

Getting it together

Emptying nest is not easy

Why is it so difficult for some young adults to leave home and become independent of their parents?

It's not supposed to be difficult. At least, no more difficult than cutting your first teeth, the first day of school, or your first love. It's just supposed to be another smooth transition that goes with growing up.

A teenager reaches the age of adulthood and graduates from high school and childhood. Then, whether he goes to college or gets a job, he becomes increasingly self-reliant. He replaces the support system of his parents' home with his own resources. He learns to support his own financial needs, to find non-parental ways of taking care of himself emotionally and socially.

With a sigh of relief, supposedly, the parents of the new adult welcome their retirement from parenting. They move smoothly from being a caretaker, a guide, and a policeman and assume the role of friend with their adult offspring.

A nice, logical fantasy, but rarely is growing up so smooth.

THE NOT-SO-SMOOTH truth of the situation is probably a lot closer to the following. Your young adult daughter, having reached the age of emancipation, begins to make some self-reliant motions.

But, if you look closely, you'll recognize that her heart isn't really in her efforts. She tries to find a job, but she can't find one that really suits her. There's not enough pay. The work is too menial or boring. Or it's just too difficult for her. So she never really gets started in the work world.

Meanwhile, she is having similar bad luck in looking for a place to live. She can't find one that she likes in the

range she can afford. And, on top of all this, her love life is far from successful.

Simultaneously, the transition is not going smoothly on the home front either. Mom and Dad are finding that it's not so easy to retire from the parenting job. Everybody knows that parents are supposed to let their young adults go at this point. But how do you do that?

How do you let your daughter go when she consistently falls on her face as a clumsy new adult? How do you let your daughter go when being her mother was the most meaningful endeavor of your life?

And so it's not surprising when daughter cries for help by getting fired, or getting pregnant, or failing in college, or getting divorced and Mom and Dad charge to the rescue.

WHEN YOU THINK about it, it's not clear who is rescuing whom. But the question still remains—why is this emancipation crisis more of a problem for some families than for others?

For me, this is easiest to understand when I think of crossing a stream on a string of boulders. Progress requires that I move from the rock I'm on to the next rock in line. It means leaving the familiar boulder that has proven that it can hold me and placing my weight on the unknown ahead.

Will I do it? That depends on whether I believe that next rock will hold me safely.

Moving ahead, from the secure and familiar to the unknown future, is an act of faith. It's an affirmation of confidence and positive expectation. And, without that confidence, you get stuck in the middle of the stream.

Becoming an emancipated adult requires the confidence that you'll be just as happy and secure on that rock as you were on the boulder of your childhood. The greater the dis-

By
BOB TRENZ,
Ph.D.



crepancy between how content you were at home and how content you expect to be on your own, the harder it will be to step into self-reliant adulthood.

ACTUALLY, this principle applies to everyone as we make the developmental steps in our lives. But there are some factors which determine just how hard this growing-up movement will be.

One such factor occurs when a child has been raised by "professional parents." These are people, usually mothers, who have taken the job of parenting so seriously and so full-time that they provided their children with a rich, uninterrupted flow of parenting. So comprehensive was their care that they took care of every detail, leaving few moments of frustration and little opportunity for their kids to take care of their own needs.

Leaving the nest for these families is, therefore, a great loss to mother as well as to the young adult. How do you tell your mother that she's fired?

Similarly, leaving home is extra difficult for the children of relatively affluent families. While in their parents' care, there was an abundance of resources. Often there is the use of a free car, a large home, and lots of material benefits provided by parents

who want their family to have the best.

So leaving the nest means leaving a life style supported by the income of a family who has "made it" and moving to the life style of a brand new career. For many new adults, that's a hard act to follow.

THEN THERE IS the child who never learned to cope with the challenges of adult independence. He never had to work, and so he didn't. He never had to make important decisions, and so he didn't. He never had to cope with challenging social situations, and so he didn't. A nice, comfortable childhood. But it's also a prescription for a helpless, catastrophic adulthood.

And, finally, consider the circumstances of the youngest child. All three of these difficult factors combine as a troublesome trio for the last bird to leave the nest. For the parents who have derived most of the meaning and joy of their lives from their children, the emancipation of the youngest child is the real pink-slip of their parenting career.

No child has had it so good as the youngest. Father's career has become most established and there are lots of material benefits available that weren't around for the older kids. After there is little reason for the "baby of the family" to take on responsibilities when there are so many older people around to do the jobs.

A deadly combination of all the things that make it so hard to grow up. So it isn't surprising that the crisis of becoming a new adult is often the worst for the youngest.

Bob Trenz is a psychologist and marriage counselor in Rochester. Comments for Dr. Trenz may be sent to P.O. Box 64, Rochester 48063.

Thursday, January 26, 1978

(O)SB

STOREWIDE WINTER SALE

15% to 50% off CONTEMPORARY SCANDINAVIAN & DOMESTIC FURNITURE INCLUDING SPECIAL ORDERS!

We've lowered the prices - but not our standards. You can purchase the same outstanding excellence, the same fine teak and rosewood, the same incomparable contemporary designs. Everything is priced for savings - freestanding wall units, elegant dining sets, chairs with flared plush sofas and all accessories. See for yourself and if what you want is not actually here, save 15% to 20% on special orders!

SHOP AT HOME FOR SPECIAL ORDERS Our colorful new 48 page catalog includes sale prices. Phone or mail us your request and we'll mail it right to your door for \$1.50!

WAREHOUSE PRICING adds no more savings. Ask about it!

brusch interiors

Scandinavian Village - 3305 Orchard Lake Road 14 miles north of Maple, 625-0031 Open daily 10 to 5:30. Monday, Thursday & Friday till 9 Sunday 12 to 5. BankAmericard - Master Charge

Retirement planning in OU course

An active retirement can be a very satisfying time of one's life, according to Oakland University's Continuum Center, which offers a program on pre-retirement planning in Madison Heights starting Feb. 2.

The five-session program will be held from 7:30-9:30 p.m., Thursdays, from Feb. 2 through March 2 at the Sigma School, 2800 Alden in Madison Heights. The program is being co-sponsored by Madison Heights Continuing Education Department.

The program is free, except for a \$5 materials charge because of funding from the Administration on Aging. It will be led by Continuum Center Counselor Adele Weaver of West Bloomfield. The Older Adult Department of the Continuum Center won an innovative program award for its programs in 1977 from the National University Extension Association.

According to Betty White, project coordinator of the older adult department, "many people are nervous about retirement ahead of time. Some people take our career programs without ever admitting to themselves that they are really exploring early retirement."

For more information on Pre-retirement Planning, contact the Continuum Center at Oakland University in Rochester or telephone 377-3333. Advance registration is requested.

Village Club begins history series

Faculty members from three universities will participate in the 17th annual History-in-the-Making Lecture Series to be held starting Thursday at the Village Women's Club, 190 Long Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills.

The theme is "Africa: Strategies of Development in Today's World" with a focus on Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rhodesia, and South Africa.

The series will be held 10-11:30 a.m. six Thursdays through March 4. Sponsors are Oakland University and the Village Women's Club.

Among the speakers are James D. Graham, associate professor of history at Oakland University; G.N. Uzoigwe, professor of history; Kenneth H. Shapiro, assistant professor of resource economics; Mdirauri Ndiransanga, assistant professor of economics, and Joe Samoff, professor of political science, all of University of Michigan; and Michael Bratton, professor of political science, Michigan State University.

The program is open to all interested persons at a cost of \$25 for a Women's Club member and \$50 for non-members. Further information can be obtained by calling the Oakland University Conference Department at 377-3272 or Mrs. Charles J. Meske at 644-6298.

BUY!

COOKS IN ONLY 7 MINUTES

Look for local team coverage in your hometown newspaper

ALL CROSS COUNTRY SKI EQUIPMENT ON SALE NOW!

Bavarian Village

CROSS COUNTRY SKI SPECIALISTS

- BLOOMFIELD HILLS: 2540 Woodward at Square Lake Rd. 338-0882
- BIRMINGHAM: 101 Townsend across from Hughes-Harbor 844-9550
- MT. CLEMENS: 1216 S. Gratiot 1/2 mile N. of 16 Mile 443-2020
- LATHROP VILLAGE: 2845 Southfield south of 12 Mile 558-2260
- LIVONIA/REDFORD: 14211 Telegraph at Jetties Hwy. 534-8250
- EAST DETROIT: 23261 Kelly Rd. between 8 & 9 MI. 778-7020

OPEN DAILY TUE 9 - SAT. 10-5:30 - CLOSED SUNDAY

REAL ESTATE PRE-LICENSE CLASSES STARTING SOON

Call our Career Counselor at

851-1900

Real Estate One.

FINAL CLEARANCE!

SALE SAVE

VALUES UP TO \$45.00 NOW \$22.00 2 PAIRS \$28.00
VALUES UP TO \$33.00 NOW \$16.00 2 PAIRS \$22.00

Pappagallo

148 PIERCE ST. BIRMINGHAM 642-5550

From Our New *Jamiso* collection

rich, green & white print polyester \$78.

The shops of **Walton-Pierce**

16218 Kierchell • Grand Falls
-2661 Somerset Mall • Troy

GORMAN'S GORMAN'S

20045 Telegraph Road
Southfield, Mich. 48066

Larry Klein

353-0880