

CPYU PARENT PAGE

THE CENTER FOR PARENT/YOUTH
UNDERSTANDING

Helping **parents** understand **teenagers** and their world

YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

“The video was to represent the young woman today – it’s not the traditional woman anymore – and not the specifics of ‘Am I gay? Am I straight? Am I bi?’ I’m making the rules for myself, and I don’t have to be stuck down to one label.”

Actress and singer Keke Palmer in response to her steamy music video for the song “I Don’t Belong To You” and on why she chooses not to label her sexuality, *PEOPLE*, Dec. 16, 2015



HAPPY NEW BODY

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



January brings the start of a new year. I want to challenge you to use the occasion of calendar newness to think about the physical newness teenagers face as their bodies transition from childhood into adulthood. What parents witness as a metamorphosis is actually the God-ordained physical transition that begins as the body produces and secretes hormones that lead to the onset of puberty. The physical growth and development that follows is rapid, and can be confusing and frightening for both child and parent! And consider this: back in the nineteenth century, the average age for the onset of puberty was 17. Today, it’s happening at an average age of 12!

What makes this newness so difficult for kids is that the media is pounding them with thousands of images daily, each one contributing to a set of appearance standards that become the benchmark for being normal, acceptable, likeable, and lovable. . . all of which are desires that peak at the same time all these physical changes are taking place! Parents can and must help kids navigate this confusing new transition of rapid physical growth by playing the following roles:

Be sensitive and affirming as your teen’s body changes. Our children need parents who will openly explain and discuss what is happening to their bodies. Most of these changes occur during the middle school years, when group acceptance is of the utmost importance and when peers – because of their own impulsivity and insecurities – tend to be most cruel and insensitive. A loving and sensitive parent can serve as a buffer in the midst of the type of ridicule that could scar a child’s self-image for life. While dealing with these pressures will still be difficult for your

child, your positive input will serve to build resiliency into your teen.

Offer your teen a godly perspective on the changes that are taking place. In addition to modeling the unconditional love and acceptance of Christ during the physically awkward years, Mom and Dad should temper the social pressure to be preoccupied with outward appearance. Take the time to teach your children about the inward qualities of godliness. Be sure you provide an example void of obsession over your own appearance. It’s important to be about the business of developing your own inward character in a Godly direction. You too, are who you are, not what you look like.

Understand the sexual temptation your teen faces. In centuries past, when puberty arrived at a later age and marriages took place when children were younger, premarital sexual temptation was present but not as intense. Kids were able to answer the pressure with some resilience thanks to a commonly-held understanding of sexual parameters, right and wrong, and the expectations of society-at-large. The ever-widening gap between sexual maturity and age of marriage has made it difficult for our kids. We must live and promote a biblical sexual ethic so that they might experience the God-given gift of sexuality in all of its glorious and enjoyable fullness, in the context of a monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

Ongoing open communication with your kids about their new bodies will not only temper the culture’s message with Scriptural truth, but it will strengthen your relationship with your child. ✱

Spare-Time Activities of Generation Z

Percentage of 15-20 year-olds who selected various activities as one of their "top 3."
Source: Nielsen



1. Listen to music - 37%
2. Read - 27%
3. Watch TV - 23%
4. Connect with loved ones - 19%
5. Exercise - 18%
6. Play online games - 17%
7. Read/review social media - 17%
8. Play video games - 16%
9. Travel - 13%
10. Shop online - 11%
11. Eat - 11%
12. Arts and crafts - 8%
13. Cook - 8%



QUICK STATS

9.5% of U.S. adults used marijuana in 2013 and 58% of Americans now favor the legalization of cannabis.

(National Institutes of Health and Gallup)

From 2014 to 2015, poison control centers in the U.S. experienced a 229% increase in calls related to the use of synthetic marijuana.

(Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University)

FROM THE NEWS:

THE ROLE OF CREATIVITY

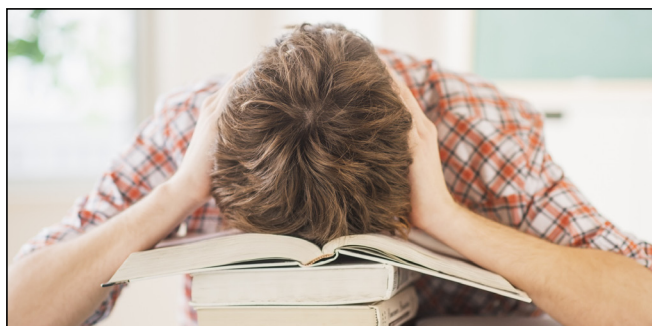
A couple months ago, CNBC ran an evening special report on how the pop singer known as Pitbull has achieved his fame and fortune. In fact, the special report was titled, "Pitbull: Fame and Fortune." In the show, the singer explains rather honestly that the blueprint for success in today's music industry is "ninety percent business" and "ten percent talent." Parents and youth workers, this is a reality we must talk about with our kids. Not only should we teach them to take note of how marketing efforts are used to get them to spend their money on music that lacks creativity, but we should talk about the role of creativity in God's plan for humanity. In the first chapters of Genesis, we read that God created humankind in His image. To be made in God's image means that we have been given the ability to create. In fact, all the good things God created have been given to us to in turn use to make things, including music. Teach your kids to glorify God by using their creative gifts to create with excellence.

TRENDS: PARENTS PROVIDING ALCOHOL

Some of the most absurd and foolish parenting stories CPYU hears are those about parents who provide alcohol and a place to drink for their own underage teenagers and their friends. Many parents justify this approach to parenting by embracing the faulty conclusion that kids are going to drink

anyway. Sometimes these parents believe they are doing kids a favor by confining the kids for a safe drinking experience. This is dead-wrong. On the one-hand, you are encouraging and teaching kids to skirt and break the law. In addition, you are teaching kids that drinking is a necessary and expected part of life if you are hoping

to have fun. Perhaps most risky, is the fact that you could be triggering a life-long alcohol problem in a kid who is predisposed to alcoholism. Finally, it is now a documented fact that alcohol consumption by teens permanently alters the structure and function of the brain. Parents, please don't choose to go down this ridiculous and dangerous road.



LATEST RESEARCH: TEENS AND SCHOOL

A recent survey of 22,000 high school students from across the United States set out to discover what our kids are feeling during the hours they are in school. Students were asked to fill words of their own choosing into three blank spaces that followed the open-

ended question, "How do you currently feel in school?" Eight of the top ten responses were negative. 39% of students said they feel "tired." In second place was "stressed," with 29% of the students choosing that word. And finally, 26% of the respondents chose the

word "bored." With the top three most mentioned responses being "tired," "stressed," and "bored," we need to consider how we might be putting pressure on our kids, along with how we can relieve any undue pressure. As Christian parents, we must expect our kids to do their best in school, rather than some socially-defined best. Let's help our kids have a healthy school experience.

COLLEGE TRANSITION INITIATIVE

a resource of CPYU

www.CollegeTransitionInitiative.com



The Caffeine Kick

by Walt Mueller



Way back in the late 1970s, one of my college roommates convinced me to get an edge in preparation for a big exam, by taking caffeine in pill form. Poor planning had left me a bit behind in my studying, and I needed to bear down and get ready for my final. The product was known as NoDoz and it was a popular over-the-counter pill-form stimulant used to pull all-nighters among college kids. I tried it once and vowed never to do it again, knowing that better preparation and planning on my part would help me avoid the disruption of my much-needed sleep patterns. What I was experiencing was the effects of a central nervous system stimulant.

In today's world, a growing number of teenagers and college students are ingesting powdered caffeine in an effort to boost energy, improve their athletic performance, elevate their mood, and stay awake in order to study. Because of this, medical experts are warning kids of the dangers, including an increased heart rate and even cardiac arrest. Some kids have died as a result of caffeine powder overdose.

The sale of caffeine powder is unregulated. It's easily secured in stores and from online vendors. A 100-gram package costs about \$10 and contains as much caffeine as 3,000 cans of Coke. Just 2.7 grams of the powder is equivalent to 28 cups of coffee, or 79 cans of caffeinated soda. Ten grams – about a tablespoon – is a lethal dose for an adult. Parents, warn your kids about the dangers.

Host a Seminar

Would your church be interested in hosting a

Tackling the TOUGH STUFF

Seminar?

Presented by Walt Mueller and Marv Penner, this seminar will tackle the tough teen issues of **suicide, depression, self-injury, narcissism and pornography.**

Learn more about hosting at www.cpyu.org/toughstuff.

FROM THE WORD

As we begin another new year, you most likely have high hopes for the next twelve months. Most people desire to put aside, forget, and move on from the difficult realities of life they've faced during the last year. That's not at all unusual. In fact, this desire for things to be right actually points to the fact that we were made for something better. That "something better" is what existed when God created our first parents and placed them in the Garden. Things were the way they were supposed to be. No pain. No heartache. No sickness. No tears. No death.

**"LOOK! I AM MAKING
EVERYTHING NEW."
REVELATION 21:5
(THE MESSAGE)**

Isn't that really what we hope for at the beginning of every new year?

For those who are committed followers of Jesus Christ, this reality that we all long for *will* one day be realized. In Revelation 21:5, God pulls back the curtain on our future and tells us to "Look! I am making everything new" (*The Message*). We are told that we can look forward to a new heaven and a new earth where things will be the way they are supposed to be. No more pain, heartache, sickness, tears, or death! The brokenness and suffering we are sure to once again experience this year will finally be gone.

Your longing points to the fact that you were made to be in a relationship with God. Follow Jesus and hope will be yours. As God helps you navigate anything difficult that might come your way in 2016, rest assured that there is a day coming when "gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away" (Isaiah 35:10).

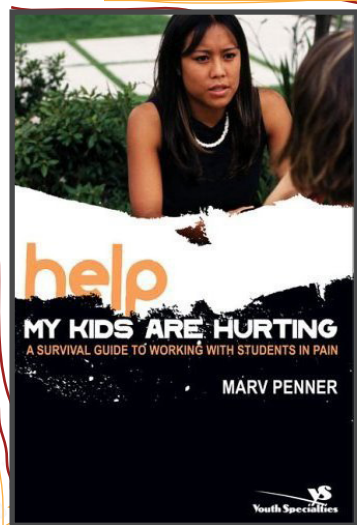
HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

WHAT TO DO - AND WHAT NOT TO DO - WHEN KIDS ARE IN PAIN

You know your students are vulnerable to all sorts of hurts. Whether they're family problems, depression, bullying, loneliness, or other issues among the myriad of emotional difficulties adolescents face, you know they're in pain - and you want to help. But how can you help them if you don't know how?

Some of the critical topics covered in Dr. Marv Penner's book *Help! My Kids Are Hurting: A Survival Guide to Working With Students In Pain* include identifying your helping style and why adolescence is such an intense time.

This book is a great introduction to ways to bring compassion and care to your kids and your ministry.



Available in the
CPYU Resource Center at
www.cpyuresourcecenter.org.



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