

# NERDS, GEEKS AND POPULARITY

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What would you do if you heard a friend say something like the following? “I just don’t know what to do. Blake was an excellent student for so long and now he seems to be more interested in girls. He worries about what others think about him and pays less attention to us.”

You would probably not be alone if you admitted that at least one of your children provided you with a similar experience. We are not alone in a lot of the episodes and escapades teenagers inflict on themselves and their parents. Teenagers over the last few thousand years probably have meted out heartaches to their parents. Why would an intelligent, previously hard-working child suddenly become morose, slacken in their school work, bring home unsatisfactory grades, want to wear funny clothes, do outlandish things, want to spend more time away from home and have something opposing to say to every statement you make?

It’s called growing up. I’m not suggesting that these things are acceptable at all. What is occurring is a transitioning from child to young adult, like a butterfly metamorphosing. Hormones rage and hurtle themselves around your child’s body. There’s a serious tugging away from the apron strings that once held in check this previously nice, compliant child. Technology and the media don’t help in this domain, providing instant, mind-boggling and erotic scenes for your child’s eyes to feast on. It’s a confusing time, and if you think we had it bad growing up, today’s teens have to cope with far more than we could imagine.

School life has changed so much. No longer is it cool, if you want to be cool, to work hard and receive top grades. Sure, there are young people who still weather peer pressure and become successful, but it takes a lot of strength of character and a gift to stand up against the crowd. It means coping with ridicule and being willing to wear the label, ‘nerd’ and ‘geek’. It means putting aside one’s desire to be high on the popularity scales. There is soooo much peer pressure to be like everyone else. Wouldn’t it be great if we were able to tip the scales and have everyone trying to be like the successful kids?

How can you as a parent try to assure that your child will be one that weathers the storm and stands strong against the norm in their school? Decide on a set of powerful values you wish your family to live by. Write them down and train your child to live by them. The Bible says in Proverbs 22:6, “Train children how to live right, and when they are old, they will not change.” Encourage him in his faith and be a living example as a parent. These things will certainly help. I love the verse in Jeremiah 29:11 that says, “I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you, says the Lord. I will give you hope and a good future.” If you and your children can find out your purposes for being here and get into doing that, the future will be exciting and nothing will get in the way.

Keep your communication lines open and encourage your child from an early age to share their thoughts and emotions with you. Take an active interest in their school life and schoolwork while encouraging them when you see them standing firm and making good choices. Have family meetings and openly discuss the pressures they face at school, and in their relationships. Just remember that each of us has a free will and sometimes our child may make a poor choice and have to live with the consequences of that decision. Don't try to bail them out. Discuss the issue and do all you can to teach and encourage responsibility. This leads to maturity. Bailing them out of poor choices creates dependence and entitlement. There are no guarantees when we raise a child, as we see in the parable of the prodigal son, but the great lesson learned was that he did return finally to what he knew and was taught.

Along with the Lord try to be your child's hero and they will be more inclined to achieve, become successful and be a delight to you.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at [sally@forefrontfamilies.org](mailto:sally@forefrontfamilies.org). We invite you to also check out our website at [www.forefrontfamilies.org](http://www.forefrontfamilies.org) and our blog site at [www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com](http://www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com) for further assistance.