you're 91 percent more likely to get divorced.
- Teenagers in single-parent families and in blended families are three times more likely to need psychological help within a given year. (Peter Hill "Recent Advances in Selected Aspects of Adolescent Development" Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry 1993)
- Compared to children from homes disrupted by death, children from divorced homes have more psychological problems. (Robert E. Emery, Marriage, Divorce and Children's Adjustment" Sage Publications, 1988)
- The death of a parent is less devastating to a child than a divorce.
- A study of children six years after a parental marriage breakup revealed that even after all that time, these children tended to be "lonely, unhappy, anxious and insecure. (Wallerstein "The Long-Term Effects of Divorce on Children" Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry 1991)
- Children of divorce are four times more likely to report problems with peers and friends than children whose parents have kept their marriages intact. (Tysse, Burnett, "Moral Dilemmas of Early Adolescents of Divorced and Intact Families. Journal of Early Adolescence 1993)
- If your parents are happily married, your risk of divorce decreases by 14 percent.
- Living together prior to getting married can increase the chance of getting divorced by as much as 40 percent.
- The Barna Research Group measured divorce statistics by religion. They found that 29 percent of Baptists are divorced (the highest for a US religious group), while only 21 percent of atheists/agnostics were divorced (the lowest).
- The divorce rate among couples with children is 40 percent lower than couples without children.



### How Good for Children Is the 'Good Divorce'? Surprising Findings on Educational Attainment and Marital Success

[www.americanvalues.org](http://www.americanvalues.org)

*The main implication of the findings of this study . . . is that a so-called good divorce, while clearly preferable to a bad one, falls far short of being a good substitute for a good parental marriage, and in some respects does not even seem to be a good substitute for a mediocre parental marriage.*





## Proper Gender Identity

California has taken the lead in the protection (and promotion) of gender confusion among the youth. Governor Jerry Brown has signed into law two very controversial laws – one that allows any person to use any bathroom/locker room of their choice (so transgender kids do not feel uncomfortable) and another law that makes it illegal to attempt to change the sexual orientation of patients under the age of 18. The two bills stand in direct contrast with each other. The first bill is premised on the idea that gender is fluid, changing, in a constant state of flux for young people – the second bill denies that gender can change, or at least denies that gender can move in a direction away from homosexuality.



Ricky Chelette and Living Hope Ministries is one of the nation's leading organizations providing biblical counseling to teens and families struggling with gender identity. One of the best resources for understanding gender development is their DVD titled [Why? Understanding Homosexuality and Gender Development in Males](#).

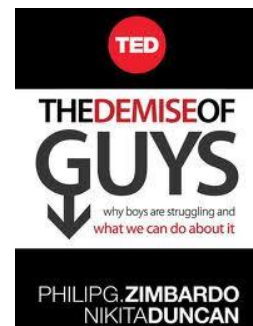


## Address Pornography Issue

The average age someone first sees porn today is before the age of twelve (*Teenology*, p. 84).

Philip Zimbardo recently presented a TED talk titled “The Demise of Guys” in which he says this about the problem he sees with young men today:

*Boys’ brains are being **digitally rewired**, in a totally new way, for change, novelty, excitement, and constant arousal...that means they’re totally out of sync with romantic relationships...*



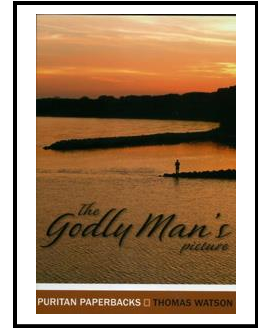
Zimbardo claims that this new “**arousal addiction**” is significantly different than other addictions, like to drugs. With a drug addiction, Zimbardo says, you crave more and more of the same drug. With the new arousal addiction, you crave something **different** each time.

CS Lewis had a profound comment on what most consider a “sex-saturated” society – he considered ours a “sex-starved” society – consider his thoughts:

*Now suppose you come to a country where you could fill a theatre by simply lifting the cover so as to let everyone see, just before the lights went out, that it contained a mutton chop or a bit of bacon, would you not think that in that country something had gone wrong with the appetite for food? And would not anyone who had grown up in a different world think there was something equally queer about the state of the sex instinct among us?*

## Begin List of Godly Traits for Spouse

What are the traits of a godly man or woman? At an appropriate age, have your child begin to list what he or she believes those traits are. You can begin with the proverbial “Proverbs 31 woman” and branch out from there. A great resource for young men is *A Godly Man’s Picture* by Thomas Watson. Most of the traits that young people list will probably be traits they see in their parents – another good reminder to model a good marriage and an authentic relationship with Christ!



## Learning How to Work Hard


"Materialism rose substantially from the mid-1970s through the late 1980s, peaking among members of Generation X. Although materialism then declined slightly, youth in the late 2000s were significantly more oriented towards materialistic values than they were youth in the 1970s."

- 39 percent of Millennials said that they did **not** want to work hard, and the number of respondents who said they saw work as a "central part of life" slid from 3/4 in the 70s to 2/3 in Gen x.



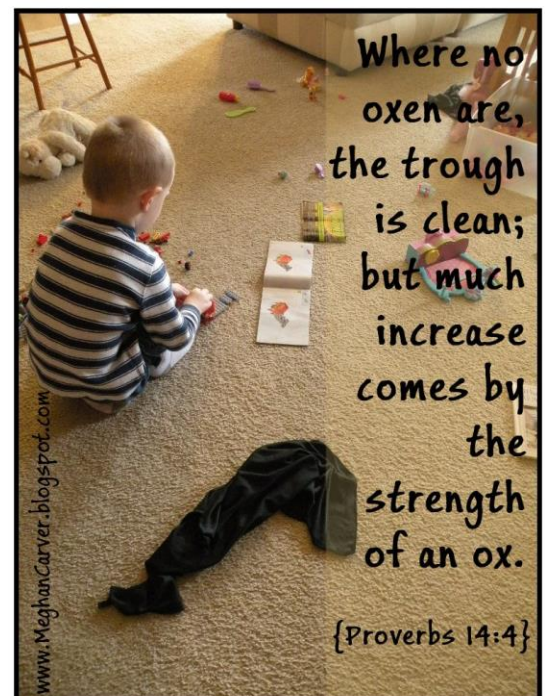
*If you want children to keep their feet on the ground, put some responsibility on their shoulders. Abigail Van Buren*

### Age-Appropriate Chores for Children



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<p><b>Ages 2-3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Put toys in toy box</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stack books on shelf</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Place dirty clothes in laundry hamper</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Throw trash away</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Carry firewood</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fold washcloths</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set the table</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fetch diapers &amp; wipes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dust baseboards</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ages 6-7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gather trash</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fold towels</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dust mop floors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Empty dishwasher</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Match clean socks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Weed garden</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rake leaves</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Peel potatoes or carrots</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make salad</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Replace toilet paper roll</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ages 10-11</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clean bathrooms</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Vacuum rugs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clean countertops</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Deep clean kitchen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare simple meal</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mow lawn</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bring in mail</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do simple mending (hems, buttons, etc.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sweep out garage</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ages 4-5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Feed pets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wipe up spills</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Put away toys</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make the bed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Straighten bedroom</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Water houseplants</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sort clean silverware</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare simple snacks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use hand-held vacuum</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clear kitchen table</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dry and put away dishes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Disinfect doorknobs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ages 8-9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Load dishwasher</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Change light bulbs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wash laundry</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hang/fold clean clothes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dust furniture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spray off patio</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Put groceries away</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Scramble eggs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bake cookies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Walk dogs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sweep porches</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wipe off table</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ages 12 and up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mop floors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Change overhead lights</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wash/ vacuum car</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Trim hedges</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paint walls</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shop for groceries w/list</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cook complete dinner</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bake bread or cake</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do simple home repairs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wash windows</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Iron clothes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Watch younger siblings</li> </ul>



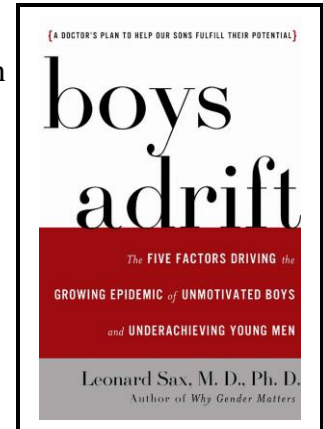
## Train Boys to be Readers

According to Dr. Leonard Sax, author of *Boys Adrift*, “changes in education over the past thirty years have created a negative attitude toward education among many boys.”

*1 in 4 white boys with college-educated parents can't read proficiently.*  
Boys Adrift

*Girls read; boys don't. Roughly nine out of ten boys have stopped reading altogether.*

Boys Adrift



## Limit Access to Video Games

The average teenage boy spends more than 13 hours/week playing video games. According to research put forth in Dr. Sax's book *Boys Adrift*, “the more time your child spends playing video games, the less likely he is to do well in school.” Also, “boys who spend many hours each week playing violent video games are at greatly increased risk of disengaging from the real world.” The fundament harm in video games is the reward associated with advancing to different levels. Dr. Sax writes, “playing video games gives boys the REWARD associated with achieving a great objective, but without any connection to a real world.”

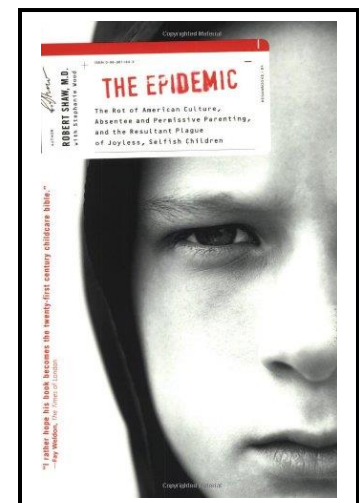


“It's Not Your Fault”  
Coke Zero ad campaign

## Self-centered vs. Other-centered

Today's parents seem to have absorbed the notion that a child's life should be totally serene, totally self-expressive, and totally free from frustration. But creating an atmosphere that feels satisfactory to the child all the time does her a disservice. (*The Epidemic*, p. 13)

As they grow older, our stricken children spend much of their time pursuing entertainment rather than accomplishment: TV, video games, mall roaming, computer hacking, substance abuse, promiscuous sex. (*The Epidemic*, p. 17)

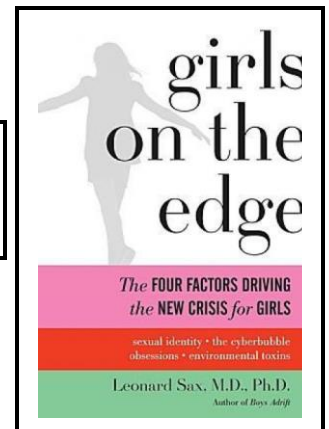




## Proper Body Image/Desire to be “Liked”

*As boys progress through puberty, they become more satisfied with their bodies; as girls progress through puberty, they become less satisfied with theirs.*

Girls on the Edge



Sexting/Social Media – parents need to understand the power of social media today and establish reasonable boundaries around all media use.



Instagram

Instagram: Teens are on the lookout for "Likes." Similar to Facebook, teens may measure the "success" of their photos -- even their self-worth -- by the number of likes or comments they receive. Posting a photo or video can be problematic if teens post it to validate their popularity.

Tumblr: Porn is easy to find. This online hangout is hip and creative but sometimes raunchy. Pornographic images and videos, depictions of violence, self-harm, drug use, and offensive language are easily searchable.



SnapChat: It's a myth that Snapchats go away forever. Data is data: Whenever an image is sent, it never truly goes away. (For example, the person on the receiving end can take a screenshot of the image before it disappears.) Snapchats can even be recovered.

Vine: It's full of inappropriate videos. In three minutes of random searching, we came across a clip full of full-frontal male nudity, a woman in a fishnet shirt with her breasts exposed, and people blowing marijuana smoke into each other's mouths. There's a lot of funny, clever expression on Vine, but much of it isn't appropriate for kids.



Ask.fm: Bullying is a major concern. The British news website MailOnline reported that the site has been linked to the suicides of several teens. Talk to your teens about cyberbullying and how anonymity can encourage mean behavior.

The Whisper App: Teens have started using the app for cyberbullying. Due to the anonymous feature of the app, teens are posting pics of other teens with derogatory text superimposed on the image. Users do not have to register to use Whisper thus no user profile. Unfortunately, the app allow users to communicate with other users nearby by using the device GPS location settings. Pedophiles seek out female whisper users to establish a relationship. Recently, a Seattle, Washington man was arrested for raping a 12 year old girl that was lured to a hotel through the app.

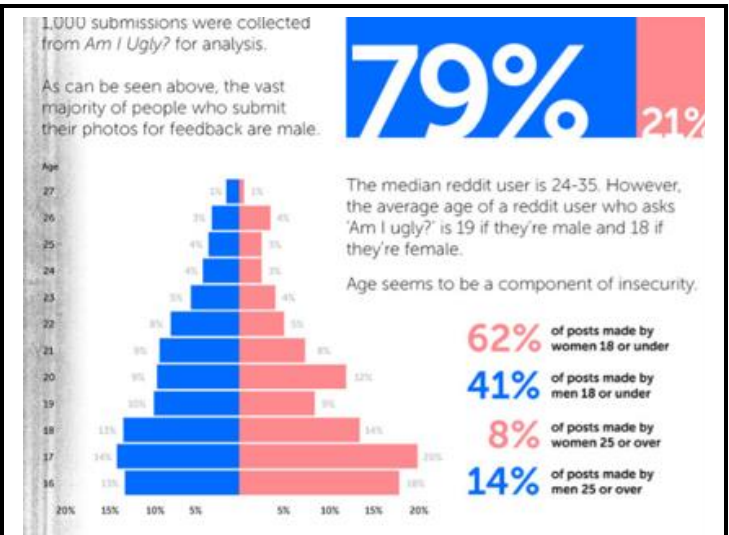






An alarming new trend on YouTube called "Am I Pretty or Ugly" raises questions about how young women in the digital age are internalizing beauty standards. In a nutshell: young women title their uploads with that loaded question, and then open themselves up to the merciless criticism and sexual objectification of the YouTube forums.

Disturbing YouTube Trend Has Young Girls Asking the Internet, 'Am I Pretty or Ugly?'  
By Danielle Paradis November 5, 2013



### What The 'Am I Pretty?' YouTube Trend Is REALLY Saying By Elizabeth Perle, Senior Editor, Huffington Post

Clutch Magazine wrote last week of the trend: "It's sad that young girls are out there seeking validation from a bunch of strangers." And the New York Post similarly claimed it was "systemic of a young culture obsessed with the superficial." According to researchers, **age 9 is when girls begin to lose body confidence, and 20 to 40 percent of girls begin dieting at age 10.** And according to another study, one in four teenage girls who have been in relationships reveal they have been pressured to perform oral sex or engage in intercourse. One in four.

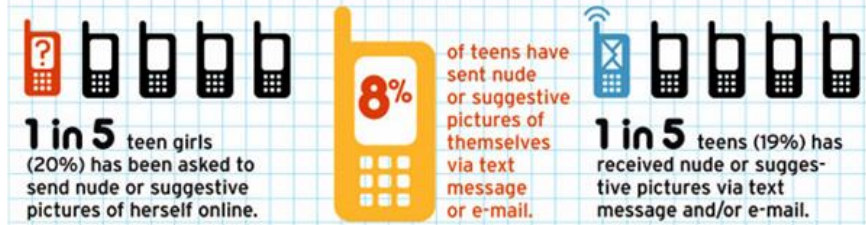
Add in the "Who Wore It Better?" messaging these kids are bombarded by in their entertainment (and please take a moment to remember that their once beloved Facebook began as a "hot or not?" website called Facemash), and it's no surprise girls develop this troubling template for how they're supposed to judge themselves and each other.

We cannot blame teen girls for the ferociously sexist social environment they have no choice but to live in. Maybe what the girls in these YouTube videos are saying isn't: I don't feel pretty. Maybe it's actually: I feel completely powerless when it comes to my sexuality.

Another way to look at it is this: Teen and tween girls are using these online platforms as a way to have control over or participate in a conversation about their appearance that they feel is already happening around them. Scratch that -- a conversation they know is already happening around them.



Recent study reveals that nearly 20 percent of participants (18 percent of male students, 17 percent female students) reported having sent a sexually explicit image via their cellphone, with nearly twice as many saying they had received such a cellphone picture. And while nearly 50 percent of male students had received a sext, only 31 percent of females reported the same. Of those receiving such a picture, about 25 percent said they had forwarded the sexy photo to others.



**Statistics to Consider:**

- More than 50% of teens use the Internet with no supervision
- 25% of kids age 5-7 have a computer in their room
- 50% of parents do not use parental controls already on their computer systems
- 66% of parents have not seriously discussed online security/safety with their kids
- 30% of kids ages 8 to 11 have a social networking profile even though the “legal” age on most sites is 13
- Almost 50% of parents did NOT know their kids had online profiles on social networking/web sites

40% of children ages 6 to 14 said they would like to see more involvement from their parents when they are using technology (Learning in the Family Report, 2009)

**PARENTS, IF YOU'RE NOT ASKING, THEY'RE NOT TELLING**

**48%** of parents believe their teens tell them everything they do online

**71%** of teens have hidden their online behavior from their parents

**McAfee**  
An Intel Company

Source: TRU Insights & McAfee, May 2012

**90%** OF CHILDREN AGES 8-16 HAVE VIEWED PORN

PORN SITES COMPRISE 12% OF THE INTERNET

THE LARGEST CONSUMERS OF PORNOGRAPHY ARE 12 TO 17-YEAR-OLD BOYS

**STATS ON PORN**

70% OF MEN AGES 18 TO 34 VISIT A PORN SITE IN A TYPICAL MONTH

**1 IN 6 WOMEN** STRUGGLES WITH PORN ADDICTION

\$10 TO \$14 BILLION IS SPENT ON PORN ANNUALLY, THE SAME AMOUNT THE US GOVERNMENT SPENDS ON FOREIGN AID

**25%** OF SEARCH ENGINE REQUESTS ARE FOR PORN

**50%** OF PASTORS REGULARLY LOOK AT PORN

**EVERY SECOND** 28,258 PEOPLE VIEW PORN

**EVERY MINUTE** \$184,500 IS SPENT ON PORN

**38%** OF ADULTS SAY PORN IS MORALLY ACCEPTABLE

STATISTICS FOUND IN REAL MARRIAGE RESEARCH BRIEF PASTORMARK.TV/CAMPAIGNS/REAL-MARRIAGE

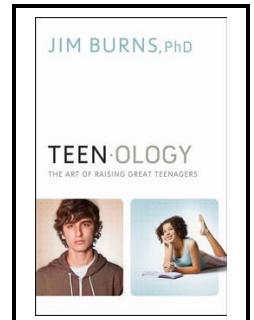
## Ages 13 - 16

## Hormones!!!

### Dates vs. Dating

When should parents allow their children to start dating? A couple of questions arise:

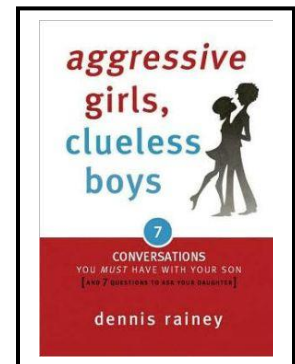
1. What is meant by “dating”?
2. Are “going on dates” and “dating” different?
3. If boys are girls are just texting, does that mean they are dating?



According to one study, of the kids who were in exclusive dating relationships at the age of twelve, 91 percent had had sexual intercourse before finishing high school. For the kids who waited until age sixteen to date exclusively, that percentage went down to 20 percent. (Teenology, p. 89)

### Girls Pursuing Boys

Thirteen-year-old Ashley began dating in fourth grade. At first, "it was movies, malls and making out," says the eighth-grader from Pleasantville, New York. These days, "About half of the people in my class are sexually experienced. Some have lost their virginity, but most have oral sex. It's popular because you can't get pregnant." Last July, she decided to try oral sex with a boy she'd been seeing for a month. "We did it to each other; it was fun. Now we do it at his house, my house, everywhere. Oral sex rules!"



Girls are especially at risk. Tara Thrutchley, 18, a volunteer peer educator for AID Gwinnett, a nonprofit HIV awareness group in Lawrenceville, Georgia, has noticed that girls tend to give oral sex more than they receive it. "A lot of eighth-grade girls engage in this activity with high-school boys," she says. "They see it as a way to please a guy without losing their virginity."

### Texting vs. Talking

The telephone call is a dying institution. The number of text messages sent monthly in the U.S. exploded from 14 billion in 2000 to 188 billion in 2010, according to a Pew Institute survey, and the trend shows no signs of abating. Not all of that growth has come out of the hide of old-fashioned phoning, but it is clearly taking a bite — particularly among the young.



While texting is the major way teens communicate, it isn't always the preferred method when talking with different people. When asked to choose, teens were clear about which modes of communication they preferred for talking with different people in their lives. For friends, who for most teens make up the bulk of their conversational partners, text messaging was dominant, with 67% of text-using teens saying they are more likely to use their cell phone to text a friend than to call. Still, a significant minority of text-using teens – 28% — said they preferred talking to their friends rather than texting them. Another 5% of texting teens said they were equally likely to call or text.

- As of December 2012, 171.3 billion text messages were sent in the US (includes PR, the Territories, and Guam) every month. (CTIA)
- 11% of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted.
- For drivers 15-19 years old involved in fatal crashes, 21 percent of the distracted drivers were distracted by the use of cell phones (NHTSA)



## Progression and Power of Touch

When two people touch each other in a warm, meaningful, and intimate way, oxytocin is released into the woman's brain. The oxytocin then does two things: increases a woman's desire for more touch and causes bonding of the woman to the man she has been spending time in physical contact with. (p. 37, Hooked)

Oxytocin can cause a woman to bond to a man even during what was expected to be a short-term sexual relationship. She may know he is not the man she would want to marry but intimate sexual involvement causes her to be so attached to him she can't make herself separate. This can lead to a woman being taken off-guard by a desire to stay with a man she would otherwise find undesirable and staying with him even if he is possessive or abusive. (p. 38, Hooked)



HELLO  
my name is

Oxytocin

TEXT2PIC.COM

If a young woman becomes physically close to and hugs a man, it will trigger the bonding process, creating a greater desire to be near him and, most significantly, **place greater trust in him**. Then, if he wants to escalate the physical nature of the relationship, it will become harder and harder for her to say no. (p. 39, Hooked)

The truth about such a relationship [one with the “wrong” guy] may be apparent to parents and friends who are concerned about the girl's well-being, but it takes wisdom and tact to effectively warn a young woman about a relationship others can see could be dangerous to her. (p. 41, Hooked)

### 12 steps to increasing intimacy:

1. Eye to body.
2. Eye to eye.
3. Voice to voice. This is where a real relationship begins. This step is all about communication.
4. Hand to hand.
5. Hand to shoulder.
6. Hand to waist.
7. Face to face.
8. Hand to head.

Most adults – especially parents – would say that's the last step for a non-marital relationship. You'll start to understand as you look at the last 4 steps. This is stuff that's embarrassing to talk about, let alone having people think or know you're doing it! The first 8 steps were about building a romance; about a growing relationship built on increasing familiarity with and acceptance of personality and attitudes.

9. Hand to body.
10. Mouth to body.
11. Touching below the waist.
12. Intercourse.



## Definition of "Sex"

But even those kids who remain virgins aren't necessarily innocent. In a recent survey by Seventeen magazine, 55 percent of teens, aged thirteen to nineteen, admitted to engaging in oral sex. Half of them felt it wasn't as big a deal as intercourse. Robin Goodman, Web site director of New York University's Child Study Center, in New York City adds, "Oral sex is like the latest sport, an activity kids egg each other on to try."

The raw numbers indicate that 50% of teenagers aged 15 to 19 have had vaginal sex. 55% have had heterosexual oral sex. Among technical virgins – teens who have never had vaginal sex – 23% have had oral sex. That number sounds high until you notice that among nonvirgins, the oral-sex figure is 87%.

Among teens, oral sex is often viewed so casually that it needn't even occur within the confines of a relationship. Some teens say it can take place at parties, possibly with multiple partners. But they say the more likely scenario is oral sex within an existing relationship. Still, some experts are increasingly worrying that a generation that approaches intimate behavior so casually might have difficulty forming healthy intimate relationships later on. "My parents' generation sort of viewed oral sex as something almost greater than sex. Like once you've had sex, something more intimate is oral sex," says Carly Donnelly, 17, a high school senior from Cockeysville, Md. "Now that some kids are using oral sex as something that's more casual, it's shocking to (parents)."



At 29, Curtis and his girlfriend have the most traditional arrangement. They met at a restaurant where they both worked at the time, happened to break up with people the same week, took advantage of their newfound freedom to sleep together immediately, and then started dating – an order of events he says is very much the norm. "It's almost in reverse in a sense. It's like the relationship is the really special and unique part," while the sex is a step you take to see whether or not you'd want to commit to the relationship. Joe is even more pointed: "It's more fun to get [sex] out of the way and see how you connect, and then focus on who they are as a human. 'Are you interesting? Are you fun to be around? Great.' Sex isn't inherently a huge step. At the end of the day, it's a piece of body touching another piece of body – just as existentially meaningless as kissing."

"It suddenly struck me the other day," continued Bernard, "that it might be possible to be an adult all the time."

"I don't understand." Lenina's tone was firm.

"I know you don't. And that's why we went to bed together yesterday – like infants – instead of being adults and waiting."

### Teens and oral sex

Heterosexual oral sex among teenagers ages 15 to 19 varies by age and gender, with older teens more likely to engage in intercourse.

percentage of teens who have had intercourse and their ages:

#### Boys

15 — 25.1%  
16 — 37.5%  
17 — 46.9%  
18 — 62.4%  
19 — 68.9%

#### Girls

15 — 26.0%  
16 — 39.6%  
17 — 49.0%  
18 — 70.3%  
19 — 77.4%

percentage of teens who have had oral sex and their ages:

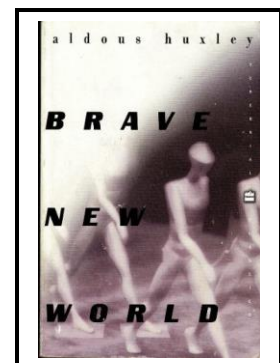
#### Boys

15 — 35.1%  
16 — 42.0%  
17 — 55.7%  
18 — 65.4%  
19 — 74.2%

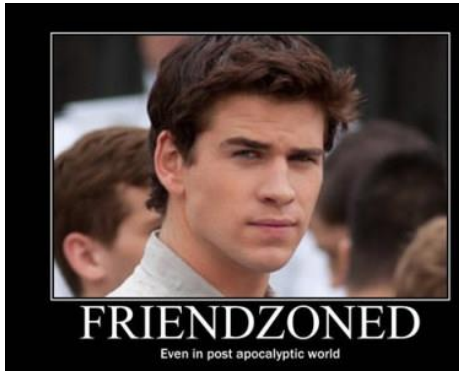
#### Girls

15 — 26.0%  
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18 — 70.2%  
19 — 74.4%

Source: 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, Centers for Disease Control of Prevention

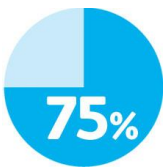


## Purity Leads to Intimacy



As one writer puts it, a nonmarital “relationship is only as old as it is nonsexual. The relationship stops growing once it becomes sexual, because the erotic aspect will become the primary focus of [the couple’s] time together (Hooked, p. 69).

When a bonsai stops growing, you know it's dead.



### Interesting Statistics:

- Forty-six percent of all high school students (freshman through seniors) have had sexual intercourse.
- Approximately 75 percent of graduating high school seniors have had sex. (p. 75, Hooked)

One fascinating finding reports that the brain center for “lust” is different than the brain center for “love.” (p. 51, Hooked) This means of course that a man (or woman) can be sexually attracted to another person, approach that person for sex, engage in sex, and yet have no sincerely love-motivated thought or interest at all because all their desire arises from the brain’s center for “lust.” (p. 68, Hooked)

### SIGNS OF LUST

- You're totally focused on a person's looks and body.
- You're interested in having sex, but not in having conversations.
- You'd rather keep the relationship on a fantasy level, not discuss real feelings.
- You want to leave soon after sex rather than cuddling or breakfast the next morning.
- You are lovers, but not friends.

### SIGNS OF LOVE

- You want to spend quality time together other than sex.
- You get lost in conversations and forget about the hours passing.
- You want to honestly listen to each other's feelings, make each other happy.
- He or she motivates you to be a better person.
- You want to get to meet his or her family and friends.

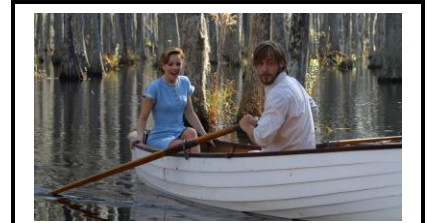
Lust	(Verses) <sup>na</sup>	Love
Natural	1 John 2:16	Super-Natural
Of the world	1 John 2:16	From God
Temporary	1 John 2:16	Eternal
Ungodly	1 Thessalonians 4:5	Godly
Pagan (Lost)	1 Peter 4:3	Christian (new creation)
Never fully-satisfies	1 John 2:16 + Proverbs 27:20	Completely Satisfying
Fear	1 John 4:18	No fear- Perfect love cancels out fear
Selfish	1 John 4:7-20	Selfless

## Messages in the Media

Be careful of the messages that the media sends your children about “love.” Generally, there are mixed messages – some that support Biblical values, others that oppose Biblical principles. Parents must teach children how to discern fact from fiction, truth from lies. Here are just a few of the messages that influence the thoughts and opinions of your children about what love is...

### *The Notebook*

- Regardless of your commitments to others, follow your “passions” – that is what “true love” is. And how do you find your passions – have sex with someone!
- True love never dies – it stays committed even when it costs!



### *The Hunger Games*

- Love is a game – it’s not about trust, commitment, feelings, intimacy – it’s about what you have to do to survive, to win the game, to get ahead.
- Love is a sacrifice – regardless of what everyone else does, you have to be willing to lay your life on the line for those you love.



### *Twilight*

- Love is creepy – guys watching over you at night to “protect” you.
- Love runs counter to what is best for you – it is dangerous, or it isn’t real love!
- Love is commitment...and family is central to love and happiness!



### *Divergent*

- True love protects others, sacrifices for the good of others.
- Love is not dominated by uncontrollable passion.



### *Frozen*

- Love means hiding who you really are – others cannot be trusted.
- Love is about sacrifice – doing for others what they are unable to do for themselves.
- Love means accepting people for who they are, appreciating their special gifts and talents, even if that is uncomfortable for you.
- Love is...an open door!



## Plans to be Successful in Dating

Parents, date your kids. Teach them how to “date well.” Help them write down a plan for successful dating. Here are some examples of issues to address for “successful dating” →

Find a good friend with the same commitment about sex.  
Write down your commitment to abstain from sex.  
Practice assertiveness.  
Make sure your values are known to everyone.  
Don't get involved with someone who doesn't share your values.  
Plan your dates to avoid difficult situations.  
Avoid alcohol and drugs.  
Introduce your date to your parents.  
Limit the amount of physical contact.

Adolescent judgment, therefore, is in gradual formation and will only achieve true maturity when shepherded by the guidance of parents or committed and caring mentors. The truth about [a bad relationship] may be apparent to parents and friends who are concerned about the girl's well-being, but it takes wisdom and tact to effectively warn a young woman about a relationship others can see could be dangerous to her (Hooked, p. 41).



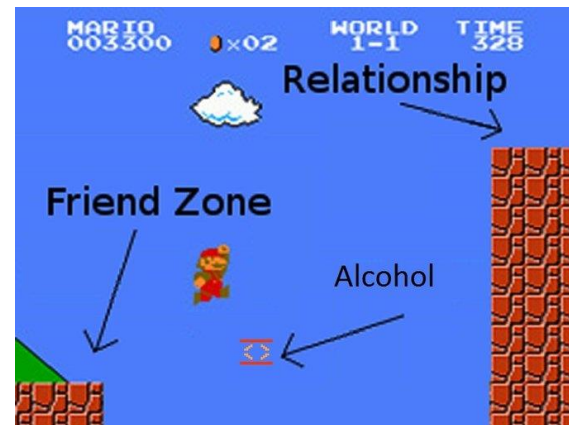
*Courageous*

Sex at this immature stage can keep a person from honestly evaluating the other person. Sex can make a person feel that the other person is the “right one” because the bonding and dopamine high it brings can blind one to honestly looking at the other's faults and lack of compatibility. (p. 67, Hooked)

## Influence of Alcohol

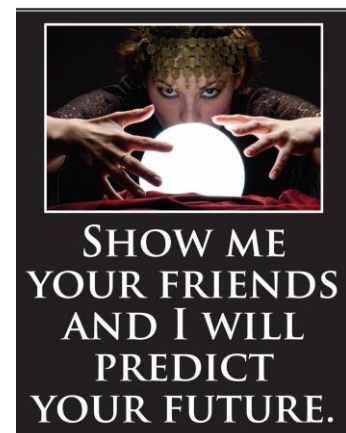
Another warning sign for parents and mentors to watch for in young people is involvement in risky behavior such as alcohol, marijuana, or tobacco abuse. Adolescents involved in these risky behaviors are more likely to initiate sex early and to have an increased number of sexual partners. (p. 89, Hooked)

An article distributed by the Center for Disease Control states that 1 in 8 adult women and 1 in 5 high school-age young women binge drink. Binge drinking is characterized by having more than 4 drinks 3 or more times a month. The CDC warns young women that binge drinking can lead to serious health risks including, but not limited to increased chances of breast cancer, heart disease, sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancy.



## Importance of Knowing Friend Group

Remember the warning of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 – Do not be misled, “Bad company corrupts good character.” You need to know who your son or daughter's group of friends are and take every opportunity to train them as well. Don't assume that they are being trained with a biblical perspective in their own home. Remember that while influence may be a two-way street, it tends to lean downhill toward the negative!





## 16 to 21

## Dating

### Importance of Modesty

Male college students at Princeton University recently took part in studies of how the male brain reacts to seeing people wearing different amounts of clothing. The test subjects were placed in a brain scanner and for a fraction of a second were shown photographs of women in bikinis, as well as men and women dressed modestly. The most easily remembered photographs were of bikini-clad women whose heads were cropped off the photos!

Dear Girls, Dressing immodestly is like rolling around in manure. Yes you'll get attention, but mostly from pigs. Sincerely, Real Men

Researchers also discovered that when some of the men viewed scantily clad females, **the men's medial pre-frontal cortex was deactivated**. This is the region of the brain associated with analyzing a person's thoughts, intentions, and feelings. Susan Fiske, a professor of psychology at Princeton University, remarked, "It is as if they are reacting to these women as if they are not fully human." She added, "It is a preliminary study but it is consistent with the idea that they are responding to these photographs as if they were responding to objects rather than people."



### How 'Modest Is Hottest' Is Hurting Christian Women: What the phrase communicates about female sexuality and bodies.

By Sharon Hodde Miller

ChristianityToday

This particular approach to modesty is effective because it is rooted in shame, and shame is a powerful motivator. That's the first red flag. Additionally concerning about this approach is that it perpetuates the objectification of women in a pietistic form. It treats women's bodies not as glorious reflections of the image of God, but as sources of temptation that must be hidden. It is the other side of the same objectifying coin: one side exploits the female body, while the other side seems to be ashamed of it. Both sides reduce the female body to a sexual object.

Making modesty sexy is not the solution we need. Instead, the church needs to overhaul its theology of the female body. How do we discuss modesty in a manner that celebrates the female body without objectifying women, and still exhorts women to purity? The first solution is to dispense with body-shaming language. Shame is great at behavior modification. But shame-based language is not the rhetoric of Jesus.

Second, we must affirm the value of the female body. The value or meaning of a woman's body is not the reason for modesty. Women's bodies are not inherently distracting or tempting. On the contrary, women's bodies glorify God. Dare I say that a woman's breasts, hips, bottom, and lips all proclaim the glory of the Lord! Each womanly part honors Him. He created the female body, and it is good.

Finally, language about modesty should focus not on hiding the female body but on understanding the body's created role. Immodesty is not the improper exposure of the body per se, but the improper orientation of the body. Men and women are urged to pursue a modesty by which our glory is minimized and God's is maximized. The body, the spirit and the mind all have a created role that is inherently God-centered. When we make ourselves central instead of God, we display the height of immodesty.

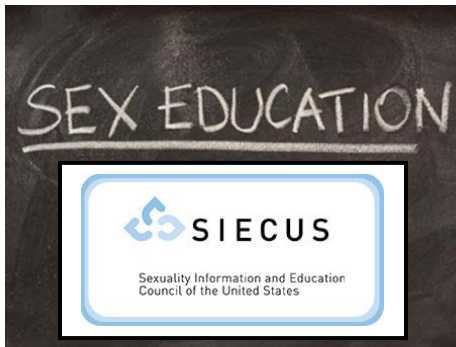
THE SECRET LIFE OF  
WALTER  
MITTY

beautiful things  
don't ask for  
attention



## Non-Directive Sex Education

Statistics show that if young people begin having sex when they are sixteen years old, more than 44 percent of them will have had five or more sexual partners by the time they are in their twenties. If they are older than twenty when they initiate sex, only 15 percent will have had more than five sexual partners, while just over 50 percent will have committed sexually to only one partner. (p. 65, Hooked)



Number of Sexual Partners	SEXUAL EXPOSURE CHART (If every person has only the same number of partners as you)	Number of People Exposed to
1		1
2		3
3		7
4		15
5		31
6		63
7		127
8		255
9		511
10		1023

© Copyright 2004 Why kNow Abstinence Education Program

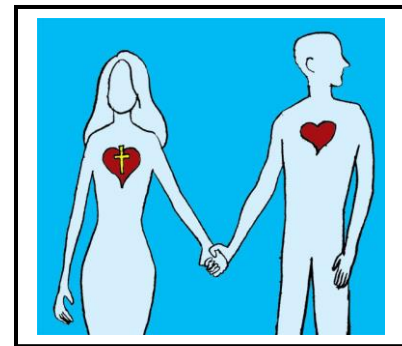


## Treating Dates as Future Spouses

One reason it is best to not become involved sexually before marriage is that statistics say that a relationship started prior to the age of twenty-one will probably not be permanent. (p. 65, Hooked)

An important conversation that Christian parents need to have with their children concerns the concept of dating non-believers.

2 Corinthians 6:14 states, “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers,” but that concept of “yoking” seems to be more strongly associated with marriage, not dating. So what is a young Christian to do in situations where they are interested in someone who is not a believer?



There are several things that Christian young people must consider. First, if the person you are dating does not end up being your spouse, then you definitely want to make sure that you don't become intimately or sexually engaged with that person – you are going to be married to someone else as are they. Secondly, if that person ends up being your spouse, you still don't want to become sexually intimate with that person before marriage because you don't want to do anything that inhibits the growth of your relationship – and you want to make sure that you are thinking clearly when you make that life-long commitment to that person and are not influenced by the bond formed from sexual activity. Finally, regardless of whether that person becomes your spouse or not, they are not a believer and you have an incredible reasonability to model Christ to them. The love of Christ is pure, not self-serving, and sacrificial in nature. In addition, to model that Christ is pre-eminent in your life, you will have to make the choice of being one with someone who does not have Christ on the throne of their heart. Like the line from Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, “You must choose, but choose wisely.”

## How Does a Boy Treat His Mother/Sister



If a boy can separate lust from love, how do you know if a young man really “loves” a young lady when he is pursuing her? Best advice – watch how he treats the women in his life he is not pursuing – most likely his mother and sisters. If he treats them well, odds are that he may treat a young lady well once she has become his wife. If he does not treat his mother and sister well, should a young lady expect to be treated better than those women in his life?

## Boys to Men?

Not all males will become men...some will remain boys. Manhood is not defined by age, but rather maturity. Men accept responsibility for their actions, are initiators, self-starters, pursuers in a relationship. Teach your boys to Pursue, Protect and Provide!

Train your boys to be men. Give them responsibilities at home, have them open the car door for their mom and for young ladies at school. Do not allow the culture to emasculate or feminize your boys!

She deserves a man  
who will fight for her,  
and until a boyfriend  
proves his worth, that  
job belongs to her  
father.

don't grow up  
...it's a trap

## Isolation Kills

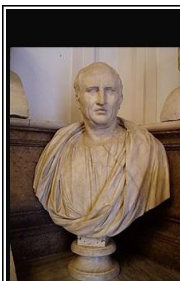
According to C.S. Lewis, sex cannot and should not be removed from the idea and union with marriage – meaning and sex outside of marriage (self-gratification, sex before marriage or sex with someone other than your own spouse) is not the ideal. Consider his thoughts:

*The Christian idea of marriage is based on Christ's words that a man and wife are to be regarded as a single organism...The male and female were made to be combined together in pairs, not simply on a sexual level, but totally combined. The monstrosity of sexual intercourse outside of marriage is that those who indulge in it are trying to isolate one kind of union (the sexual) from all the other kinds of union which were intended to go along with it and make up the total union. The Christian attitude does not mean that there is anything wrong about sexual pleasure, any more than about the pleasure of eating. It means that you must not isolate that pleasure and try to get it by itself, any more than you ought to try to get the pleasures of taste without swallowing and digesting, by chewing things and spitting them out again.*

The idols of today are unmistakable - self-esteem without achievement, sex without consequences, wealth without responsibility, pleasure without struggle and experience without commitment.

meatville.com

Jonathan Sacks



The first bond of society is marriage; the next, our children; then the whole family and all things in common.

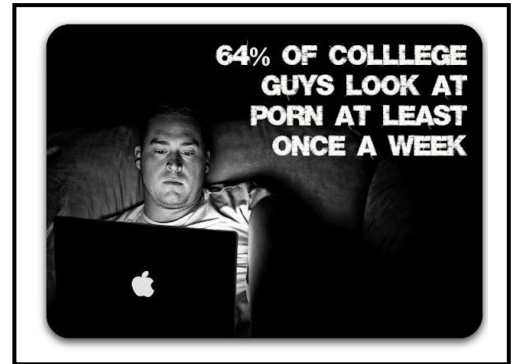
(Cicero)

izquotes.com



## Dabble in Spiritual Word, Immersed in Physical World

When your children leave for college, they will have the opportunity to live their lives free from your constant oversight and control. If they are not grounded in their faith, they are easy prey for the enemy. Many kids growing up in Christian homes and environments are surrounded by spiritual things because of the influence of their parents and church – but when those influencers are absent, the ubiquity of the world is overwhelming. The ease and prevalence of pornography on the college campuses is a huge temptation for youth today. It is not a surprise that far too many teens abandon their belief system to pursue the things of this world. Here are some of the percentages of recent studies of the numbers of young people putting religion on the shelf:



- 88%: The Southern Baptist Convention's Family Life Council study in 2002
- 70%: LifeWay Research study in 2007
- 66%: Assembly of God study
- 61%: Barna study in 2006

The Barna study also found that only one-fifth of twentysomethings (20%) have maintained a level of spiritual activity consistent with their high school experiences. Another one-fifth of teens (19%) were never significantly reached by a Christian community of faith during their teens and have remained disconnected from the Christian faith.

According to the National Association of Evangelicals, 80 percent of unmarried evangelical Christians between ages 18-29 admit to having had premarital sex, a shocking figure when measured against the number of pledges made in youth ministries and wristbands worn endorsing abstinence around the country throughout the late '80s and early '90s. For a generation fed a steady diet of “just wait until you’re married for sex,” why are so many of us losing our virginity before we say “I do”? What is causing the growing chasm between our Christian belief and sexual purity?



A recent article was published about kids who don't walk away from their faith sought out the core principles of those teens who walked faithfully even after leaving the safety and security of their home environment – here is a brief conclusion of that article:

### 3 Common Traits of Youth Who Don't Leave the Church:

- **They are converted.**
- **They have been equipped, not entertained.**
- **Their parents preached the gospel to them.**





## 21 to 26

## Prep for Marriage



### Run Hard After Christ, Not Marriage

A significant life transition happens when the friends of your child begin to get married – they begin to get worried! Many take their eyes off the prize for which God has called them and begin to put their eyes on the earthly prize of marriage. Parents should continue to encourage their adult children to pursue hard after Christ – to seek first the kingdom of heaven. Several Christian leaders have used the example of a godly mate by talking about first running hard after Christ and turning your head then turning your head to the right and left seeing who is running hard after Christ, too – those are suitable marriage partners! Far too often Christian young adults settle for someone they “met at church,” or who would at least attend church with them...with the mistaken belief that they are either going to change and become more spiritual after marriage, or they are just tired of waiting for God’s best in their lives.

### If He Can’t Lead You Now...

One of the most common mistakes in marriage happen when Christian women settle for a Christian man who is unable to lead them spiritually. Parents should continue to help their adult children see an accurate picture of the people connected to your kids. If a young man is unable (or unwilling) to lead in a spiritual manner before the marriage, don’t expect anything different after the wedding day!



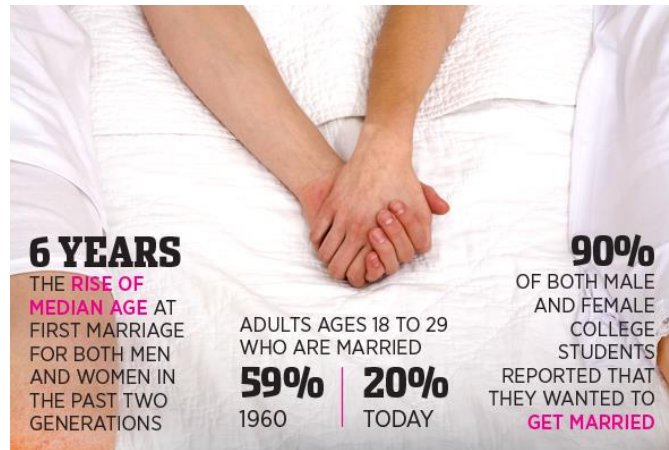
### Relationship vs. Rules

Some parents don’t believe that they can continue to speak truth into the life situations of their adult children. If their connection to their children was built only on rules and not on a life-giving relationship, it will be very difficult to continue to guide, encourage and provide wisdom when those adult children are no longer “under your roof/under your rules.” If that connection to your children was built on mutual love, respect and admiration, young adults should continue to value the wisdom of their Christian parents and should be willing and able to seek out wisdom and advice, even if that wisdom is contrary to their own decisions and lifestyle. The role of the Christian parent is not to provide personal wisdom, but biblical wisdom – which applies equally to everyone!



## Marriage is on the Decline

In 2011, a Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census data found that only 51 percent of Americans were married, a record low. While the marriage rate has declined among all age groups, the drop is most dramatic among Millennials: Today, only 20 percent of adults ages 18 to 29 are married (compared with 59 percent in 1960). Meanwhile, the median age for a first marriage has risen by close to six years for both men and women in the past two generations.



Nevertheless, compared to other developed countries, America still boasts high rates of both marriage and divorce – a tug of war between our society’s commitment to commitment and its commitment to individual freedom. And sexual revolution notwithstanding, America is a place where marriage still matters – even among the young. In a recent study conducted by Paula England, a professor of sociology at NYU and president of the American Sociological Association, about 90 percent of both male and female college students reported that they wanted to get married, while a Pew Research Center study from 2010 discovered that a primary goal of the majority of Millennials is to be a good parent.

## Ten Important Research Findings On Marriage

By David Popenoe, Ph.D.

The National Marriage Project  
Rutgers University

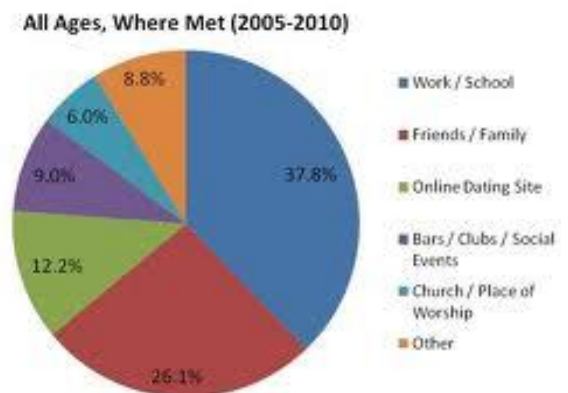


### 1. Marrying as a teenager is the highest known risk factor for divorce.

People who marry in their teens are two to three times more likely to divorce than people who marry in their twenties or later.

### 2. People are most likely to find a future marriage partner through an introduction by family, friends, or acquaintances.

Despite the romantic notion that people meet and fall in Love through chance or fate, evidence suggests that Social networks are important in bringing together individuals of similar interests and backgrounds. According to a large-scale national survey, almost 60% of married people were introduced by family, friends, co-workers or other acquaintances.



**3. People who are similar in their values, backgrounds and life goals are more likely to have a successful marriage.**

Opposites may attract but they may not live together harmoniously as married couples. People who share common backgrounds and similar social networks are better suited as marriage partners than people who are very different in their backgrounds and networks.



**4. Women have a significantly better chance of marrying if they do not become single parents before marrying.**

Having a child out of wedlock reduces the chances of ever marrying. Despite the growing numbers of potential marriage partners with children, one study noted, "having children is still one of the least desirable characteristics a potential marriage partner can possess." The only characteristic ranked lower is the inability to hold a steady job.

**5. Women and men who are college-educated are more likely to marry, and less likely to divorce, than people with lower levels of education.**



Predictions of lifelong singlehood for college-educated women have proven false. Although the first generation of college-educated women (those who earned baccalaureate degrees in the 1920s) married less frequently than their less well-educated peers, the reverse is true today. College-educated women's chances of marrying are better than less well-educated women. However, the growing gender gap in college education may make it more difficult for college women to find similarly well-educated men in the future. This is already a problem for African-American female college graduates, who greatly outnumber African-American male college graduates.

**6. Living together before marriage has not proved useful as a "trial marriage."**

People who have multiple cohabiting relationships before marriage are more likely to experience marital conflict, marital unhappiness and eventual divorce than people who do not cohabit. I attribute some but not all of these differences to the characteristics of people who cohabit, the so-called "selection effect," rather than to the experience of cohabiting itself. It has been suggested that the negative effects of cohabitation on future marital success may diminish as living together becomes a common experience. However, according to one study of couples who were married between 1981 and 1997, the negative effects persist among younger cohorts, supporting the view that the cohabitation experience itself contributes to problems in marriage.





### 7. Marriage helps people to generate income and wealth.

Married people do better economically. Men become more productive after marriage; they earn between ten and forty percent more than single men with similar education and job histories. Marital social norms that encourage healthy, productive behavior and wealth accumulation play a role.

Some of the greater wealth of married couples results from their more efficient specialization and pooling of resources, and because they save more. Married people also receive more money from family members than the unmarried (including cohabiting couples), probably because families consider marriage more permanent and binding than a cohabiting union.



### 8. People who are married are more likely to have emotionally and physically satisfying sex lives than single people or those who live together.

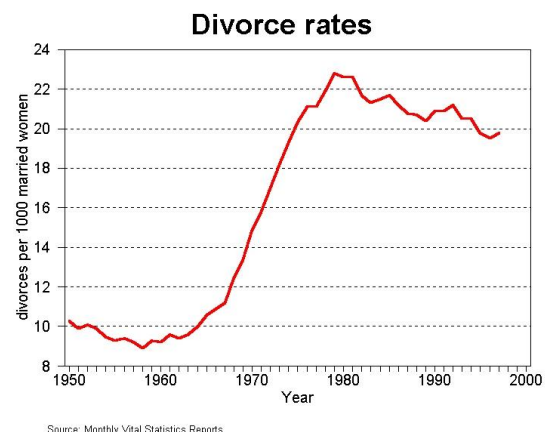
Contrary to the popular belief that married sex is boring and infrequent, married people report higher levels of sexual satisfaction than sexually active singles and cohabiting couples, according to the most comprehensive and recent survey of sexuality. Forty-two percent of wives said that they found sex emotionally and physically satisfying, compared to just 31% of single women who had a sex partner. Forty-eight percent of husbands said sex was satisfying emotionally, compared to just 37% of cohabiting men. The higher level of commitment in marriage is probably the reason for the high level of reported sexual satisfaction. Marital commitment contributes to a greater sense of trust and security, less drug and alcohol-infused sex, and better communication between spouses.

### 9. People whose parents divorced are slightly less likely to marry. They are much more likely to divorce when they do marry.

According to one study the divorce risk nearly triples if one marries someone who also comes from a home where the parents divorced. The increased risk is much lower, however, if the marital partner is someone who grew up in a happy, intact family.

### 10. For large segments of the population, the risk of divorce is far below fifty percent.

Although the overall divorce rate in America remains close to fifty percent of all marriages, it has been dropping over the past two decades. The risk of divorce is far below fifty percent for educated people going into their first marriage, and lower still for people who wait to marry at least until their mid-twenties, haven't lived with many different partners prior to marriage, or are strongly religious and marry someone of the same faith.





## Friends with Benefits

### *In defence of hooking up – in university and beyond*

Women should be able to make their own sexual choices – from abstinence to casual sex – and not be shamed for them



[Jill Filipovic](#)

What students need isn't a lecture on abstinence. They need a community that sees sex as about mutual pleasure and intimacy, not point scoring or getting something, and that doesn't shame or problematize female sexuality. Heterosexual women need male partners who are respectful, generous in bed and emotionally competent, and who treat women like people regardless of whether those women are girlfriends, one-night stands or friends with benefits. Sex, be it in a committed relationship or a more casual arrangement, doesn't have to be the fraught power play or unpleasant interaction merely tolerated by young women. Sex is sex. Human beings throughout all of history have enjoyed it for very good reason. Consensual, mutually pleasurable sex is, for many people, at the top of their "favorite things" list.

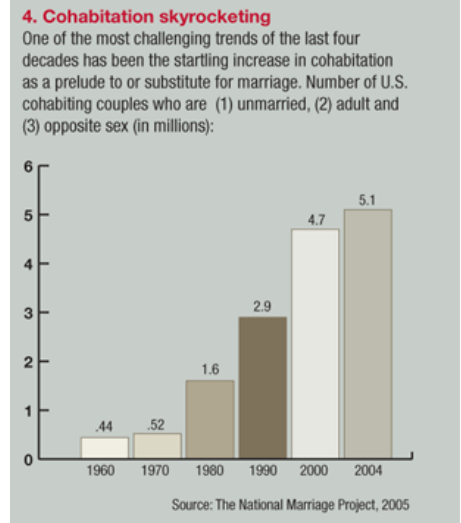
Feminist writer Jaclyn Friedman illustrated just how important a little wildness can be in her piece *My Sluthood, Myself* (and later in her book, *What You Really Really Want*), where she declared that sex when she needed it – just sex, on her terms – was liberating, healing and soul-fulfilling. The key? Self-awareness, community support and a step away from shame. Friedman knew her boundaries, and she had an idea of what she wanted to explore. Her self-awareness allowed her to pursue fruitful relationships, whether those were purely sexual or both sexual and romantic. Her group of friends offered support and helped to keep her both safe and sane.

## Some Boys Never Grow Up

Stevens, a 32-year-old owner of a pool company in Hilton Head, SC, and Sheaf, a 28-year-old engineer in Washington DC, have been revisiting the ghosts of spring breaks past every year since graduating from the University of South Carolina.

Each one is better than the last, they say. “I have a lot more money now,” says Stevens. “And it makes for a more fun time.”

Come March and April, when most US universities have their midterm vacations, hordes of post-grad professionals in their late 20s, 30s and 40s eschew “grown-up” getaways for spring break hot spots including Miami, Cancun, Puerto Vallarta and — home of the first-ever wet T-shirt contest — Fort Lauderdale.

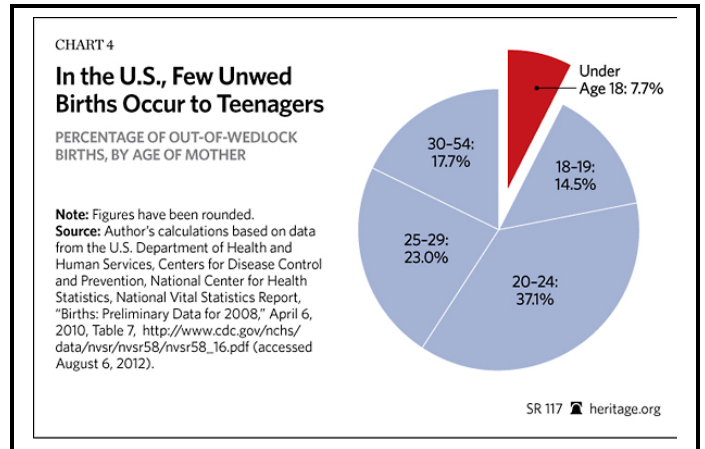


## Children Born out of Wedlock

The average age of marriage is increasing to 26.5 years old for women and 28.7 years old for men. That's up from ages 23 and 26 in 1990, respectively. But, the median age of first birth for a woman is now 25.7 -- meaning that about 48 percent of first births happening outside of wedlock.

But, twenty-somethings aren't waiting to have children, according to the report. Forty-four percent of American women will have given birth by the time they are 25, but only 38 percent are married by that age. By 30, two-thirds of women will have had a child out of wedlock.

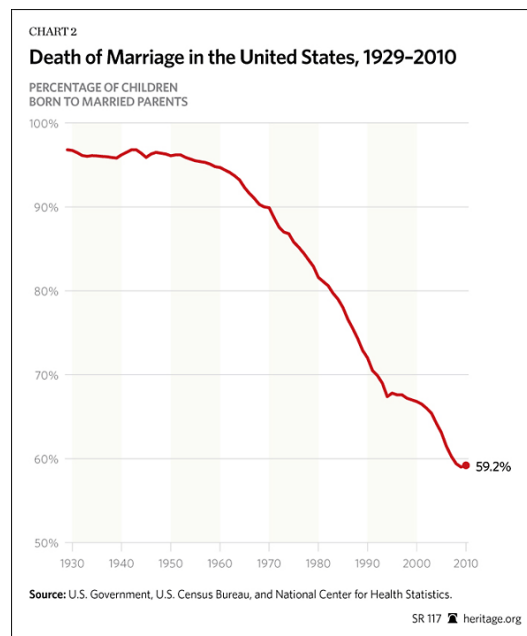
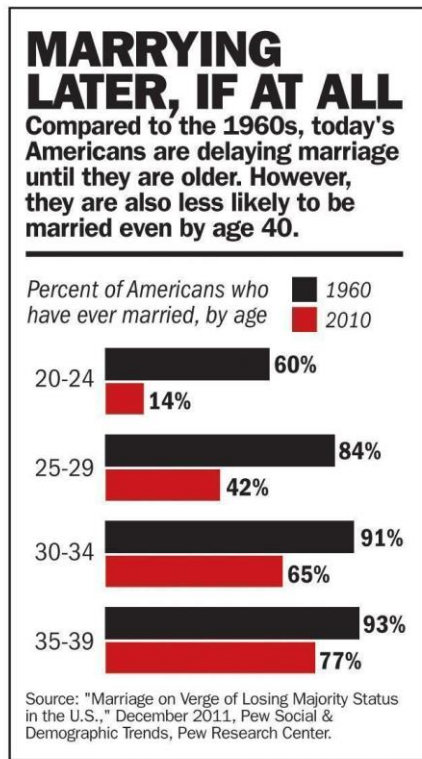
The researchers also found that 35 percent of single twenty-something men and co-habiting men are "highly satisfied" with their lives, compared to 52 percent married men. For women, 33 and 29 percent of single and cohabiting women are "highly satisfied" respectively. Forty-seven percent of married women claim the same status.



## The Choice to Stay Single

More Americans are living alone, according to the Census Bureau, reflecting a global trend that could have significant impacts on the economy and the environment.

In its America's Families and Living Arrangements report this week, the Census Bureau found that the percentage of one-person households has grown over the last 40 years, from 17 percent of total households in 1970 to 27 percent in 2012.



## 26 and Beyond

## Till Death Do Us Part!

### In-law Issues

When you are the “in-laws,” consider the advice given by Focus on the Family and learn to put the marriage of your child above the needs of your child. Think about these issues from the perspective of your son or daughter-in-law:

If you feel your in-laws are intruding into your married life, the old saying, "Good fences make good neighbors," may apply. In concert with your mate, set reasonable boundaries; ask that he or she firmly and kindly insist that your in-laws respect these limits. "Honoring" one's parents (Exodus 20:12) does require showing them patience, kindness, gentleness, and respect. This applies to in-laws, too. You may not even like them, but you need to choose to act in a loving manner toward them.

When you married, you also became part of another family with its own set of expectations. You need to recognize and respect those—within limits. What are those limits? Here are three things that "honoring" your in-laws does not mean:

- It doesn't require that you submerge all your own feelings, desires, preferences, and needs in the service of "doing things their way."
- It doesn't mean you must permit them to disrespect, control, or manipulate you for their own selfish ends.
- It doesn't entail "obeying" all their "parental" requests or requirements—which, in some instances with some in-laws, may get pretty crazy.

### Holiness vs. Happiness

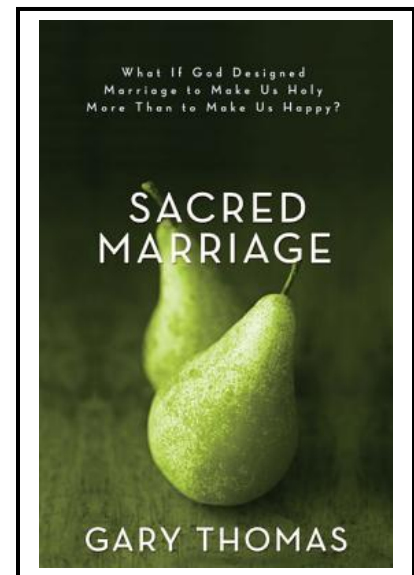
Many conflicts in marriage begin with the phrase, “I’m just not happy.” Encourage your adult married children to read *Sacred Marriage: What If God Designed Marriage to Make Us Holy More Than to Make Us Happy?* by Gary Thomas. You get the idea.

### Christian Counseling

Every marriage as “communication issues” and conflict. Encourage your married adult children to use the resources of biblical counseling if needed – but make sure that the counsel that is given is biblically sound.

### Influence of Friends/Family/Community

One study claims that divorce is “contagious” in social networks. According to the study, if you have a divorced friend, the chance that you’ll get divorced as well increases by 147 percent. If you have a sibling that gets divorced, you are 22 percent more likely to end up divorced yourself. The good news is for those with lots of brothers and sisters – one study suggests that people who were only children or had only one or two siblings were more likely to be divorced than those that had more siblings!



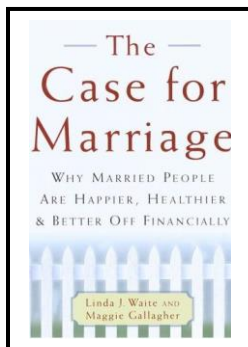


## The Case for Marriage

**Benefits of Marriage for Children** (from *The Case for Marriage* by Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher):

Children who live with their married, biological parents enjoy many advantages over children who live with a single parent or with a remarried parent. Advantages include:

- Better academic performance. Children living with two parents perform better in school and are less likely to drop out. They have higher test scores and grade point averages and are more likely to go to college. Later in life, they have better jobs, higher incomes, and lower unemployment rates.
- Less criminal behavior. Neighborhoods with a majority of single parents (usually mothers), have higher crime rates than neighborhoods with two-parent families, probably because fathers are more able to manage and control boys' behavior. Children of married parents are less likely to turn to gangs and crime for social support than children of single parents.
- Less premarital sex. One study found that girls from two-parent homes are less likely to experiment with premarital sex than girls from single-parent homes.
- Stronger parent-child emotional bonds. Emotional ties between parents and children are stronger in married homes. Adult children raised by both a mother and father rate their relationship with their parents higher than those from divorced or unwed families. A healthy parent-child bond helps children work hard, follow rules, and stay out of trouble.
- Better physical and emotional health. Even a child's physical and emotional health benefit from living with both parents. Married homes can provide more supervision, which prevents accidents. Children in two-parent homes avoid the sadness, tension, anxiety, depression, and disruptive behavior that many children of divorced parents experience.
- Less abuse. Children living with both biological parents are at lower risk for being abused. Stepfathers and boyfriends abuse children at far higher rates than biological fathers. Research has shown that without the biological tie between father and child, men are more likely to take out their aggression on children.
- Less poverty. Children of two-parent families are largely protected from poverty and the many disadvantages that it brings, such as high levels of stress, poor health, low academic achievement, and a weak social support system.



### People who marry young are happier, but those who marry later earn more

"Knot Yet", the study Wilcox helped lead, has some interesting findings in this regard. He finds that self-reported happiness with one's marriage is highest for those who marry in their mid-20s, compared to those who do it in their late teens or early 20s or who wait until their late 20s or early 30s.

Holding partner quality equal, Wilcox argues, it still depends. "If your goal is to maximize your professional and financial accomplishment, then there's no question that getting married later is the answer for you," he says. "But if you have a more traditional orientation in terms of having kids or being religious, then getting married and having kids in your 20s is a good bet."

