

The impact on society of teenage tattooing



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Does the tattoo define the person, or does the person define the tattoo? In modern society tattoos are widely accepted except when applied to the skin of an adolescent. Adolescents with tattoos face judgment from a variety of people such as authoritative figures, parents, and their peers. This article (On Teenagers and Tattoos, by Andres Martin, MD.) provides examples of how society views adolescents with tattoos. Tattoos are something we see on people on an everyday basis, but on adolescents, it is not very common.

Many adults believe that those in the younger generation sometimes get tattoos to enrage affronts to their authority. Parents in general do not approve of their children decorating their bodies with modifications such as tattoos because of their irreversible and permanent nature. Like makeup, fashion or hairstyles tattoos can also be just another way to fit in with their peers. When given the chance it is important to understand the motivations and significance of a tattoo before making an erroneous judgment.

Tattooing is a way of fitting into a peer group or expressing one's own individuality. Adolescents often turn to tattooing as a way to take back some control of their evolving bodies as well as their lives. When an adolescent feels that there is a lack of stability in his life (such as divorce, abandonment, and repeated family relocations) he may feel that getting a tattoo may return a sense of control and stability into his life. Adolescents are often influenced by peers to get a tattoo but do not put any thought into its permanence or how they may feel about it in the future.

Author Andres Martin says " The frequency of self-made tattoos among hospitalized, incarcerated, or gang-affiliated youth suggests such motivations: a sense of stability may be a particularly dire need under

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temporary, turbulent or volatile conditions. " In every argument there are two sides to be heard, and the other side in this case is the adolescents. Adolescents believe in expressing themselves through art. They also believe tattoos are a way of representing their individuality. I believe that teenagers get tattoos for various reasons that are important to the person.

Some get them for personal reasons such as a memorial tattoo for a deceased family member, or a ribbon to show support for someone fighting their battle with cancer. An inspirational quote such as a bible verse, poem, or a song lyric may also be another choice for the adolescents tattoo. Fantasy characters are also a popular choice. On the other hand there are various negative reasons teenagers get tattoos as well; for instance, to defy their parent's authority, to represent a gang affiliation, to draw attention to themselves, and sometimes as a dare.

I have observed that some older people have an aversion to tattoos on teenagers as opposed to some young parents that find it acceptable. Older people may assume that the adolescents tattoo is gang related or that they are a troubled youth. Some people believe that the parents of an adolescent with a tattoo may be neglectful or unaware of what is going on in their child's life. Some older people are against body modifications of any form and look down on those who have them. After reading through this article I found that it thoroughly explains the pros and cons of adolescents with tattoos.

Although I do respect the writer's view on the subject, I disagree. I personally believe that as a part of growing up a teenager should be allowed to get a tattoo but only after being fully informed of the consequences that getting a

tattoo may bring. Some of the problems that might ensue are possible rejection from a specific field of work for the visibility of a tattoo, a wrong assumption about the character of a person with a tattoo, or even later in life having to cover a tattoo or get it removed because your own personal feeling about it has changed.

I personally have been debating on getting a tattoo myself, although my family doesn't approve. It's my body and I will make the final decision. I am very well aware that in five maybe ten years from now I could quite possibly hate my tattoo and regret not listening to my family. I am also aware of how expensive and painful laser removal is but I'm prepared to suffer the consequences if and when I decide to get a tattoo. Most adolescents don't think beyond the tattoo itself or its ramifications Martin, Andres.

References

1. Baker College Composition. Revised Edition ed. Boston Ma: Pearson Learning Solutions, n. d. 320-23. Print