

The Leap into Adulthood

by Vladimir Bilenjki

There is a point in our lives where we're forced to make the leap from being a teenager into adulthood. The sickness of the world can be traced to those who never did, who either look at themselves as full of unchecked emotions and cornered with their backs against the wall or as victims of their circumstances. No adult can accept defeat as an option but teenagers will readily keel over. Whether it's suicides that come from the mind not ready nor willing to engage any further with the world or failing to the point that there seems like there's no other way out, the ones that may have acted like adults find themselves in for a rude awakening when their mask slips off and all that's there is the scowl of a sad child.

An adult is never rude, nor do they prey down upon those who are beneath their means, nor will they save the world as a whole but they know that trying to will never go out of style. The adult who comes to the side of a child or a teenager can guide them along the road as they mature into adults themselves, but a grown person who has never made the leap will only guide them astray. There is no virtue in being a teenager; only an opportunity. Grown men and women who aspire to hold the same sense of living as teenagers are pathetic. They yearn for a weaker state to their being to be chaotic. They look at their teenage years as an opportunity that passed them by and rest in a grave pursuit to recapture those days, conflating aimless wonder with the feeling of living cool.

The danger of being a teenager is that one is left in waiting, not quite in purgatory nor a room, rather they wait for the circumstances around them to change. The less fortunate ones are in such bad circumstances that they have to escape them — those are the ones that thrust themselves into adulthood, less they live out the rest of their days in a dismal state, not only to themselves but anyone they may cross paths with. Grown teenagers make adults obligated for their wellbeing. They become a nuisance and, worse than that, they are a sickening presence to the lives of other teenagers and younger. A child can see through the visage of a pathetically overgrown teenager which that masquerading wreck cannot themselves see, for they do not reflect on their state of being, rather ignore it and point the blame for their decrepit way of living on someone else. They encourage the worst qualities out of other teenagers by promoting degeneracy so that they can feel less bad about themselves and less alone in feeling as bad as they do because that is the only way they can prove their ideas about how bad the world around them is — by dragging others down to their level of despair that they wallow in.

Adults pay them no serious business because they can never be on the same level; they can only help guide the teenager along or bail them out when they're in trouble. Those adults that are not themselves mature, or even adult enough, to carry out the same measure of discipline that they would receive for their own transgressions. Those same adults shelter their own fragile egos and standing by being overly kind and acting as a floormat for others to walk all over, coddle their children well into teenage years and beyond. They are entirely culpable, but the young soul that accepts that as the main reason for their own immaturity could never become an adult until they take full responsibility for their life.

The difference between our minds and bodies from being a teenager into adulthood is a subtle one that can only be measured so much, but there is a deep divide in one's conscience between the two states that, under scrutiny, is strikingly clear. Place yourself in your years as a teenager. Recall how things couldn't feel so secure because you didn't have full control over your life. Now, imagine having the knowledge and wisdom of what it takes to make it in the world and give it to yourself as a teenager. The advantage would be so unfair in contrast to those around you at the same age then. The sickness of grown-ups who never became adults is that they perpetually exist in that state, where they can use those means to prey on others.

Someone who's grown up and, by all accounts, should be seen as an adult will not be seen as such by others so long as they carry a strange teenage attitude about themselves. Somehow, an adult can intuitively pick-up on someone who's still mentally stuck being a teenager because there is something queer about the way that they move and their perspective on things, whether it's entitlement or finding refuge in chaos. The virtue of being a teenager is being anarchic — not following the rules that have been imposed upon them because their own will and autonomy won't keel to authority, often times for no better reason than they can't be told, "no."

The trouble often begins when they become the authority while they are teenagers as it's a recipe for complacency. While the teenager can lead, they do so within an institution. They cannot be truly free of being under the authority of their parents or school unless they've left behind all such institutions and had to grow into adults quick to survive.

Teenagers don't need to aspire to anything. They can slack away and do nothing and no one would bat an eye at them. That's the key difference between being seen as a teenager and being seen as an adult. When an adult asks, or even begs, another grown person to do something with their lives, what they really want from them is for that person to be an adult.

Teenagers that are coddled well into adult years are a danger to themselves and everyone around them. They are the ones that live in the past, always thinking about what could have been and what should be instead of making it happen in the present.

They are the ones who think about love and opportunities that passed them by and find themselves out of love and destitute without anything of value to give to the world.

They are the ones who prey on actual teenagers and children because they do not really see themselves in the world of adults — their sexuality is stunted and they turn into predators with no semblance of morals, only a yearning for decay in ruining others and their own selves with them.

They are the ones who can't make it with people their own age so they hang around high schools and playgrounds well after it's too late, always there somehow with teenagers, and stay there for as long as they can hold on.

They are the ones that escape and lie because the truth of their reality is so pathetic that they dare not let others know about it nor acknowledge themselves.

They are the ones that can only live in sheer ignorance and denial of their decrepitude and so they scurry into the edges of parks at night with a bottle of liquor or something harder and hang around only the others between those pines who share in the same vile and low existence as them.

They are the ones who have a past that wasn't good enough to leave behind and no future as they waste away their dignity in their toxicity. Never approach these people. They do not have the means of being saved by others. They need to go away and reflect on their lives until they can know better.

Lord knows I tried to help them but, just as the universe sorts itself out, they are gone beyond the point of rescue and, as the years go on, they vanish.