

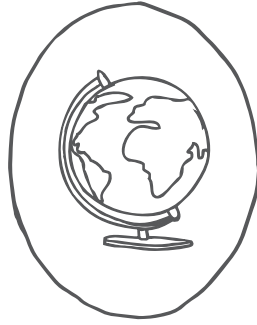
18 PLUS

PARENTING YOUR
EMERGING
ADULT



FREE SAMPLE

STEVEN ARGUE - KARA POWELL



YOU PARENTED YOUR CHILD
FOR APPROXIMATELY
936 WEEKS FROM
THE DAY THEY WERE BORN
UNTIL NOW.
WELCOME TO WEEK 937
AND BEYOND.



**"TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS
(OR MAYBE WEEKS)
THAT WE MAY GAIN A HEART OF WISDOM."**

PSALM 90:12

18 PLUS

PARENTING YOUR EMERGING ADULT

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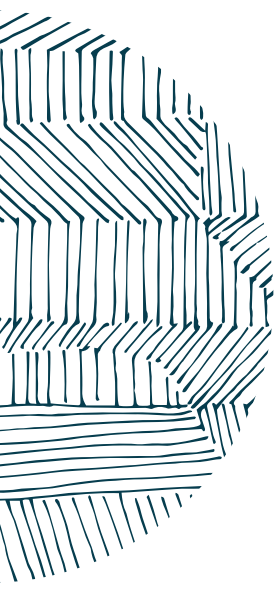
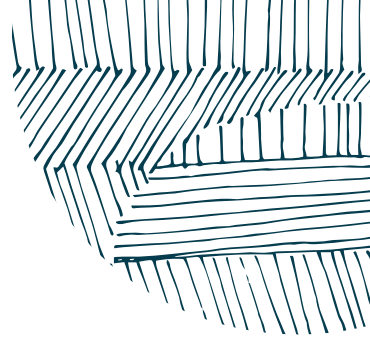
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EVERY PHASE IS A
TIMEFRAME
IN A PERSON'S LIFE
WHEN YOU CAN
LEVERAGE
DISTINCTIVE
OPPORTUNITIES
TO INFLUENCE
THEIR

future.



18 PLUS

THE PHASE WHEN
YOUR EMERGING
ADULT PULLS AWAY
MORE, NEEDS YOU
AGAIN, DOES THINGS
FOR THE FIRST TIME
AND YOU BOTH
KEEP ASKING,

"What now?"



THIS IS THE YEAR YOU HAVE IMAGINED FOR EIGHTEEN YEARS

You may be surprised how loud the emptiness sounds when someone so familiar in your world suddenly disappears. Of course, you may also rediscover a little personal freedom of your own. What do you mean there's no game to attend, no form to sign, no forgotten books to take to the school at the last minute? And how did the milk not get consumed before it expired?

THEY MAY COST YOU MORE EVEN THOUGH YOU SEE THEM LESS

Even if they aren't physically present, their presence may still be felt—especially in your bank account. Whether you are helping fund their continued education or making a deposit for their first apartment, there's a good chance you haven't stopped paying for some expenses in their world. They may also cost you some unpredictable time as well. You never know when they may call looking for advice, affirmation, or maybe just a reminder of home.

GIVE ADVICE WHEN THEY ASK FOR IT

The good news is that every 18 and 19-year-old knows what they want and has a precise plan for their life. Wait? That's not true? They might amaze you with all they can do on their own, but there's also still a lot left to figure out. Where will they live? Will they get married? What kind of work will ultimately bring them fulfillment? They want your advice, but only in small doses, and only when they ask for it. This is a season to re-engage your child in a new way, not as a parent but more as a peer as you transition your relationship for the future.



Today's emerging adults face a world that is more complicated, more competitive, requires more preparation, and offers more options. What your son or daughter is navigating—and the support they need from you along the way—is likely different than you think. No matter what television and movies suggest, now is *not* the time to shift to “autopilot parenting.” It's more like ready-at-any-moment's-notice parenting. You never know when they may call (or, okay, text) looking for advice on how to fix . . .

A car

A failing grade

An overdrawn checking account

A sticky work situation

A broken heart

And in those moments? They'll need you.

In other moments, they'll need affirmation, encouragement, someone to believe in them, or a reminder of home. Sometimes they'll tell you what they need. Other times, you'll have to figure it out on your own. Either way, parenting isn't over. Not by a long shot. You've just entered a new phase. Parenting will look a lot different now. And just like when . . .

your two-year-old turned three

your fifth grader became a sixth grader

your middle schooler started high school . . .

the most important thing is that you still show up.

18 PLUS THE BEST PHASE

EMERGING ADULTHOOD IS THE BEST PHASE

This is the moment when your 936-week investment begins to pay off as you watch your teenager emerge as a young adult. Chances are your kid is making some of their first post-high-school choices. Maybe they're pursuing a degree. Maybe they've landed a full-time job. Maybe they've joined the military. But no matter if they're moving out of the house or into your basement, your kid is now more responsible for their friendships, romantic interests, careers, and spirituality than ever before. And because of your guidance and support, they're (mostly) ready for it! This season of parenting can be both exciting and hopeful as you watch your son or daughter make decisions that will set the trajectory of their future.¹

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS “EMERGING”?

Your kid probably doesn't think of themselves as “emerging.” They may try to convince you (and themselves) that they've got this, or that they're ready. (So you've heard. A few times.) Yet, they'll also admit that stepping out on their own is scary, uncertain, and ill-defined. They may be clear on who they're not anymore but still grappling with who they are becoming. That's why we use the word “emerging” to describe this specific phase of your kid's life. It's an in-between season. High school is in the rearview mirror. Major milestones of adulthood—like marriage, family, and career—are still on the horizon. So even though your kid is legally considered an adult, you know (and they really know) they aren't quite finished growing and don't have it all figured out yet.

In other words, they still need you.

YOU'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE, BUT THIS FEELS (AND IS) DIFFERENT

The truth is, this isn't the first time your kid has "emerged" as someone new. New phases tend to cause a double-whammy for parents: We measure our kid's progress so far, while amplifying our own anxieties about this new, unexplored season. So during a time of change, we may attempt to "help" in two ways. First, we try to take control to ensure that our kids (and we) make it through the transition. But continually taking control has diminishing returns over the course of your kid's life. What worked when they were in preschool doesn't, of course, work when they're 13. Now that they're on the verge of adulthood, your attempts at control will almost always land flat.

The second way we "help" is by assuming that their post-high school transition will look just like ours did. The reality is that it will be strikingly different.

We know your kid's world may seem familiar to you. Because you remember what it's like to be their age, right? (And it wasn't that long ago, right? Right?) But the world they live in is hugely different from the world you and I experienced as graduates.

This unique, dynamic phase will help us discover a new closeness with our emerging adults, challenge our dreams for them, and confront our own insecurities—as well as stretch our worldviews.

However, some things won't change. They'll probably still need some money.

EVERY EMERGING ADULT IS UNIQUE

Some move away.
Some don't.

Some want to start a business.
Some want to throw a party.

Some have a clear plan now.
Some have big dreams and no idea about
how to get there.

Some are still dating a high school sweetheart.
Some are dating someone new every weekend.

Some live alone.
Some live with roommates.
Some live with you.

Some have all the answers.
Some have all the questions.

Some have a few close friends.
Some have thousands of social media followers.
Some have both.
Some believe everything they did five years ago.
Some question everything they believed five years ago.
Some find something new to question every five minutes.

And even though every young adult is unique, they all have some traits in common. This book is designed to help you make the most of the challenges and opportunities that come with parenting an emerging adult.

*Remember: We haven't met YOUR emerging adult.
This book is just about a lot of emerging adults.*

FOR SOME EIGHTEEN+ SOUNDS LIKE . . .

THINGS THEY MIGHT SAY

I'm thinking about taking a year off.

Why does everyone keep asking me what I want to do with my life?

I don't know if I'll ever get married.

No matter how much I do, I still feel behind.

I'm not like you.

I don't believe that anymore.

Don't treat me like I'm in high school.

I have a question.

You want me to *pay rent*?

I'm not going to be home for the holiday.

I'm thinking about a different major.

I'm working on my personal brand.

Why does college cost so much money?

I'll pay you back.

Text me!

Um, could you please not comment on my posts?



THINGS YOU MIGHT SAY

How long will you be home?

When will you be home?

It'll be okay.

What do you mean you don't want a "normal" job?

What's a start-up?

Why didn't you reply to my text?

What do you mean you can sign your own release form?

I thought by now you would stop asking me for money.

I thought by now you would stop playing video games.

I'm not sure I believe that anymore, either.

When I was your age . . .

I have a question.

I miss you.

I'm worried about you.

I'm proud of you.

Did you see my post on Facebook?

Call me!

UNDERSTAND THE PHASE

THE SIX WAYS YOUR EMERGING
ADULT IS CHANGING



NEWSFLASH:

Even though your kid is no longer in high school, 936 weeks after they were born, you're still parenting.

Maybe this reality makes you happy.

Or maybe it makes you feel exhausted. Aren't you supposed to graduate parenting when they graduate from high school?

Well, no. Because the truth is this: parenting doesn't have a finish line. Each new phase is just a corner that takes you into a new phase of parenting.

And this phase? Well, you now have some un-parenting to do.

This doesn't mean that your parenting has been bad. You did a great job during third grade. Sixth grade? Crushed it. You even parented gracefully through the twists and turns of tenth grade (although maybe there were moments when you were ready to give up on parenting altogether).

But now they're in a new phase. And your parenting is, too.

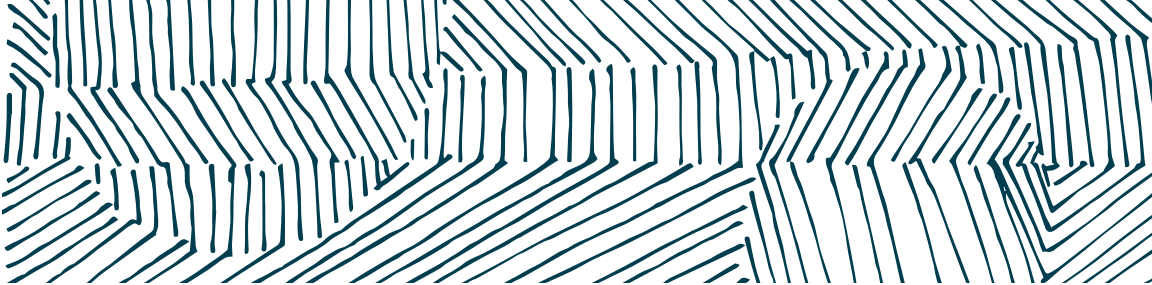
In other words, the parenting that got you here won't get you there.

So you'll need to pay attention to your kid.

And to yourself.

Because this journey toward adulthood isn't just about them.

It will challenge and shape you in new ways, too.



During each phase of your child's life, they change in six different ways. As you begin your journey with your emerging adult in these six areas, your role will become less authoritative and more relational.

You'll be less of a commander, and more of a companion. And before it's over, maybe even a friend.



WHAT'S CHANGING CULTURALLY

THE QUARTERLIFE CRISIS

Parents of emerging adults often face their own midlife crisis.

While your potential midlife crisis is a topic for another book, your emerging adult child is in a parallel process some refer to as the “quarterlife crisis.”² Think of it as a mid-midlife crisis, but earlier and without the new sports car.

While previous generations have faced important questions in their journeys after high school, the road map for today’s young people is more complicated. Way more. Your child likely has more opportunities, and more possible routes to take, than ever before. They can go almost anywhere—physically or virtually. They can become anything or anyone they want. It’s possible for them to not only *choose* a career path but to create an entirely *new* path.

Many of these options will require education, which may be why the number of students attending colleges and universities has increased in recent years.³ In fact, two-thirds of high school graduates attend college, a higher proportion than ever before in American history. And then there’s school *after* school. Of those who graduate college, nearly a third head to graduate school the following year.

In addition to choices surrounding higher education, your emerging adult faces a dizzying array of career choices. The average American now holds six *different jobs* between the ages of 18 to 26.⁴ Which means that they may experience more job transition in the short span of a few years than previous generations did in their entire lifetime.

All of this job change—combined with looming student loans and a challenging economic climate—doesn't help the bank accounts of emerging adults (or yours, for that matter). As a result, your kid may take more time than you or your parents did to become financially independent.

Still, independence is their primary goal at this phase, which can explain why your kid makes the choices they do. Even when they play it cool, even when they act like they don't care that they're still living at home, emerging adults still feel anxiety and pressure to make it on their own—emotionally, intellectually, and relationally. They may not fully be adults yet, but they still want to be seen and taken seriously.

YOUR ROLE IN THIS PHASE IS TO MOBILIZE THEIR POTENTIAL

Even though their entire world revolves around *what's next*, many emerging adults have not thought about where they want to be in ten years. Some would like to have these conversations, and they need a safe place to share and process their thoughts—a place where they don't feel pressure to have it all figured out. Even if your kid isn't sure what they will do for a career or where the next step will take them, you can mobilize their potential by encouraging them to *invest in their identity capital*—the things they do to build who they are.

You can start by helping your son or daughter to pinpoint his or her passions, abilities, and interests.

Talk with them about where they would like to be when they are 30. Encourage them to invest in education, jobs, and experiences that can help them in that trajectory.

And if your kid doesn't always love having those conversations with you, that's okay. Sometimes they would rather talk with—and listen to—adults who aren't their parents. Suggest another adult who could be a good sounding board, like an uncle, a step-grandparent, a former youth pastor or small group leader, or a collegiate campus minister. No matter their age, your kid will always need to find older, wiser people who can help them navigate the next phase of life. Now is a great time to begin developing the skill of choosing those people and staying in contact with them.

THE UNIQUE CULTURAL CHOICES FACING YOUR DAUGHTER

Among those ages 18 to 33, women are six percent more likely to have finished at least a bachelor's degree than men. Today, 63 percent of young women are employed, while just 31 percent are not in the labor force.⁵ Young adult women have more career choices than women had even a generation ago.

The challenge, however, is that women can feel the (often internal) pressure to "do it all." They may face the endless quest to balance career aspirations with family goals. This pressure can heighten feelings of insecurity, anxiety, and inadequacy. This is why emerging adult women are optimistic about maintaining balance, but also recognize and consider this tension between the professional and personal earlier and more intentionally than men.⁶

Be available to talk with your daughter about how these tensions affect her dreams. Celebrate the opportunities that come her way, and normalize the conflicting aspirations she feels. In a world where emerging adult women feel increasing and conflicting demands, you can be a safe place for her to process what's most important to her.

THE UNIQUE CULTURAL CHOICES FACING YOUR SON

Christian Smith, a sociologist who specializes in times of developmental transition, suggests that social pressures for men to be “tough” and “daring” still endure.

Today’s emerging young men hear countless voices and opinions on what it means to be a man. They’ll hear these voices from their peers, from culture, and from their parents. That’s where you come in. Maleness in society is confusing and young people need older voices in their lives to encourage and inspire them to be responsible men.

When you talk with your son, ask questions that aren’t just related to accomplishments, like grades or sports. Talk with them about their dreams, desires, pressures, and fears. Take time (more than once) to discuss risky behaviors and potentially negative outcomes. Ask them to walk through big social plans (like a party) or to role-play the situations they may find themselves in. Hold them accountable for their actions, and don’t make excuses for any behavior that may harm them or others.

THE PHASE WHEN YOUR EMERGING ADULT PULLS AWAY MORE, NEEDS YOU AGAIN, DOES THINGS FOR THE FIRST TIME AND YOU BOTH KEEP ASKING, “WHAT NOW?”

Congratulations!

You’ve parented for 936 weeks, and your kid has graduated and moved on to what’s next. Whether they still live at home or you’ve already converted their room into a workout studio, you might be in the best phase of your kid’s life. While parenting won’t look the same anymore, it isn’t over yet. Your kid still needs you.

Eighteen Plus is a guide to help you parent in this new unfamiliar phase. You will discover how your emerging adult is changing, how their world is changing, and what they still need from you (besides more money.)

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