own. Her view was that if at the age of 11 her daughter could not get to school and back by herself, she would think there was something wrong with her! Some of the other parents agreed with this statement while others, myself included, found it incredibly callous and were rather shocked as we felt that eleven was too young to let them walk around the streets of London or take public transport. Their view was it would make their children independent and ours was that we were trying to keep ours safe. I guess there is no right or wrong -- different parents look at the same thing with different perspectives.

It is only now when my daughter is almost fifteen that she comes home from school by herself a couple of days a week. After much debate, we let our 12 year old son walk with his friends from one of their houses to another. This nearly changed a few weeks ago when I was chatting with my kids and my son told me about an incident where two of his friends were mugged by two men while walking from one of their houses to the newsagent. The frightening thing is that it was a perfectly safe residential area the boys were in and not a particularly secluded road either. The men told the boys to hand over their mobile phones and iPods. As the boys were only 12 years old, they were naturally terrified and did not try to run or pretend they had nothing in their pockets which in incidents such as this is actually a sensible thing to do. Luckily they were allowed to go once they had emptied their pockets. Before I had time to voice my horror at this story, my eldest daughter interjected that these muggings seemed to be becoming more and more common as one of her friends had had a similar experience. In the case of her friend, they had been walking down a main high street when they were cornered by one just one man. In this instance too, the man managed to intimidate the kids into handing over everything they had and then let them go. My initial instinct was to tell them they were never going to be allowed to venture out of the house without one of us until they reached the ripe old age of thirty! However I have relented and reduced the age to twenty-five. See I can be reasonable.

Parenthood is truly a rollercoaster ride and I for one seem to be playing it by ear and hoping that I am doing a relatively good job -- only time will tell. As parents we make choices, which we feel are the right ones for our children, and will be in their best interests and hope that our children turn out to be happy, healthy, well adjusted people.

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