

Parents vs teenagers — an ongoing crisis

Our parents: at some point in their life, they decided to have children. Lovely little bundles of joy, all bright eyes and giggles, cuddles and warmth. So much to learn, so much to laugh and smile about. That's what they signed up for when they decided to have children.

Diapers, sleepless nights, shit everywhere, puke and spit on all your clothes. That's not the right toy, not the right blanket, too hot, too cold, I'm tired, I've wet myself. It all sounds like screaming. That's what they signed up for when they decided to have children.

The children are six now, they've learned to walk and talk and sing and draw. It's the first day of school. How adorable they all look, smartly dressed and head held high as they enter the everyday routine which marks each member of society. You're gonna do great, kid! That's what they signed up for when they decided to have children.

Broken plates and fighting amongst siblings, stubbornness and snotty noses, high-pitched banter and pathetic jokes. That's what they signed up for when they decided to have children.

But everything is fine. The parents, they have the perfect job, the perfect partner, the perfect children. Perfect family, perfect holiday, perfect house. Perfect life.

But fuck.

Nobody signed up for having teenagers. Because the soft-faced children with shiny hair and wide eyes now think for themselves, they see things they were "too young to understand" before, they realise how screwed up the world is, and that it will never be okay. Some don't. One can't force them to. They realise how fucked up you are, too, and they'll point it out to you. It's you who decides not to listen. It's you who wishes they were still the little angels you raised, but the world is cruel to angels and now the teenager who lives at the end of the hall no longer thinks it's normal, and most certainly no longer bears it. Corrupted purity and vulgar innocence; you've ruined us! Shave your armpits, cover your legs and your shoulders, close your legs, sit up straight, go say Hi, stop playing with that, it's for girls.

The sweet little children in fairy costumes and colourful raincoats now dress themselves wear makeup and have long hair and short hair, colourful hair, hide it all, messily and sloppily, or fabulously, revealing or baggy, colourful, monochrome, each to themselves. But parents, they wish they would still wear those pretty little outfits they laid out for them. You should wear more colour, you should cover up more, you look like a slut, it's an invitation, show yourself more, stop hiding in those ridiculous hoodies, don't wear that shirt, it looks ridiculous on you. Cut your hair, grow it out, why did you put that colour in? You look like a traffic light.

Those lovable, delightful children singing nursery rhymes in the car have now discovered their own music, Eminem, Nirvana, BTS, Taylor Swift, My Chemical Romance, Halsey, Black Pink, Melanie Martinez, Ed Sheeran, Green Day, you name it. Their music is angry, sad, excited, it expresses their feelings, each to themselves. But parents, they wish they'd turn it down and listen to something pleasant and not so disruptive. That music, it just doesn't suit you. You should listen to something calmer, something more girly, something more manly.

Those simple-minded, gullible children are now finding themselves. Some people like girls, some people like boys, some like both, some don't like anyone romantically. Some enjoy sex, some don't. Some question their gender, some transition, everyone likes to experiment. But don't you wish your son would just wear that suit like he was told, and stop painting his nails and asking you to call

him, what was it, Scarlett? Don't you wish your daughter would just go out with the neighbour's son, the two got on so well when they were younger, and stop seeing that awful, short-haired girl? What the hell is non-binary, and what's the big deal in calling that hippie a fag? There's never been a bigger homo, did you see how he was walking? Why are you getting angry at me? You're too sensitive. That wasn't what you signed up for when you decided to have children, was it?

Don't waste your potential. A B is okay, I suppose, but you should be getting A's. Oh you got an A? That's what I expected. Go to swimming practise or I'll take those damn headphone off you for the week. Get up early, go to bed early, brush your hair, cut it off, you look awful, show your elders some respect, don't answer back, tell me what you're thinking, look at me, stop crying, you're being childish, you'll never be a man, it wasn't that bad, don't smoke, don't drink, weed will kill you, tell me where you're going and who you're going with, be back at seven, earn your own money, be thankful, you'll end up lonely, this is what you want, this is what's best for you.

Enough.

Dear parents, teenagers know the effort you make. We also see the mistakes you make. So maybe, just maybe, overlook your pride and authority and just listen to what we have to say. We know what's good for us, too.