

Is childhood the happiest time of your life?

[Life](#), [Childhood](#)



Childhood is certainly not the happiest time of your life. It's about time somebody exploded that hoary old myth about childhood being the happiest period of your life. Childhood may certainly be fairly happy, but its greatest moments can't compare with the sheer joy of being an adult. Who ever asked a six-year-old for an opinion? Children don't have opinions, or if they do, nobody notices. Adults choose the clothes their children will wear, the books they will read and the friends they will play with. Mother and father are kindly but absolute dictators.

This is an adult world and though children may be deeply loved, they have to be manipulated so as not to interfere too seriously with the lives of their elders and betters. The essential difference between manhood and childhood is the same as the difference between independence and subjection. For all the nostalgic remarks you hear, which adult would honestly change places with a child? Think of the years at school: the years spent living in constant fear of examinations and school reports. Every movement you make, every thought you think is observed by some critical adult who may draw unflattering conclusions about your character.

Think of the curfews, the marital law, the times you had to go to bed early, do as you were told, eat disgusting stuff that was supposed to be good for you. Remember how 'gentle' pressure was applied with remarks like 'if you don't do as I say, I'll ...' and a dire warning would follow. Even so, these are only part of a child's troubles. No matter how kind and loving adults may be, children often suffer from terrible, illogical fears which are the result of ignorance and an inability to understand the world around them. Nothing can

equal the abject fear a child may feel in the dark, the absolute horror of childish nightmares.

Adults can share their fears with other adults; children invariably face their fears alone. But the most painful part of childhood is the period when you begin to emerge from it: adolescence. Teenagers may rebel violently against parental authority, but this causes them great unhappiness. There is a complete lack of self-confidence during this time. Adolescents are over-conscious of their appearance and the impression they make on others. They feel shy, awkward and clumsy. Feelings are intense and hearts easily broken. Teenagers experience moments of tremendous elation or black despair.

And through this turmoil, adults seem to be more hostile than ever. What a relief it is to grow up. Suddenly you regain your balance; the world opens up before you. You are free to choose; you have your own place to live in and your own money to spend. You do not have to seek constant approval for everything you do. You are no longer teased, punished or ridiculed by heartless adults because you failed to come up to some theoretical standard. And if on occasion you are teased, you know how to deal with it. You can simply tell other adults to go to hell: you are one yourself.