



March-April, 1995

Ben Silliman, Family Life Specialist, Editor

BOOMERS GOING BUST?

It's a challenging time for the Baby Boomers, the children of the 60's, the Pepsi Generation, yuppies. The majority of those who swore never to trust anyone over 30 are now over 40! Worse yet, those they mistrusted are over 60 and have control of the future of Social Security. Most have reconciled with their parents, many with the establishment (they're running it), some with their own aging. That's the toughest job.

Not only are the previous generation's "stuck" roles (jaded homemaker, naive father, burned-out salesman, irascible boss) passe, but its role rewards (respect for elders, job security) are largely gone, too.

"Not only are the previous generation's "stuck" roles passe, but its role rewards are largely gone too."

Sexist and racist barriers remain alongside community and workplace civil rights; economic uncertainty and cultural diversity create a new canvas for personal opportunity. The pace of life is more rapid and uncompromising than ever. It's a different world from midlife in the 1930s, '50s, or '70s.

AS IT HAPPENS...

Men and women face a variety of choices and challenges in midlife, reflecting the variety of paths taken through childhood and young adulthood: settling in to the position they worked up to, marrying after some career success and security, embracing singlehood and its freedoms, finding new freedom and

connection in the empty nest, birthing one first (last) time, reassessing priorities, starting over in love and/or work. While a variety of events are happening to folks between 35 and 65, three themes stand out in the research on middle age development:

1. **Transition:** consolidating work success, parenting and launching adolescents, moving into new roles between young adult exploration and later retrenchment. The key issue in transition is using opportunities to grow rather than hanging on to old habits and roles

2. **Achievement:** using experience to nurture and support persons and projects, and adjust to disappointments. The key issue in achievement is exercising creativity and productivity without becoming a workaholic.

3. **Re-evaluation:** reflecting on gains and losses, revitalizing relationships and work, and setting new directions in light of "time to go" vs "time spent" The key issues in re-evaluation are thoughtful reflection and experimentation, expanding as well as balancing various life components.

A WOMAN...AND A MAN

Betty Friedan suggests that, as women face aging, "Man is not the enemy here, but the fellow victim." Cross-cultural research suggests that women often assume more instrumental and assertive roles after midlife, men feel more free to be expressive and nurturing. As men cooperate in child and eldercare or women in financial support or retirement planning, each becomes whole and healer, not victim.

ROUNDUP ON THIS EDITION

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The years between 50 and 70 are the hardest. You are always being asked to do things and yet you are not decrepit enough to turn them down.

--T.S. Eliot

FAMILY LIFE SPECIALIST ADVENTURES**3/ 3, 10 Strengthening Families Conference Planning, Cheyenne****8 Northwest District Training, Thermopolis.**

Training will update Extension educators on "Balancing Work and Family" issues and preview materials on "Gaining Cooperation and Taking Charge." If time, we'll also talk about resiliency.

/ 9 Marriage Preparation Coalition, Basin.**/10 Marriage Preparation Coalition, Douglas.**

Training and planning with community professionals.

/24 Resiliency Research Planning Group, Ft. Collins.

UW-CSU collaboration developing a model for investigating the relationship between conflict resolution and resiliency.

/24 Alzheimer's Caregivers Satellite Conference, 9-11 AM.**/25 "Parenting by Play," Laramie Early Childhood Ass'n.**

Ben and son Jeremiah will preview age-appropriate activities.

/30 Strengthening Families Conference, Powell.

Sponsored by Park and Big Horn Counties, this mini-summit for professionals and volunteers will feature information and "how to."

4/11 Family Resiliency, Platte Co. FCE, Chugwater.**/12-13 Resiliency Training, Missouri Cooperative Extension****/17-19 Resiliency Training, West Virginia Coop. Extension**

Extension educators will hear about the research base, innovative projects for building resiliency, and have opportunity to plan activities for their counties.

GOPHER HOLE "Gopher" is a popular name for electronic files accessed via Internet. Both Extension and 4H (CYFERNET) offer "gophers," as well as universities, government agencies, and private organizations. Newsletters, program information, research, and statistical reports, grant announcements, and much other info appear on menus.

State Fact Sheets on population, farm employment, farm income, and financial, poverty, and commodity data are now available from the Economics Research Service of USDA. Recent WY facts include:

- 1993 Population: 257,908; 2000 Estimate: 276,242
- Birth rate (1991) 14.6 (39th highest rate)
- Violent crime rate (per 100,000; 1992) 320 (vs. 758 USA)
- Unemployment rate (1993) 5.4 (vs. 6.9 USA)
- AFDC/SSI percent (1992) 5.2 (vs. 7.6 USA)

For information send an e-mail message to:

LISTSERV@ERS.BITNET

Then on a single line, type GET < filename >

or call the AutoFAX phone number, 202-219-1107. An AutoFAX voice menu allows you to request Fact Sheets directly (WY #5551; USA #5552)

Troubleshooting: Contact

Tom Carlin (202-219-0520; TCarlin@ERS.BITNET) or

Tim Parker (202-219-0541; TParker@ERS.BITNET)

**NEWS & NOTES ON
HUMAN DEV. & FAMILY**

Baby Boomers across the developed world are 4-5 times more likely to become depressed than previous generations, according to Dr. Gerald Klerman, Cornell Univ. Med. School. Women were 2-3 times more likely to be affected than men, but rates for men are increasing faster. Industrialization and erosion of support systems are key influences. Mexican-Americans were exceptions to trends. -USA Today, 4/21/90, p. 1D.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES CONFERENCE

--To better understand and work with youth and families--

March 30, 1995, Powell Fairgrounds

8 AM to 5 PM

Featured speakers/UW Extension: Rhonda Shipp (Family Trends), Ben Silliman (Family Systems), Patty Booher (Communication), Teddy Jones (Teen Leadership), Gene Rohrbeck (Workshops with Youth), Debbie Johnson (Resiliency), Gary Small (Coalition-Building).

Other Speakers: John Cox (Powell Police; Time Mgt.), John Wyatt (Big Horn DFS) & Dennis Peters (Basin Police) (Child Abuse), Warren Murphy (Cody Episcopal Church, Blended Families), Mike Moe (WY PARENT; Support Groups), Dave Reetz (Powell FNB; Community Action), Julie Mulder (Park Big Horn Child Resource Centers; Empowerment).

---To register, call Teddy Jones, 754-5733---

You know you've reached midlife when...

As a woman, you know you've reached midlife when...

10. Classmates look like your parents.
9. Your glasses are now two-story.
8. You keep wondering "if it's warm in here."
7. You're surprised to find your spouse cuddly and yourself horny.
6. You wish you'd drunk more milk earlier in life.
5. Well, maybe skim milk once you look at that cholesterol report.
4. 10:30 P.M. sounds like a better bedtime than Midnight.
3. The word "screening" does not free-associate with the movies any more.
2. You look inside, more than at the mirror, for clues to well-being.
1. You're less surprised by aches and creaks, but have redefined the lower limits of "old."

As a man, you know you've reached midlife when...

10. You look better in boxers than in briefs.
9. Other people don't seem to speak up so they can be heard.
8. You hear yourself touting the value of experience over school-learning.
7. You find yourself reading food labels (through your new glasses).
6. Ben-Gay is your best exercise partner.
5. When given the choice of too much wine, women, and song, you buy earphones.
4. You realize that nobody comments on you looking younger than you are anymore.
3. Depression is no longer monopolized by mothers in midlife malaise.
2. When you have shortness of breath, you thank God for the breath part.
1. You know you are at the top of your game.

**STATS AND FACTS:
IN THE MIDDLE**

The Age Spectrum (Percentage in each age category, 1990)

5- 18- 25- 35- 45- 55- 65- 75-
< 5 17 24 34 44 54 64 74 84 > 85 YRS.

WY (1992)
7.3 22.3 9.9 15.0 17.2 10.3 7.3 6.2 3.4 1.1

USA (1992)
7.6 18.3 10.2 16.6 15.6 10.7 8.2 7.2 4.1 1.3

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States (1993). U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. p. 33.

The "dependency ratio" or balance of earners to non-earners will be a major concern in coming decades. Low birthrates and fewer elders reduce economic burdens on young/middle aged adults; yet the youngest are necessary to sustain communities into the future and the oldest offer wisdom and service. The greatest challenges for communities are the development of each age group's potential and integration of all ages as a community of concern.

County Age Patterns, 1990

Percentage under 18 years

Albany (21); Big Horn (31); Campbell (36); Carbon (30); Converse (33) Crook (32); Fremont (31); Goshen (28); Hot Springs (26); Johnson (27) Laramie (28); Lincoln (38); Natrona (30); Niobrara (24); Park (28); Platt (29); Sheridan (27); Sublette (28); Sweetwater (34); Teton (24); Uinta (40) Washakie (30); Weston (30)

Percentage between 18 and 65 years

Albany (71); Big Horn (52); Campbell (60); Carbon (60); Converse (58) Crook (56); Fremont (57); Goshen (56); Hot Springs (55); Johnson (65) Laramie (62); Lincoln (52); Natrona (59); Niobrara (5.7); Park (59); Platt (55); Sheridan (58); Sublette (60); Sweetwater (59); Teton (69); Uinta (55) Washakie (56); Weston (57)

Percentage over 65 years

Albany (08); Big Horn (17); Campbell (04); Carbon (10); Converse (09) Crook (12); Fremont (12); Goshen (16); Hot Springs (19); Johnson (18) Laramie (10); Lincoln (10); Natrona (11); Niobrara (19); Park (13); Platt (16); Sheridan (15); Sublette (12); Sweetwater (07); Teton (07); Uinta (05) Washakie (14); Weston (13)

Source: Bureau of the Census. (1990).

Persons Never Married (USA, Percent)

Age	Males			Females		
	1970	1980	1990	1970	1980	1990
30-34	9.4	15.9	27.0	6.2	9.5	16.4
35-39	7.2	7.8	14.7	5.4	6.2	10.4
40-44	6.3	7.1	10.5	4.9	4.8	8.0
45-54	7.5	6.1	6.3	4.9	4.7	5.0
55-64	7.8	5.3	5.8	6.8	4.5	3.9

Source: Bureau of the Census. (1991).

Increasing numbers of singles should cause communities to consider special needs for housing, recreation, and services.

Births to Women 35 and Over (WY, 1991)

All Births/ Age 35-39: 474; 40-44: 66; 45+ : 1
First Birth/ Age 35-39: 64; 40-44: 10; 45+ : 0

Source: WY Vital Statistics. (1991). Cheyenne: WY State Department of Health.

Children's Time with Parents

Father Involvement: Percent of married **fathers** who say they usually spend 3+ hours a day feeding, dressing, bathing, and putting pre-schooler to bed, 1987-88):

Younger than 30 yrs.: 37% Over 30 yrs: 25%
No college: 36% Some college: 22%
Wife-employed: 30% Wife not employed: 25%
Non-Hispanic: 25%; Black: 49%; Hispanic: 32%

Source: National Survey of Families and Households, via American Demographics August 1993, p. 24.

Grown Children in Parents' Home (USA, 1990)

	20-24 yrs.	25-29 yrs.	30-34 yrs.	35-39 yrs.
Male	61.4	33.1	27.6	23.6
Female	52.8	24.9	14.9	13.3

Trend for Percentage of Grown Children at Home (1960): 9.1; (1970): 8.0; (1980): 8.9; (1990): 12.0

Source: Bureau of the Census. (1990).

Rising lifestyle expectations, declining job opportunities, and family disruption are among the reasons for "boomerangers" staying at home or returning home.

Discretionary Income, USA (1986)

25-29 yrs.: \$3,306 50-54 yrs.: \$4,899
30-34 yrs.: \$3,713 55-59 yrs.: \$5,759
35-39 yrs.: \$4,195 60-64 yrs.: \$6,188
40-44 yrs.: \$4,679 65-69 yrs.: \$6,280
45-49 yrs.: \$4,572 70+ yrs.: \$6,073

Source: Work and Family. (1986). New York: The Conference Board.

Employment (USA, Percent for Male/Female)

Age	1970	1980	1990	1993
35-44	96.9/51.1	95.5/65.5	94.4/76.5	93.5/76.7
45-54	94.3/54.4	91.2/59.9	90.7/71.2	90.5/73.5
55-64	83.0/43.0	72.1/41.3	67.7/45.3	66.5/47.3

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. (1993).

"The old believe everything, the middle aged suspect everything, the young know everything."--Oscar Wilde

WORK AND FAMILY NOTES***Re-engineering Your Career at Midlife***

Marie Elkin, UW-CES Staff Development Specialist

Whether a man or a woman, making a decision about whether to make a mid-life career change in today's complex job market can be a difficult and complicated decision unless one understands the process of transition.

Transition is really change and change can be viewed as a "window of opportunity" or a destabilizing event in one's life. People who feel confident, have clarity of expectations, and are self-aware are most likely to succeed at making not only a successful transition, but an exceptional one.

In order to become more self-aware, you may want to take note of and begin to practice Stephen Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. They include 1) be proactive; 2) begin with an end in mind; 3) put first things first; 4) think win/win; 5) seek first to understand, then to be understood; 6) synergize; and 7) sharpen the saw.

Also important is a basic knowledge of the correct questions to ask oneself when considering this important step to one's future. Keep in mind that there is more than one possible outcome to this type of search. It may be found that a career change is imminent and most productive. One may also find a renewed sense of energy toward one's present occupation and situation. Questions such as the following are most helpful:

- 1) Am I dissatisfied with my career or only my job?
- 2) Could I change my present environment or my attitude toward it?
- 3) Do I have an understanding of my personality type and the type of environment I'd prefer?
- 4) Can I enter another field without retraining?
- 5) Exactly what will I be giving up and what will I be beginning?
- 6) How important is seniority, retirement fund, and other benefits?
- 7) Do I have the patience to spend the time in another position to insure that it is a success?
- 8) Am I willing to take risks?
- 9) Have I completed a professional and personal improvement plan which includes long-range and short-term goals?
- 10) Have I located the sources within the community which will support, encourage, and prepare me for the transition?

Remember: Making a decision of this magnitude is time-consuming and takes considerable energy. It requires you to dream, to research, and to be realistic. However, having the confidence about a productive outcome makes the procedure worthwhile.

Note: For more information on mid-life career change, contact your Staff Development Office.

Monitor the Machinery: Physical Changes at Midlife**TYPICAL PATTERNS**

- *Behavioral and genetic predispositions affect health more than chronology
- *Stress-related conditions increase risk of hypertension, heart attack, ulcers, stroke
- *Preventive health (weight control, non-smoking, moderate alcohol/no drugs) related to 30% decrease in mortality in midlife since 1977
- *Avg. 60 yr-old needs 1/3 more brightness in vision; glasses, bifocals typical
- *Avg. 60 yr-old can hear whisper, but hearing declines typical

WOMEN'S HEALTH

- *Menopause initiation = 51 yrs.
- *Most women experience little trauma
- *Drop in estrogen may lead to osteoporosis and fracture risk
- *Hot flashes (upper body warmth, perspiration) common, most not severe
- *Vaginal and urinary tract changes may produce painful intercourse, incontinence, treatable via estrogen creams, exercise, or in severe cases, surgery
- *Estrogen therapy can be effective, but does involve risks

MEN'S HEALTH

- *Climateric changes similar to menopause begins 55-65 yrs.
- *Physical effects (infertility, erectile failure, decr. orgasm) vary, but only a minority are severe
- *Emotional effects (depression, fatigue, lower libido) often related to expectations/interpretation
- *Early detection of prostate cancer risk (after 45) the most critical preventive health issue.

EARLY WARNING SIGNS (typical ages of onset)

Arteriosclerosis (hardening of arteries): 30 yrs (sm. lesions on arteriogram); 40 yrs (larger lesions); 50 yrs (leg pain on exercise); 60 yrs (angina pectoris); 70 (stroke; heart attack)

Cancer: 30 yrs (cellular metaplasia); 40 yrs (increasing metaplasia); 50 yrs (carcinoma in situ); 60 yrs (clinical cancer); 70 yrs (spread)

Arthritis: 30 yrs (joint narrowing); 40 yrs (bone spurs); 50 yrs (mild pain); 60 yrs (moderate pain); 70 yrs (disabled)

In the Middle of the Action

RESILIENT MIDLIFE

Virgil wrote, "In the midst of life, I found myself in a dark wood." Darkness is the color of greetings, rubber buzzards, and grim jokes which mark the birthdays of the 40s and 50s today. A poignant reminder of a youth-worshipping culture which has largely put off retirement planning.

For many decades, research and education flourished in child development before adult maturation was "discovered." Erikson's model (1950) described the 35-40 year span before retirement with one theme, **generativity**, involving:

- *nurturance of others, at home, work, and neighborhood;
- *productivity, consistent, quality contributions at work; and
- *creativity, injecting spontaneity and innovation into roles,

after using six themes to describe changes from 0-25 years. Those "lost in the wood" more often experience **stagnation**, emotional malaise and disengagement than the popularly-perceived **midlife crisis** search for lost youth known to only 5-10% of 40-60 year-olds. Researchers agree that life events (job loss or promotion, relationship change), rather than predictable stages, tend to trigger periods of introspection, productivity, or community involvement. Since women have traditionally aligned young adult goals with relationships, many reach age 40 with a more balanced sense of self than men. Women with high career aspirations, however, feel a sharper feeling of frustration over compromised career goals than men.

While minor chronic ailments are not unusual, women and men in their 40's and 50's are healthy...although less often fit. Mental health and personal growth depend on grasping the complexities (rather than holding on to simplistic views) and transcending (rather than denying) life's contradictions. Building on experience rather than resting on laurels is the hallmark of those who enjoy midlife and enrich the lives of those with whom they live and work.

At work, midlife presents some interesting challenges for women and men:

1. Continuously **revitalizing** career identity, goals, and skills, at a point when (for career-oriented individuals) self-satisfaction with accomplishments or self-criticism over unmet goals threatens to sidetrack professional growth. Resiliency may come from seeing changes as opportunities (corporate restructuring as a chance for a new career, trying new tasks, continuing education, or networking with new co-workers or clients can help maintain the excitement...and the competitive edge needed for emotional and material success.

2. Boldly **exploring** new roles and opportunities (esp. for family-oriented or displaced workers) rather than comparing self to others or plodding along unhappily in the status-quo. Talking with friends or a transition support group, trying new roles through classes, volunteer, or small business (child care, catering, consulting) experiences may open doors to growth.

3. **Connecting** with others via mentoring (with emphasis on shared problem-solving vs. advice-giving) and networking (information exchange vs. stealing ideas or wasting time) is critical to flexibility. Workers who "made it" on self-reliance and personal competence may be challenged to learn from less experienced colleagues or play roles as equals, but teamwork, listening skills, and creativity are crucial to remaining a vital part of a competitive operation.

In relationships, growth occurs for those not too "stuck in their ways:"

1. **Revitalizing marriage** may sometimes mean moving out of destructive relationships, but can mean becoming reacquainted with spouse after years of focus around kids and work, and trying new roles (shared cooking, yardwork, etc. after split roles). Some couples find separate interests, planned dating, a second honeymoon, or marriage enrichment groups helpful.

2. Energizing life through **friendships**. Developing and maintaining one or more close friends provides an energy-input for sandwich generation (between kids and frail elders) members with many commitments to giving. Setting aside time for coffee breaks, recreation, trips hunting clothes or elk, or cooperative projects (scouts, coaching, civic club) is an investment in self.

3. **Giving back**. Settling down and moving out of daily parent roles creates a temptation (encouraged by ads and other middle ageders) to withdraw or escape community activities. Today's society, like traditional ones which preceded it, depends on the wisdom and leadership of 40-50-or 60-somethings to shape the future. Perhaps co-leading youth or community events with younger peers might enable middle aged persons to feel more in touch and retain the freedom to enjoy other leisure activities.

Combining experience and reflection, persons at midlife remain vital contributors to their communities by going beyond simplistic, black-and-white solutions. Here are some samples:

Ethics and Morality--Doing what's right rather than looking out for what's expedient, profitable, good public relations.

Age and Gender Roles--Being one's own man or woman, without media labels of macho or liberated.

Tolerance, with Principle--Standing for justice, compassion, a social, political, or religious principle by doing something constructive rather than simply criticizing opponents.

Accepting Loss, Embracing Life--Using troubles, past and present, to grow into a deeper, richer personality. Recapturing awe through time with people, nature, the eternal.

One of the signs of passing youth is the birth of a sense of fellowship with other human beings as we take our place among them.--Virginia Woolf

"Parent and Teen Cycles"

Material contributed by Susan Corland,
Student in Child & Family Studies

Two Ships Passing in the Night?

Families develop patterns as they move through life together. According to Lee Combrinck-Graham (1987), midlife parents and teens fit a centrifugal pattern (spinning out from family to individual evaluation and discovery), following the centripetal pattern (turning toward shared family events) of school-age years. These parallel experiences have the advantage of promoting strong empathy, which may aid bonding and support or creating intense anxiety which drives parents and children apart. Parents who seek to understand themselves and gain adult support during their own changes can keep parenting on the positive side.

<i>Centripetal</i>	<i>Centrifugal</i>	<i>Centripetal</i>
	GRANDPARENTHOOD CHILDBEARING CHILDBIRTH	
LATE MID- ADULTHOOD	MARRIAGE MID- CHILD SETTLE DOWN	PLAN RETIRE.
	ADOLESCENCE	
	40S RE-EVALUATION	
	RETIREMENT	

Source: L. Combrinck-Graham (1987). Adolescent sexuality in the family life spiral, pp. 107-131 in C. Falicov (Ed.) Family Transitions NY: Guilford.

Typical contrasts for midlife parents and teenage kids involve biological change, time and the future, power, and intimacy.

What's Building Up for One is Sagging Down for the Other

First, there are the issues of biological change. Parents at midlife may be noticing their physical limits (shortness of breath and bifocals) and feeling less sexually attractive at the same time their kids are beginning to "feel their oats" and collect friends and admirers. While chronic illness or disease rarely keep midlife parents from typical activities with their kids self-consciousness or competitive jealousy might. Parents may be helped by discussing both physical and psychological reactions with a physician or friend. A pattern of exercise such as jogging, weightlifting, or aerobics which parent and child do together may promote fitness and parent-child support. Supporting (not criticizing) children's budding talents may help bridge the gap.

Dreams Being Born, Lived, and Lost

A second area where there is often crisis is in perception of time and the future. At midlife, parents may begin feeling time (to achieve or change) slipping away. At the same time, teens are gaining systematic thinking skills--making them

capable and enthusiastic critics--and dreaming of a whole life in front of them. Parents who are too busy chasing their dreams or too depressed by not meeting them may miss the excitement of planning for the future or neglect the support and guidance the child needs to make those dreams come true. Parents who encourage children's talents and interests (co-operating on projects, visiting museums, attending career days at school) without coercing choices or performance can give teens the confidence and help to turn their dreams into reality.

Remember that as a teenager you are at the last stage when you are happy to hear that the phone is for you.

--Fran Lebowitz

The Power of Caring

Another area of overlap in development is power and status. Children are beginning to reason for themselves, make decisions at school and in town, and are influenced by strong peer groups may feel their authority slowly (or not so slowly) eroded. Parents may attempt to reinforce their power by grounding, brow-beating, or even abusing their child. In most cases, these power-plays have effects opposite those intended. Yet those who take the time to show and share, not just shout or sound sarcastic, gain personal power which influences much more effectively than positional power. For the parent, this involvement provides continuity and connection in the midst of midlife re-evaluation.

Lovable Me

Mid-lifers and mid-teens present interesting contrasts and parallels in intimacy. Parents in empty-shell relationships may long for the kind of attention and affection received by their popular children. Lonely teens may wish they had the security and affirmation of their parents' bond. Yet parents would not be well-served by the doting or promiscuity of youth and adolescents are incapable of the familiar affection of maturity. The burden of support rests with parents, who must work through unmet needs for affection, then offer encouragement--as well as sufficient limits to promote maturity and prevent unwanted pregnancy--to reassure the child inside the youth.

Reprise

Parenting teenagers is not an easy task. For biological parents, it takes at least 12 years of practice to find out you're not ready. The key to readiness and effectiveness seem to be:

1. Caring for person inside a changing body and environment.
2. Flexibility in handling fluctuations in behavioral maturity.
3. Reasoned limits, with personal accountability and control to work within them, and consistent consequences.
4. Time to enjoy common interests; to be available.

Parenting "Boomerang" Kids

Jeanne Rothaupt

Jeanne is a graduate student in Child & Family Studies and Executive Director of Children & Nutrition Services, Casper.

Over fifty percent of all 20- to 24-year-olds are either at home or being supported by their parents, and 11% of all 25-34 year-olds have never left home or have returned home. The media is referring to these returnees as "boomerang kids." Some have not found (or just lost) a job, others cannot afford (Parenting adult children who move back home after living on their own may be a challenge. Following are questions and issues to explore which may make the transition smoother:

1. Define your relationship. Will...
 - ...you operate as a family or will the returning young adult behave as a tenant?
 - ...meals generally be eaten together?
 - ...money be shared or an allowance be given (especially important to discuss with unemployed sons and daughters).
2. Set boundaries and be clear about your own expectations. Will..
 - ...the family be accountable to each other?
 - ...the returning son/daughter have access to the car?
 - ...rent be paid, and when?
 - ...guests be welcomed, and when?
3. Allow your young adult child an independent personal life, but expect common courtesy. Request...
 - ...to be told when your son/daughter will be home late
 - ...to be told when your child will not come home
 - ...emergency phone numbers.
4. Communicate effectively. Make time for one or more...
 - ...meals together at least once a week
 - ...family meetings
 - ...regular recreation together
 - ...walks or exercise together
 - ...short or long trips together.
5. Establish a time limit for living at home. Realize...
 - ...your children should not generally live with you forever
 - ...that some of the most important adult life tasks are made difficult to master while living at home. Some of these are:
 - solidifying identity
 - becoming independent
 - developing intimate relationships
 - that your adult children will most likely continue to need your emotional support and encouragement to "make it" on their own.

Source: John W. Santrock. (1995). Lifespan development. Fifth edition. Dubuque, IA: Brown & Benchmark.

Grandparenting

For all the sentimental images of grandparenting, not everyone is excited--or terribly involved--in the role. Sometimes geographic distance from grand-babies keeps the generations apart. Many long-distance grandparents, however, are much more aware and involved in the lives of their children's children than those in the same neighborhood.

If I had known grandchildren would be so much fun, I would have had them first. --bumper sticker

Studies of grandparent roles suggest that the older generation tends to relate in one of five ways:

- 1) **Fun-seeking:** Many under 65 years enjoy identifying with their youngest family members, nurturing and playing without feeling the obligation to give advice they may have felt as parents. Almost any activity will do, from their own favorite camping out to the child's soccer or card games.
- 2) **Formal:** Personality, health, finances, or family circumstances may lead some grandparents to maintain a more distant and restrained relationship, except for special treats on special occasions.
- 3) **Parent substitute.** Absence of a parent due to death, divorce, or work responsibilities may place an older adult in the daily care of a child. So long as the relationship is not possessive (i.e., take parenting role to deny one's own aging) or resentful, the grandparent often finds more patience and wisdom (if not energy) as he/she had as a parent.
- 4) **Family wisdom:** When not forced on children or grandchildren, a grandparent's stories, knowledge, skills, or resources may enrich family heritage and child development. Parents can tap this wisdom by affirming their parents' gifts and matching interests with the child's or the occasion.
- 5) **Distant figure:** Especially when interaction is limited, grandparents can become more characters than persons. This relationship can be enhanced through letters and phone calls, but may need to be replaced with nearby grandparent surrogates if elders show little interest in relating to younger generations.

Obviously, grandparenting roles change as children and elders develop and change. Personality, interests, and gender-identification exert strong influences on whether and how relationships happen.

Some Helpful Resources

Les Strom. (1989). Becoming a Grandparent. Guidebook, Viewpoints, and Leader's Guide. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Caring for the Frail Elderly Family Member

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As loved ones grow old, frail and more dependent, families often face difficult decisions. Though being informed can make it easier to cope when the going gets tough, few are emotionally prepared for the reality of dependent care. Thus recording information about private and public services in the community will help the family make appropriate choices if the need arises.

THE REALITIES:

Caregiving is becoming an increasingly common family responsibility, due to demographic, social and economic trends. The average American woman now has more dependent parents than dependent children. She likely has fewer siblings to share the burden. Adult children may be old themselves. Women the traditional caregivers, are more likely to be employed and have less time to devote to caring for their elderly parents. The high rate of divorce changes obligations and family structure. Families are less likely to live close to each other making long distance caregiving an issue. Homes are smaller, often only large enough for the nuclear family.

Still, families are finding ways to care for their aging relatives. The vast majority of frail elderly are being cared for by family members: in fact, more costs are being borne by families than by all private and government agencies combined.

BENEFITS:

While most emphasis is put on the stresses of caregiving, a number of benefits cannot be overlooked. Data from one national survey of informal caregivers showed almost three-quarters said caregiving made them feel useful. Married people saw it as a major contribution to their self worth and recognized that the loved one kept them company. In some cases an improvement in the relationship between caregiver and recipient was reported along with a better understanding of the impaired loved one. Finally, in spite of the stresses of caregiving, the experience often enhanced the sense of well-being and helped put other stresses into perspective.

STRESSES AND STRAINS:

Studies show caregiving may have negative physical, emotional, financial and interpersonal effects, including poorer health, more prescription drug use and depression. The most negative physical effects are likely for wives, due to their lower income level, little training and lack of help from other relatives.

The more dependent the person receiving care, the higher the level of stress reported by caregivers. Satisfaction decreases if caregivers see their role as inconvenient or confining but increases if the recipient of care is more active.

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING CAREGIVING STRESS

When challenges and demands are too great, the caregiver's physical energy, time, health and money are drained. Five strategies are recommended for coping with caregiver stress.

SET REALISTIC GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS: The most important goal of caregiving is to assure the quality of life, safety and physical comfort for the person in need of care. Many options are available to help accomplish this goal from providing direct care to being a care manager. In setting goals, consider how caregiving will affect health, relationships with spouse, children, friends, and job.

ESTABLISH LIMITS: Saying "no" can be difficult especially when making painful choices. Sometimes it will be necessary to go beyond the limits but providing care at the expense of one's own mental and physical health does not benefit anyone.

ASK FOR AND ACCEPT HELP: Asking for assistance before limits are reached can help prevent stress and depression among caregivers.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF: Feelings of anger, sadness, frustration, guilt, fear, resentment, helplessness and despair are but a few of the many emotions that may be felt by caregivers. These emotions are neither good or bad, they are normal and learning to express them and deal with tensions in constructive ways is vital to emotional and physical health. Finding someone to confide in can be a great support. Too often, caregivers place their own needs last; taking breaks is essential to assure that caregiving doesn't lead to emotional exhaustion, depression, and physical illness.

INVOLVE OTHERS: Holding a family meeting can be an opportunity for everyone to talk about concerns, identify potential problems and generate a plan to deal with caregiving.

Families should seek professional help if the caregiver finds that alcohol or drugs are being used more to relieve stress, fall asleep or get going in the morning; feels chronically depressed; feels resentment or loss of emotional control; doesn't understand or know how to deal with the family member's behavior, can't resolve problems or reach agreement on care decisions; has serious conflict between caregiving and other responsibilities.

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- Schmall, Vicki L., L. Isbell. (1987). Coping With Caregiving. Pacific Northwest Extension Publication PNW 315, Oregon St. Univ.
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RESOURCES for Midlife Development

Barbara W. Davis. (1992). Charting Your Course at Midlife. State College, PA: Penn State Cooperative Extension Service. Plus "Midlife Memos" (two-page fact and activity sheets on challenges, crisis, and marriage.)

Deborah E. Simpkins & Barbara W. Davis. (Ed., 1985). Family After 40. series including booklets on Physical Well-being Emotional Changes, Family Communication, Giving and Receiving Help, and Living Arrangements is especially useful for "sandwich" families caring for dependent elders.

N. Stong & Barbara W. Davis. (1992). Loss...in a New Light: Self-Help Guide. State College, PA: Penn State Cooperative Extension Service.

Sarah R. Foulke. (1992). Creating an Awareness of Decision Needs for Planning in Midlife: An Evaluation of a Videotape. Riverhead, NY: Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Sam Quick, Gary Hansen, Michael Rupured, Charlotte Baer, and Dennis Duross. (1990). Mid-life: Opportunity and - Challenge. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

Katherine Beckham. (1988). The Second Half of Life: Growing Older. Manhattan, KS: Kansas State University Cooperative Extension Service, Kansas State University.

Ken Duichtwald. (1990). Age Wave. New York: Benton Press. This popular book features a discussion of the personal and social implications of baby boomer aging: increased need for health care, retirement planning, and alternative recreation, for instance.

R.A. Kalish. (1989). Midlife Loss: Coping Strategies. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Lilian Rubin. (1979, 1989). Women of a Certain Age: The Midlife Search for Self. New York: Harper and Row. A classic on the emotional and relational struggles arising from physical and chronological changes of the 40s, 50s, and 60s.

Susan Wittig Albert. How Women Create Success and Fulfillment Off the Traditional Career Track

Bernard A. Eskin; Lynne S. Dumas. Midlife Can Wait. New York: Ballentine Books. Explores physical changes and options in preventive health care for women.

Judith Viorst. Necessary Losses. New York: Fawcett Publishing. A penetrating look at the identity issues and freedom to be self which midlife invites...or requires.

Hassles and Uplifts of Middle Aged Americans

Hassles:

1. Weight
2. Health of family members
3. Rising prices of goods
4. Home maintenance
5. Too many things to do
6. Misplacing or losing things
7. Yardwork and home maintenance
8. property, investment or taxes
9. Crime
10. Physical appearance

Uplifts:

1. Relating well with spouse or lover
2. Relating well with friends
3. Completing a task
4. Feeling healthy
5. getting enough sleep
6. Eating out
7. Meeting your responsibilities
8. Visiting, phoning, or writing someone
9. Spending time with family
10. Home (inside) is pleasing

John W. Santrock. (1995). Lifespan development. Fifth edition. Dubuque, IA: Brown & Benchmark, p. 502.

**Nature gives you the face
you have at twenty;
It is up to you to merit the face
you have at fifty.**--Coco Chanel

PARADOXES: A PARTING THOUGHT

"On Hangups and Liberation"

A friend of mine, approaching midlife, complained of a sprained ankle the other day at lunch. "Oh yeah," I replied, "How did that happen?" (half afraid to hear) It turns out that on a sunny midwinter day in Laramie, he was out jogging along the river when--as his Norse blood would have it--the temptation to run in the flood just overcame him.

After several hundred yards in water, temperature of which would have quelled his now-throbbing ankle, he was forced to re-emerge by an ice floe. A penguinlike hop from the wet to block ice to shore fell short and a sprain resulted. "You're crazy," I asserted to this father of three. "I'll bet your mother never..." The thought crossed my mind as I imagined my own kids on this sort of frolic. Bolt-instantly, I knew this is what I admired about my friend: authenticity and spontaneity. He is a character who is a committed husband, father, professional, and, yes, son--in ways that cut a fresh track, not afraid to run in the paths set by others.

The Male Image

Of course, in Wyoming, the self-made, self-possessed man is apocryphal. Yet so many generations of homesteaders, horsemen, and Hollywood heroes have paraded an image of self-reliance, the Real McCoy is deceptively difficult to recognize. In fact, while women have sought new and liberating identities for 30 (some would say 70 or more) years, men have sought solace in a variety of physical (cowboys, warriors, adventurers), economic (prospectors, pioneers, entrepreneurs), and intellectual (inventors, scientists, writers) personae which have left them far from true personhood.

Psychologist Sam Keen, in his 1991 treatise, Fire in the Belly: On Becoming a Man catalogs eight steps by which men can escape the demands of society, of mothers or spouses, of self-made expectations, to reclaim true freedom to be themselves. His themes are filled with paradox and with depth. They challenge men at midlife to transcend the prescribed roles of youth and embrace the deeper, richer reality of maturity.

1. **From having answers to living questions** Playing the expert, hero, obedient soldier, or just plain good guy becomes more difficult as you realize the world is more complicated than the simplistic rules and roles you learned as a kid. Insisting you are right only makes you more empty or alienated from offspring, employees, or peers. Living the questions means accepting mystery and ambiguity, becoming a pilgrim.

2. **From cocksureness to potent doubt** It's not macho to admit you don't know, but who likes driving around for hours refusing to ask for directions? Great art, science, theology... they all arise from men who "see things as they are and ask 'why'?" as well as from dreamers who "see things as they could be and ask 'why not'?" To know enough is to know you don't need to know it all.

3. **From numbness to manly grief** Ask many men what they feel, Keen says, and they can't tell you. Midlife makes a reckoning for childhood wounds and adult losses... a call to face rather than escape loss and to grow through the inevitable suffering life brings. Bravado and material achievements are inadequate substitutes. Men need ways to feel, room to feel.

4. **From artificial toughness to virile fear** Years of pretending to be in charge, protecting independence, controlling through "gutting it out" or "analyzing it to death" can create a facade of control over an empty or driven ego. Admitting fear may be the most authentic step toward growing beyond it.

5. **From guilt and shame to responsible morality** Living up to mom's expectations...coping with dad's criticisms... comparing self to peers...throwing off roles in reckless contempt or toeing the line in dutiful compliance, "playing by the rules" (or against the rules) is not the same as finding self in the midst of freedom and obligation. Keen argues that American society is badly in need of males' righteous and laser-focused indignation...not vague, fear-driven anger.

6. **From false optimism to honest despair** Keen sees chronic stress, burnout, and depression as signs of spiritual drought which psychological prescriptions cannot fill. Accepting the darkness in self and society is critical to rebirth of the spirit.

7. **From compulsive action to fallowness and waiting** Men are socialized to "do something," to "make it happen," to "make a difference." Yet often the knee-jerk or regular routine is just "going through the motions." Meaningful action often follows the stillness of a trout stream, sweat lodge, or quiet prayer in a hospital lobby.

8. **Renewal and rebirth of joy** Time out to refresh or reinvent life or celebrate--rather than simply party--breaks with the expected mode of "staying in the saddle," but men who direct their own life--rather than feeling irreplaceable.