

THE SPIRAL INTO TEENAGEHOOD

YOU ARE NO LONGER
COOL, DAD!

AND MOM, YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND ME!



SHARIEZ

One of my mother's favourite things was to scare every new mother by telling them what a monster their new born would turn into during puberty and point to me as evidence. Looking back, I don't blame her, considering the inane antics I used to pull. Frances E. Jensen, a neurologist from the University of Pennsylvania having gotten fed up of her very own teenage son, decided to delve into our complex minds. She came out battered and bruised but victorious, publishing her book "The Teenage Brain."

This research was unique in several ways; while most studies conducted on teenagers were focused on the psychological aspect, Jensen's work featured only the inner neurological sciences behind a teenagers brain. It went on to prove how in some instances a teenager's brain is wired to do crazy things because they simply can't think about doing it in a logical manner.

See every little mind boggling thing that a teenager does is related to their brain. Your kid isn't talking to you and repeatedly shuts the door in your face in a hissy fit? They are currently on a journey of self-

discovery and their mind is mostly a one track deal so cutting ties and ignoring parents is just a result of them being unable to compartmentalise. Teenagers also respond poorly to authority figures and lash out as a result, the scientific aspect of this being that they do not have full access to their frontal lobe which is responsible for our personality and ability to communicate. They do not possess the tact or logic that adults have.

Several other quirks that are common with teenagers also have a scientific explanation. Most mammals have a shift in their sleeping patterns during their youth. So from puberty to adulthood the circadian clock, which in layman's terms, is your body's clock, programs teens to wake up three to four hours later than their older counterparts. Next time your kid falls asleep on a test, remember this fact seeing how it is not entirely their fault.

Perhaps the most important fact about teenage brains is that they thrive on risks. As mentioned before, they do not have complete access to their frontal lobe, which in turn makes them brash and

impulsive. While adults weigh the consequences before entering a high risk situation, teens are more of a gung ho type. They go head first into the situation without any regard for the negative repercussions. This is why this age is dangerous. Teens are constantly experimenting, so they are most susceptible to drugs and other harmful activities.

The 21st century brought with it a new set of challenges, nowhere before has the world been so connected and globalised. The digital world has put up their lives on a pedestal. Teens strive for acceptance from their peers not their parents. Pictures and personal details are put up for likes. And if they don't get the attention they crave their self-esteem might suffer. Things like excessively playing video games are very common amongst them. Gaming provides a stimulation that greatly attracts teens. Adults who have full access to their frontal lobes can do even the most stimulating things in moderation. While teens take the good things to such an extreme that it ends up doing the complete opposite of what it is supposed to do.

Parents this is the part that will be helpful for your tiring journey. The late teens is when the brain begins to put up the finishing touches and that is when they can be affected by severe mental disorders which manifest in the frontal lobe. Pay very close attention to your child. This is much different than taking care of your crying baby. The signs of something sinister are usually silent; parents very often don't realise until it is too late. If your kid is unnaturally cut off, suddenly losing or gaining weight or spending most of their day stuck in front of a screen, then it's time to interfere. Panic attacks and other stress related disorders, psychotic disorders or severe depression are the common suspects when it comes to unnatural behaviors.

For all the teenagers reading this, you now have a valid excuse. Parents you now know their new excuse. Let the fireworks begin!

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By Daneesha Khan