

Having Trouble Son?

"Having trouble, Son?" The father displays a good-natured "gotcha" smile as he teases his grown son regarding the challenge of raising his own teenage children in a dangerous and complex world. There is a sense of poetic justice in the air.

Raising a teenager is tough work. Adolescence is characterized by a growing desire for independence ...an essential prerequisite for entry into the adult world. This process is further complicated by the media: music, movies, television and humor. These are the purveyors of youth culture whose participants acquire their status, wealth and power by fanning the flames that transform the natural drive for independence into unnatural and destructive rebellion.

Is it any wonder that young parents agonize over the uncertainty and conflict involved in guiding their children through the teenage years? The transition is necessary but the hazards are many and the consequences severe. And teenagers aren't known for their appreciation for discipline, no matter how fair and loving it may be. Parents want to know, "What happened to my loving, cooperative child?" They ask the question, "Will it ever be the same again?"

My point? The teasing, good natured exchange I first described between the father and his son speaks to the hope for a better future. The tension of adolescent rebellion has been replaced by a comfortable adult to adult relationship. The bond has been restored. The relationship... healed. I've seen it happen over and over again. The relationship that seemed so broken is made whole once again.

Take courage when your pleasant world is disrupted by the tension of the teenage years. I've observed the process many times. The final chapter hasn't been written. Time and maturity will make the difference.