survey

Survey: What Teens Think

Survey Data as of: 9/12/2006

About the Book

Question 1:

Is freedom something that motivates you and that you eagerly want? (For example, the ability to have your own cell phone, drive yourself places to do what you want to do, etc.) {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
Yes, I feel like I have to have that freedom I am strongly motivated to pursue it.	72.6%
Yes, the idea of having that freedom is good, but I'm not strongly motivated to go after it.	26.5%
No, I don't really care about having freedom.	<1%
Total	100%

Question 2:

Do you ever hide negative information from your parents because you're worried about how they will react? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
Yes, I often don't tell them those things, because of that.	31.1%
Yes, I sometimes don't tell them those things, because of that.	52%
I rarely or never hide those things from them.	16.9%
Total	100%

Question 3:

Think of something that you really want to do, that your parents might disapprove of. Which statement most closely describes you? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
If I want to do something, I will usually find a way to do it, no matter what my parents think or say.	22%
If I want to do something, I will usually find a way to do it…although I'd hope my parents wouldn't think I was being too bad.	46.6%
Even if I really want to do something and even if my parents would never know, I generally don't do it if they would disapprove.	31.4%
Total	100%

Question 4:

When you do something that your parents would disapprove of, what is the best description for the reason that you do it? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
I'm just doing what my friends want me to do.	6.3%
I'm just pursuing my freedom, and my ability to do what I want to do.	89.2%
I'm just being rebellious against my parents.	4.4%
Total	100%

Question 5:

When you make a decision to do or not do something you subconsciously know is wrong, do you sometimes think about whether God sees your private thoughts and everything you do? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
Yes, that is something I think about.	60.7%
No, not really.	25.1%
No, because I don't believe there is a God.	14.3%
Total	100%

Question 6:

When you make a decision to do or not do something you feel is wrong, which thought most impacts the choice you make? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	259
On a day-to-day basis, the thought that my parents would be disappointed in me is a bigger influence than whether God would be disappointed in me.	32.4%
On a day-to-day basis, the thought that God sees everything I do and would be disappointed in me is a bigger influence than whether my parents would be disappointed in me.	61%
I don't really think about whether either my parents or God would be disappointed in me.	6.6%
Total	100%

Question 7:

Which of the following best describes how you feel? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
Even if I love my parents, I want to have my own life, tastes, values and goals and sometimes these opinions will be different from theirs.	93.2%
I am content with adopting the life, tastes, values and goals of my parents.	6.8%
Total	100%

Question 8:

Although you want to find your own identity as a person and may be questioning your parent's values, would you be secretly glad if your family had positive, strongly-expressed beliefs and values that you could return to if you wished? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	398
Yes, I would be glad to know that my parents had strongly-held beliefs running in the background, even if I may not agree with them right now.	80.9%
No, I don't care at all whether those values are there in the background.	19.1%
Total	100%

Question 9:

Imagine that you and your parents are having a conflict over something. You are angry or hurt that they just don't understand you. When you next talk face-to-face with your parents, which statement from them would most make you feel better? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
“Yes, I do understand you. I love you, and remember, I was a teenager once, too.”	29.3%
“You're right, I don't fully understand you, but I love you and value you, and want to understand who you are becoming.”	70.7%
Total	100%

Question 10:

If your parents won't let you do something and they point out that a friend's parents don't allow them to do it either, does that help you think that your parents are correct? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
Yes, if I see that other kids aren't allowed either, I realize my parents are right in having that restriction.	25.1%
No, what other kids are allowed to do should be irrelevant to me.	74.9%
Total	100%

Question 11:

Suppose you could wave a magic wand and start over again with your parents, where neither they nor you had ever made mistakes with each other. How important is it to you to have the security of knowing your parents will always be there for you and that they at least make the effort to understand your world? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
Very important	64.4%
Somewhat important	29.7%
I wouldn't care one way or another	3.7%
I don't want that security from my parents	2.1%

Total	100%

Question 12:

In your experience, when teenagers have made mistakes, how do they respond when they feel their parents judge them harshly or are not there for them when they most need them? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
That's just how parents act, and it wouldn't really bother most teenagers.	8.2%
It would hurt, but teenagers would generally continue to share things with their parents and remain open to them, emotionally.	25.8%
After awhile, it might hurt so badly that teens would stop sharing their real feelings with the hurtful parent, and it would take a lot of effort for the parent to rebuild the relationship.	66%
Total	100%

Question 13:

Imagine this scenario: Your parents don't allow you to go to a concert with kids they suspect drink a lot, and you are furious. But later you find that everyone was drinking and driving home drunk. If you had been there, you would have had to make an uncomfortable choice between seeming uncool by refusing to get in the car, or driving with a drunk driver. Looking back, are you glad your parents made you stay home? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
Yes,Though I may not admit it, I'm glad to have been spared that dilemma, which my parents may have anticipated.	73.1%
No, I should have been able to make my own choice, and I would have handled that dilemma fine.	26.9%
Total	100%

Question 14:

Most teenagers say that they want to grow up to be a good person. If you had to choose between two ways that your parents could relate to you, which one would you choose to help you become the good person you want to be? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
They set reasonable rules, they ensure that I do my homework, they care about who I hang out with and how healthy I am, and they try to create family time and stay involved in my life.	77%
They hang out with me, they usually buy me the things I want, they usually let me do the things I want to do and go where I want to go, they don't bug me about homework, and they don't hold me to rules.	23%
Total	100%

Question 15:

Imagine that you're having a problem with an unfair teacher. If you tell your parents about it, which would be the best way for them to handle it? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
You tell them your concern and they immediately jump in to help you fix the problem.	18.5%
Your parents listen to how you feel about what's going on, say something like, “That must have made you really upset. I'm so sorry.”	16.4%
Your parents listen to how you feel about what's going on, say something like, “That must have made you really upset. I'm so sorry,” then they ask if you want their help.	65.1%
Total	100%

Question 16:

Many teenagers complain that their parents don't really listen to them when something goes wrong. Suppose you have a teacher this year who you feel is being mean and unfair to you, and even embarrasses you in front of the class. After one particularly bad incident, you and your parents talk about it. Which statement from them would make you feel like they are really listening to you? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
“That must have been so embarrassing. I'm so sorry that happened. Do you feel like your teacher is singling you out and picking on you?”	68.1%
“That's too bad. I'm going to call your teacher right now.”	31.9%
Total	100%

Question 17:

Many teenagers mention that their parents sometimes "freak out" about things. Can "freaking out" include not just negative emotions but also positive ones? For example, if a parent excitedly said, "Oh, I'm so excited about that boy/girl you like!" Could that also be considered freaking out? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
Yes, if a parent gets excited or hyper, I might think that that is freaking out.	55.5%
No, I think "freaking out" only means negative emotions.	44.5%
Total	100%

Question 18:

Many teens say there are certain things that they might want to share with their parents, but don't because they don't want them to freak out. Which of the following sentences best describes you? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
If I knew my parents wouldn't freak out, I would really like to share certain things with them.	74.5%
Even if I knew my parents wouldn't freak out, I still wouldn't want to share anything with them.	25.5%
Total	100%

Question 19:

Imagine you have done something wrong, you and your parents have discussed it, and now they are going to discipline you. Which approach would you most want? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
Your parents have a talk with you, explaining all the reasons why what you did was wrong and all the reasons why you should behave differently.	50.8%
Your parents briefly remind you what the rule was, that you broke it, and what the consequences are.	49.2%
Total	100%

Question 20:

If you had to make a choice to feel only one of these sets of feelings, which is more important to you? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	427
I'd rather feel that people believe in me, trust me, and respect me for who I am.	67.4%
I'd rather feel that people fully know me, accept me, and like me for who I am.	32.6%
Total	100%

Question 21:

(Answered by boys only) If something happens to make you feel powerless and disrespected, how are you likely to react? {Choose All Correct Answers}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	209
I would be angry	67%
I would blow up	16.3%
I would get quiet and think it over	51.2%
I would be sullen and grumpy	34%
I'd stuff it and probably blow up later	30.1%
I'd cry	12%
I would pour out all my feelings to a friend	17.7%
I would compensate by trying to be powerful and respected in another area	21.1%
Total	249.3%

Question 22:

(Answered by girls only) When you're mouthing off to your parents, what feelings are most likely going on inside you? {Choose All Correct Answers}

Base = Respondents Who Answered Question	218
I despise my parents	42.2%
I know everything and they know nothing	19.3%
I'm just not feeling great about myself right now	48.2%
I'm feeling fearful, anxious or defensive	50%
I'm feeling misunderstood	84.4%

I'm feeling unloved, unappreciated, or neglected		43.6%
How I'm reacting to my parents may not have as much to do with them as it does with what is going on in my life right now.		50.5%
I'm trying to attack my parents, and make them feel bad		22.5%
Total		**360.6%**

Question 23:

Final Survey Question: "Now we want you to imagine something very difficult. If you were to somehow find out that your parents were going to die tomorrow, what would you most want to tell them today? {Please Type Your Answer In The Box Below. Please Be Specific And Include Details}"

*Note to readers: These are the verbatim responses of the teenagers to the last, open-ended question we asked on the professional survey. Of the 427 responses, several were garbled or unreadable. A few were deleted as having inappropriate content. A few others contained angry comments, and these are are included below. But the vast majority were an outpouring from teens to their parents saying, essentially, "I love you" and "I'm sorry for all the times I've been difficult." **Click here** to view the verbatim responses.*

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If you are a print publication or media representative, and would like to arrange to receive more detail on the methodology of the survey, the demographics of the responders, or cross-tabulation data, please contact the Multnomah Publicity Department at 719-590-4999.