

## Chapter 15 — Home Weaning of Adolescents

of *Piloting Modern Youth: A Guide for Parents, Teachers, and Others Dealing with Adolescents*  
(1931)

by William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S.  
with the collaboration of  
Lena K. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S.

© 2021 Matthew Block

### Source for Chapter 15, in the order in which they appear

- (1) Leta S. **Hollingsworth**, Ph.D., *The Psychology of the Adolescent* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1928)
- (2) Frank Howard **Richardson**, A.B., M.D., *Parenthood and the Newer Psychology* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926)

### Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author (or previous Sadler book) first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and Sadler pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Pink** indicates passages where Sadler specifically shares his own experiences, opinions, advice, etc.
- (f) **Light blue** indicates passages which strongly resemble something in the Urantia Book, or which allude to the Urantia phenomenon.

- (g) **Red** indicates an obvious error on Sadler's part, brought about, in most cases, by miscopying or misinterpreting his source.

Work-in-progress Version 22 Feb. 2021  
 © 2021 Matthew Block

## XV — HOME WEANING OF ADOLESCENTS

### III: PSYCHOLOGICAL WEANING (Hollingworth 36)

#### IMPORTANCE OF GETTING AWAY FROM THE FAMILY (Hollingworth 36)

Primitive man recognized, as the modern psychologist recognizes, that there is an urge which develops in every normal human being in the years between twelve and twenty, to get away from family supervision and to become an independent person.

We may call this process *psychological weaning* (H 36).

In mental weaning,

indeed, several sets of habits may be involved. There are the habits of the child, of the mother, of the father, and often of older brothers and sisters,

15:0.1 There comes a time in the life of the average boy and girl when it is highly desirable to get away from home, at least temporarily.

Sooner or later, as adolescence progresses, personality development necessitates divorcement from parental domination.

The desire of young people between the ages of fourteen and twenty to get away from home

seems to be more or less instinctive,

and the process of getting away can very appropriately be termed emotional or *psychological weaning*.

In its accomplishment,

which should be brought about gradually,

parents as well as children must be reckoned with;

in fact, every member of the family is concerned, the solution of the problem often being influenced by

## SOURCE

or even of grandparents, and of uncles and aunts, all having the possibility of acting in opposition to the new attitudes that must come when childish things are to be put away (H 36-37).

Also, by emancipation from the parents

is not meant disorderly conduct, defiance of legitimate authority

or insolence (H 37).

LEARNING TO LET GO (Hollingsworth 38)

Although the putting away of childish things is necessary for carrying into effect normal life plans,

it is nearly always somewhat painful, and many persons never accomplish it at all.

## 15: HOME WEANING OF ADOLESCENTS

grandparents, cousins, and even uncles and aunts.

15:0.2 Psychological weaning not only entails getting away from home, but it is also complicated by the fact of sexual maturity, for the post-pubescent youth is able to reproduce his kind.

The steady progress of this weaning process

should be looked upon as a natural development,

and in no sense as justification for disorderly conduct, defiance of authority,

or disrespect for the age and experience of other members of the family.

Neither should it be regarded as an excuse for insolence and peevishness.

## ESCAPING PARENTAL DOMINATION

15:1.1 By weaning I simply mean that as we grow up we are called upon to

“put away childish things.”

Some children refuse to do this—they cling to the family hearth.

SOURCE

They then remain *homesick* all their lives (H 39).

One of the facts earliest appreciated in the modern study of ineffectual personality was that *incapacity for adjustment* is often connected with *abnormal persistence of attachment to the family situation* (H 39).

TECHNIQUE OF WEANING: THE REVISION OF HABITS (Hollingworth 40)

A boy of three and one-half years is still nursing from a bottle

because, his parents say, it was harder for him to drink from a cup.

He cried when the bottle was taken from him, so they gave it back to him again.

15: HOME WEANING OF ADOLESCENTS

Others, if sent away, become *homesick*.

In some instances parents will not permit their children to go away; they keep tight hold of them, discouraging every effort toward their liberation.

This *prolonged attachment to the home* tends to foster *incapacity for emotional, social, and economic adjustment*.

Home shelter comes to prevent the acquiring of that self-confidence which is needed for a successful, competitive life.

15:1.2 Disinclination to undergo this necessary experience is but the hangover of undue pampering during preadolescent times.

These youth who refuse weaning, or whose parents neglect to encourage it, are

the boys and girls who, in the nursery, were permitted to take their milk out of a nursing bottle instead of a cup when they were three or four years old

for no other reason than that when they first tried to cup the experiment was a failure.

The baby cried, wanted his bottle, and so he continued to have his bottle.

SOURCE

15: HOME WEANING OF ADOLESCENTS

Another is unable to walk along the street without holding on to some one's hand.

These are the children who, even when five years old, could not walk on the street without holding the hand of an adult;

Here is a child of six years, unable to dress herself.

or at six were unable to dress themselves,

There is one of five years yelling and falling into a tantrum if his mother goes out and leaves him at home.

or at seven had a convulsion fit if they were left alone.

I remember hearing one mother tell of how

His mother always slips out a side door secretly on the rare occasions when she leaves him,

she had to slip out of the back door to go on an errand to a neighborhood store

to avoid these scenes (H 41).

because her child would throw a fit if he were left alone.

No wonder children who are reared that way are difficult to wean during adolescence.

[*Note:* Hollingworth's chapter "The Public Ceremonies" mentions no such isolation practices. Sadler was probably recalling initiation ceremonies described in Sumner & Keller's *Science of Society*, a four-volume work published in 1927, from which he drew heavily when writing many papers in Part III of the UB. I have found no exact parallel to 15:1.3 in *Science of Society*, but a few similar ones, including a description of a custom in New Caledonia: "... The [circumcision] ceremony over, the young man must go into the bush and hide from his female relatives for from three to six months" (S&K IV 237).]

15:1.3 This is certainly different from the practises of primitive times, when the adolescent boy, as a concluding act of the puberty ceremonies, was sent alone into the bush for one or two moons to take care of himself there without communication of any kind with any member of the tribe; only after this test, if he had the good fortune to survive, was he regarded as a man and received into the adult community of the tribe.

In some oriental communities of the present day,

In some Oriental countries, even now,

the "milk name," or as we would say, the "pet name," is abolished at a certain age,

the "milk name" or what we call the "pet name" is discarded at a certain age,

SOURCE

in the course of a formal ceremony of re-naming, and may not be used thereafter (H 41, footnote).

This problem of throwing off infantile dependency is especially hard, it seems, with **only** children, with **youngest** children, with physically **delicate** children,

and with **girls** (H 42).

THE POSSESSIVE MOTHER (Hollingworth 42)

[I]n modern times ... [t]he mother is likely to have all, or shall we say both, of her children in adolescence by the time she is **forty-five years old**.

**Still strong**, energetic, and **prime for her task**,

[She has accepted as her life task the **bearing and rearing of children**.

It is understood by her to be her **career** (H 42).]

15: HOME WEANING OF ADOLESCENTS

and there occurs a formal renaming ceremony

which marks the passing of the individual from childhood to adult life.

15:1.4 The emotional or psychologic weaning of an **only** child, the **youngest** of a large family, or a **delicate** child, is a difficult task,

while **girls** present more perplexing problems than do boys.

The mother's attitude largely determines the success of this whole project. Her situation is a serious one.

By the time her children reach this important time of life, she is **forty-five years old**,

**still strong** and ambitious, in the **prime of life**.

From the days of her early romance and marriage she has come to look upon **child-bearing and child-rearing**

as her exclusive **career**.

She has been taught that to be a mother is the greatest thing in life, and having lavished affection upon her children and reared them in accordance with her best light, she is now confronted with the test of conspiring to send them away, to push them out into the world, to separate them from her protection and fostering care.

SOURCE

she sees what she had been told was her career slipping automatically, as a function of normal growth, out of her hands (H 43).

Without reflection and without analysis of what is happening,

she grasps at her disappearing career (H 43).

Quite often this means clutching the youngest child or the weakest child with a strangle hold (H 43).

[?]

15: HOME WEANING OF ADOLESCENTS

She sees her only occupation slipping away.

The adolescent represents her maternal handiwork, and now she must encourage the inclination of this child to leave home and go out into the world as an independent individual.

15:1.5 Is it any wonder that

the average mother, not being analytical or philosophical,

instinctively resents the loss of her children?

That she grasps at her vanishing career,

and sometimes seizes a child, figuratively speaking, with a strong grip and refuses to let go?

Mothers are in double danger of thus

holding on to the youngest or to the weaker or less liberally endowed child.

**A YEAR AWAY FROM HOME**

15:2.1 In a recent conference on child culture, I listened to a very profitable discussion about the advisability of having adolescent youth, particularly boys, spend a year away from home in travel and adventure. While I would be loath to advocate this as a general rule, I am persuaded that with about one-half of our young men it would be a good thing,



provided, during that year, they earned their own money, receiving not one cent of help from the parental exchequer. I see nothing to be gained in sending boys to travel over this country or Europe with full purses.

If these boys want adventure, let them go forth from home empty-handed and learn what it is to earn one's way in the world. I think many boys, after they are sixteen, would profit by such a year; a larger number would be benefited after seventeen or eighteen. This period of independent adventure could be taken either between high school and college or after a year of college, or between the sophomore and junior years of college.

15:2.2 It would be equally helpful to a great many girls if they could, under proper protection, have a year away from home between the ages of sixteen and nineteen. Even six or eight weeks at a summer camp does much for them; but the earning of their own way does them the greatest good. After such an experience they will return home with a better knowledge of every-day problems; they will understand something about this business of making a living; their entire sense of values and relationships will have been profitably changed.

[*Note:* Sadler's only child, Bill, ran away from home at 16 and joined the U.S. Marines on a four-year stint, visiting home on furloughs.]

#### HOMESICKNESS (Hollingworth 44)

A boy was referred for psychological examination at the age of nineteen years, because his education was being seriously interfered with by chronic homesickness (H 44).

15:2.3 A few years ago I came in contact with a young man who would have been benefited by a year away from home.

I will call him Clarence for the purpose of this narrative.

He was a fine chap, but, being an only son, had been more or less spoiled; from almost every angle he presented all that could be desired by fond parents, but he had never been weaned.

Finally the time came for him to go to college.

After graduation from high school, the problem [his chronic homesickness] again arose. There was no college in the home town. The boy, then aged **eighteen**, was sent to an eastern college

where he was miserable, made no friends, lost ten pounds, could not study, occupied himself in trying to conceal his weeping. He wrote home that the food at the college was "terrible," that his digestion was being ruined, and finally that his heart was becoming weak (H 44-45).

[contd] He **developed physical symptoms** rapidly,

and at last, **before the Christmas holidays**, he had to be **sent home**.

There his mother received him with satisfaction, **coddled** him, waited upon him,

and suggested that he **might not be physically able to undergo college education**.

He was **almost eighteen** when he sallied forth one September morning,

but troubles immediately followed.

By mid-October he was sick;

a whole flock of **physical symptoms had developed**.

**Before Christmas** the school doctor advised that he **go home**,

and of course this was just what Clarence's subconscious mind wanted.

He certainly had no deep affection for college study. He wanted to get home and receive his mother's kindly ministrations.

He was put to bed, fed, nourished, loved, and **coddled**,

and he even heard his parents discussing the possibility that **he might not be physically able to get a college education**;

that the strain might be too great for him; that he had a somewhat delicate constitution.

15:2.4 It was about this time that I was called into the case, and for at least a year afterward, I am sure, this young man had no kind feelings for me.

The family physician, however, stated that the boy was in good health in all respects,

After a thoroughgoing examination I informed both Clarence and his parents that he was abundantly able to go to college and should be returned thereto post haste;

that he was the victim of a subconscious fluke; that all his trouble was an alibi to get him out of something disagreeable—namely, hard study and absence from home.

He flatly refused to go back to the college he had just left;

so the father determined to try another college,

so another was selected;

and contrary to our advice<sup>1</sup>

compromising by selecting one near enough to home so that the boy could visit frequently.

the parents chose one near home, so that they could visit him frequently

and he could come home for week-ends.

Here, too, all sorts of difficulties developed.

15:2.5 A new set of difficulties arose.

He did not like his roommate;

The boys in the dormitories were coarse and rude. The instructors were dry and uninteresting.

he did not like his teachers; he said that most of his classmates were uncultured.

A very bad cough had come on (H 45).

[contd] At this time,

the boy being now in his twentieth year, the father perceived that the situation was becoming dangerous

and called for advice (H 45).

It was recommended that the boy should get work for the summer, at some distance from home, earning money, preferably at some form of manual labor, to dissipate his fears about his heart, stomach, and practically every other vital organ, and he thereafter be sent West to a coeducational college to complete his college course (H 46).

[contd from four rows up] The mental examination showed that this boy was of excellent intelligence,

By April he had developed a very bad cough,

and the school doctor advised that he go home.

By this time,

notwithstanding the mother's 100 per cent sympathy with her boy,

the father began to get his eyes open.

We had a number of conferences,

and the following September Clarence was sent to a college on the Pacific coast,

going there after having had a series of consultations with me about the tricks of the subconscious, and after reading a letter I had written to the new college physician detailing his whole story and forewarning the doctor to get thoroughly to the bottom of any new physical complaint which the young man might develop as an alibi or defense reaction.

Clarence made good in this new environment after he and his parents had been thus educated about the tricks of the subconscious.

It ought to be said that his I.Q. was 125.

and fully capable of pursuing a college course, rating well above the usual college senior in this respect (H 45).

He had abundant college capacity.

His troubles were due to the failure of his parents to wean him emotionally.

15:2.5 We must not forget that the extraordinary care given children during times of illness is quite likely, through subconscious machinations, to result later in their getting sick when they want special attention.

When I was first called to see Clarence, he was propped up in bed, and altho he was a big husky lad, almost six feet tall, his mother would pat him on the cheek and call him sweetheart.

“He is mother’s beau,” she would say.

Her pet name for him was “mother’s beau.”

I well remember her telling me, in detailing his virtues,

“He doesn’t care for the other girls” (H 46).

how he never seemed to care for girls—

he was so devoted to his own mother.

As a result there appeared a typical “mamma’s boy,” aged nineteen years (H 46).

15:2.6 This is the way young men become sissified and grow up to be typical mama’s boys.

Until this lad was sent to college on the west coast,

Never had he earned a cent in his life.

he had never earned a cent in his life;

“Mamma always gave me my allowance,” he said (H 46).

he always had his weekly allowance handed to him by his mother.

I never saw anything manly about him until after the first summer out West,

[repeated] It was recommended that the boy should get work for the summer, at some distance from home, earning money, ... and he thereafter be sent West to a coeducational college to complete his college course. These suggestions were received by the mother with deep offense, but the father helped the boy to carry out all the recommendations (H 46).

when I induced the father to make him take a job in California

and kept his mother from going out to see him.

It was at the end of this summer's work, after he had made good and earned some real money, that he wrote me a really manly letter—the first communication I ever had from him that was not full of whines, complaints, and peevishness. At last he had submitted to weaning, and weaning was making a man of him.

## CLARA AND HER SELFISH MOTHER

### EXTREME INSTANCES OF PARENTAL DOMINATION (Hollingworth 48)

[*Note:* Sadler's vignette here is similar to one in Hollingworth, in which three bachelor brothers lived with their domineering mother till her death at the age of 113 years. (See H 48-49.)]

15:3.1 Clara was about twenty-two years old when she first came to me. Her father had died when she was very young, leaving her mother and the two girls very well-to-do. Her sister, some five years older, had married soon after finishing college. The older sister and her mother were never on very good terms; they did not understand one another. Clara was the apple of her mother's eye. Enjoying economic independence as they did, not having to worry about food, clothes, and shelter, this mother became very selfish; she monopolized all of Clara's time; almost spoiled her college course, objecting to her even leaving her side for a few hours each day to attend classes;

and what a relief it was to this mother when the girl finished college, for then she could be at home all the time!

15:3.2 But Clara was worried. During her junior year she had fallen in love with a bright young chap and wanted to get married, but she had noticed, whenever he came to see her, that her mother was always taken sick the next day, so that she would have to stay at home from school to wait on her. She would not have a nurse or anyone but this beloved daughter look after her. Naturally, Clara kept the young man away as much as possible until she graduated. Then she announced that they were engaged. The mother just went to pieces, took to her bed, and did not get up until Clara had promised to break the engagement.

15:3.3 That was seven years ago. This young woman is rapidly passing out of the marriageable age. Three or four times since then she has met attractive men, but the moment one calls on her the mother takes to bed the next day. Let me make it clear that Clara's mother really gets sick. She has a sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach, followed by nausea and frequently by vomiting. Her appetite wanes; she loses flesh; becomes anemic; is really sick; has to have medical attention.

15:3.4 Now, do not think for a moment that Clara's mother does this consciously, deliberately, with malice aforethought. It is one of the selfish tricks of her subconscious mind. The thought of losing the companionship and ministrations of her daughter is sufficient to set in motion the mechanism of defense reaction;

but after Clara breaks off with the young men, in less than a week, she is up and doing well. The girl knows that every time she has a man call on her or is taken out by one, her mother is going to be sick forthwith. What can she do about it? Nothing, unless she musters up the courage to break away from it all; and then she is afraid her mother might die, and she would have this on her conscience the rest of her life.

15:3.5 Day by day, week after week, the mother seeks to impress upon her daughter the obligation of a child to stand by its parents. She has just about convinced this young lady—no longer very young—that it would be a sin, a crime, to get married and leave her mother alone. This mother never entertains the idea of living either with the older married daughter or with Clara after she is married. She insists upon monopolizing the younger daughter's life and is doing it very successfully.

15:3.6 But what will Clara do after her mother is gone? If the mother lives ten or fifteen years more, which is likely, the daughter will then be between forty and forty-five, too old to get married—at least too old ever to experience the supreme pleasure of having her own baby's arms about her neck.

15:3.7 It has been a year or more since Clara consulted me. At that time I talked pretty straight to her. I asked her to let me talk with her mother, but knowing that I looked upon the mother as a very selfish woman, she was afraid I would offend her; so she would not agree to the conference.



I have tried to impress upon this daughter the recognition of her duty to herself and society as well as to her mother, but I fear her life will be all but ruined by this selfish woman; that she is going to be left in the world a very lonely and miserable old maid after her mother passes on.

15:3.8 There is another side to all this—the eugenic side. The ne'er-do-wells and wastrels are reproducing themselves abundantly while here is a fine young woman of good stock who will, in all probability, leave no offspring behind. You should see the two lovely children of her older sister; one of them, in inquiring not long since as to why her maiden aunt did not get married, made this significant remark: “It is too bad Aunt Clara can’t get married. Why, Mama, if she doesn’t get married she won’t be able to leave any little samples of herself, will she?” Even the little tots sense the deprivation which this selfish mother is forcing upon her willing daughter.

15:3.9 What an unfair advantage for a mother to take! How ignoble, how unlike that ideal the world has so long looked up to of the unselfish, the devoted, the all but divine mother love!

15:3.10 You cannot blame a physician for being stirred up about these matters when he is called upon to treat the nervous breakdowns and other sorrows and tribulations of the faithful sons and daughters who so magnificently deny themselves marriage and homes of their own in order to stay by their parents, and who very promptly go to pieces, blow up, or drift into melancholy after the parents are dead and gone.

It is the doctor who sees the final state of these unselfish but misguided children, and I, for one, want to record my protest against this consummate selfishness on the part of parents, particularly the clinging and lonely type of mothers.

## WEANING FROM THE PARENTS' SIDE

NATURE OF THE ATTACHMENT TO THE FAMILY (Hollingworth 49)

[I]t is from the mother that the great majority of homesick, regardless of sex, are unable to free themselves (H 50-51).

In fact, a very large number of the conspicuous cases of failure to accomplish psychological weaning are mother-daughter situations, in which the habits of infancy have never been broken.

To say, as certain psycho-analysts would, that these mother-daughter and father-son cases are on a basis of sexual perversion is to violate the scientific law of parsimony; for we do not need this idea to explain the facts (H 51).

15:4.1 It is obvious that the one great obstacle to weaning the adolescent is the mother,

the persistence of so-called mother love,

and of course it is the daughter who most often finds it difficult to escape the clutches of maternal affection.

This fact proves that sex has very little to do in interfering with the psychologic weaning process of adolescence.

15:4.2 It is not strange that boys and girls who have been in every way sheltered, petted, and coddled at home dislike to go out and make their own way in a cold and cruel world.

SOURCE

A domesticated and petted animal

will make every effort to return to its keeper, if suddenly removed from habitual comforts (H 51).

GENERAL SYMPTOMS OF AN UNWEANED CONDITION (Hollingworth 51)

Sometimes the unweaned adult will even refuse to leave the parental home after marriage,

and thus subjects the mate to what is likely to be a very restricted life under the roof of parents-in-law (H 52).

Perhaps it is stipulated that the mate must live “next door,” or on the same street as the parental house.

In this way a wife may, and often does, ruin the career of her husband by restriction; and a husband may ruin the happiness of his wife by compelling her to live under the direction of his parents (H 52-53).

[*Note:* Sadler’s son Bill stayed at his parental home after marrying and having three children. He finally left 533 at the age of 48, upon separating from his wife.]

15: HOME WEANING OF ADOLESCENTS

Even animals that have been petted and well cared for,

if taken from home, unfailingly seek to find their way back to where they have been so sheltered and protected.

15:4.3 Many fearful youth are even willing to live at home after they are married;

if not in the same house,

then in one next door or just across the street.

This may be pleasant to the member of the new marriage firm whose old home is near by,

but it certainly is pretty tough on the new mate.

Far better—at least for a year or two—to get away from home so that the young couple may have a chance to acquire their own mode of thinking and reacting to life—to get their own home established.

Of course, there are exceptions to this as to all other rules, for we cannot make recommendations that will work 100 per cent.

NEW POWERS AND URGES (Hollingworth 56)

It will be objected that the parent ... has after all a right to be served emotionally as well as in other respects by mature offspring, in view of the care given in rearing the latter. The answer to this must be that the ethics of parenthood is a difficult and complex matter,

which lies outside the scope of this discussion, except by implication (H 57).

We are beginning to see ... that human nature is in reality the same for Chinese as for others.

15:4.4 In this connection, the ethics of parenthood comes up for consideration.

Children certainly owe their parents something in return for the care given them during a helpless infancy.

Moses was wise; he had only ten Commandments, but he devoted one of them to the admonition of children not to become too forgetful of the fact that they owe something to their parents. There was no Commandment that parents should love their children. Moses knew full well that parental love was a natural instinct, and that parents would manifest it, as a rule, without admonition; and he knew that many children, especially during their later teens, might become forgetful of their parental obligations, and therefore the Commandment was promulgated, "Honor thy father and thy mother." But he did not say "Sacrifice the whole of life to thy father and thy mother."

15:4.5 Whether or not there is a revolt of youth, of one thing I am certain—more young people are actively participating in the process of adolescent weaning, and this is a good thing.

From all I can gather, this spirit is also beginning to pervade the Orient—

SOURCE

The rising generation in China is rebelling against family domination (H 57, fn).

In order to foresee and guard against an unintentional clutching at their adolescent child in a blind effort to prevent their normal departure, parents should begin early to cultivate interests extraneous to their children.

Such interests

will serve to occupy and balance them against the day of their children's psychological weaning.

The adolescent should neither be thrust forth suddenly from the home

nor be held in bondage to the home.

The weaning should be gradual but complete.

This achievement calls for **patience** and for **insight** on the part of the parents, under the complicated conditions of our advanced civilization (H 57-58).

15: HOME WEANING OF ADOLESCENTS

even Chinese adolescents are rebelling against overmuch family dominance.

15:4.6 In this connection, let me warn parents against becoming exclusively devoted to their children,

and let me urge them always to keep up an interest in each other and in many outside enterprises;

for it is these varied and intriguing interests,

as well as mutual devotion and love,

which serve to comfort them and steady their judgment during the trying times of adolescent weaning.

15:4.7 And let me remind parents that this weaning does not take place on a certain birthday;

youth are not to be suddenly pushed out of the home,

neither are they to be held forever in a firm and loving bondage.

Avoid both extremes.

The weaning is to be gradual throughout its entire process,

and the achievement of the task constitutes the supreme test of parents, calling for that **patient insight**, wisdom, and unselfishness

which represents their crowning contribution to the career of parenthood.

## RESULT OF EARLY SPOILING

II: THE GREATEST DANGER IN OUR LIVES—ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT (Richardson 11)

The “dude” (as we used to call him a generation ago),

and the shallow-pated “flapper” (in the worst sense of this much-abused word), as well as the wife who spends the greater part of her husband’s income in decorating (without unduly concealing!), her body,—

these are still in the narcissistic stage.

They have never really emerged from the period of self-love (R 15).

Next comes the period of all-engrossing love of the mother.

Perfectly natural as this is, it demands sane handling, and the steering of a course midway between the two extremes that we have been considering. Suppose, to take the first, less common danger, there is some reason why the mother bitterly resents the birth of the baby. She may already have too many children;

a girl may have come when a boy was ardently desired;... The normal amount of affection, to which every child is inalienably entitled, never comes to such a child at all (R 17-18).

A far commoner way of mismanaging this period, is of course to go to the other extreme that we call “spoiling.”

15:5.1 The “dude”

and the vain and embellished female

are but hangovers from the earlier Narcissistic stage of self-love.

They represent those who have never outgrown self-admiration.

Following self-love there comes a period of absorbing mother-love.

15:5.2 Children may be in the way, unwelcome;

girls may come when boys are wanted;

but far more disastrous is the tendency of the mother to spoil these children.

It is never too early for an infant to learn the necessity of **certain rules** and regulations for his guidance, and that of the rest of the family; and to gain the sustaining, steadying support that comes of a sensible regimen carefully and conscientiously carried out.

The household whose regular routine is sacrificed to the **whim of an infant** or child, makes the worst possible seeding ground for the neuroses in later life (R 19).

It is so common to see the utmost care used in **sterilizing baby's bottles,**

and to see no expense spared for providing proper clothing, equipment, and ventilation;

while the mental and emotional life of the child, is left totally unconsidered (R 19).

Extreme **sensitiveness,**

overwhelming **homesickness** at the slightest provocation,

persecution at the hands of the sturdier little rascals with whom the child is thrown while at school or at play, are some of the least of his troubles.

Such an individual will never be able to consummate a **happy marriage,** the biological end for which we agreed that every individual was fore-ordained, and the emotional acme of human experience.

**Certain household rules** or nursery systems should be put in operation from the first day of birth.

**Infantile whims** should not disrupt household management.

15:5.3 Great care, nowadays, is exercised in the **sterilization of nursing bottles**

and in other measures having to do with the physical welfare of the child,

while little or no attention is paid to his mental and nervous training, to the early formation of habits of self-control.

15:5.4 Spoiled children are not only bothered later on by

distressing **sensitiveness,**

**homesickness** when they leave the family hearth;

they are not only tormented by their better-controlled playmates;

but, as they grow older,

they have unhappy love affairs and usually contract equally **unhappy marriages.**

For such a one has never learned to love; he is absolutely lacking in the ability to love,—in the self-forgetting and self-sacrificing way in which mature love functions (R 21-22).

The young man who is “his mother’s sweetheart,”—

“so comfortably fixed at home that he does not need to marry,”—

the young woman who loves her father so devotedly

that she cannot listen to the honest, struggling young fellow of her own age who loves her;

are examples of this doting relationship carried to unfortunate but almost inevitable ends.

These unfortunate individuals present a sorry sight, ten or twenty years later (R 22).

Such children are capable of loving only themselves.

They can not love anyone, even of the opposite sex, with an unselfish, self-sacrificing affection.

Nothing can be more fatal to a young man than to be his mother’s sweetheart;

to be so happy in his parental home that he refuses to fall in love with a good woman and hence fails to marry and establish a home of his own.

Equally pitiful is the young woman who loves her father so devotedly

that she turns a deaf ear to the ardent appeals of some honest young fellow who wishes to marry her.

If we look at these home-loving boys and girls fifteen or twenty years later, we invariably are confronted with the spectacle of unhappy if not blasted lives.

15:5.5 When parents observe this tendency of their own children to fall in love with them and cling to the home, they should begin to put an end to the bestowal of overmuch affection. And the weaning can be brought about without any direct clash between mother and daughter or father and son.



**A SHELTERED DAUGHTER**III: PSYCHOLOGICAL WEANING  
(Hollingworth 36)

HOMESICKNESS (Hollingworth 44)

The history of the case showed that the girl was one of two sisters, neither of whom had ever spent a night away from home until this one was sent to boarding-school at the age of sixteen years.

The occasion of being sent away was that her parents desired her to be graduated from a school founded by one of her ancestors. This meant leaving home (H 47).

[contd] Never ill in her life previously, strange symptoms now developed.

She wept almost constantly, complained of weight in the chest, later developed nausea.

She was sent home, recovered at once, and returned.

Again the weeping commenced.

The physical symptoms reappeared.

She now developed what were thought to be indications for a surgical operation, which proved unnecessary, however, as the indications disappeared upon returning home (H 47).

15:6.1 As illustrative of the effects of failure to bring about psychological and emotional weaning during adolescence, Mrs. Hollingworth relates the following story:

15:6.2 The history of the case showed that the girl was one of two sisters, neither of whom had ever spent a night away from home until this one was sent to boarding-school at the age of sixteen years.

The occasion of being sent away was that her parents desired her to be graduated from a school founded by one of her ancestors. This meant leaving home.

15:6.3 Never ill in her life previously, strange symptoms now developed.

She wept almost constantly, complained of weight in the chest, later developed nausea.

She was sent home, recovered at once, and returned.

Again the weeping commenced.

The physical symptoms reappeared.

She now developed what were thought to be indications for a surgical operation, which proved unnecessary, however, as the indications disappeared upon returning home.

## SOURCE

[contd] Returning again to school, she was again so wretched that she could neither study nor mingle socially with the other girls.

She was much ashamed of herself, and in her inexperience had decided that she was “no good,” and that suicide would be advisable (H 47).

[contd] So acute was the emotional condition in this case that it seemed best for the girl to return to her home, and to attend the high school in her own town, undertaking in the meantime a very gradual process of psychological weaning.

This was brought about by going first for one week to an aunt’s house, with full knowledge that the stay was for but a week; later for two weeks; later still to a house not that of a relative.

Then the visit was for three weeks, then for four, until finally the emotional habits were sufficiently revised to permit of normal departure for a whole school term.

[contd] The parents in this instance fully realized the mistake they had made in allowing a child to sleep every night for sixteen years in the same room, and for twelve of these years in the same bed,

without ever once undertaking any revision of the habits thus formed until the drastic change was suddenly made of sending her completely away from home.

They began at once to prepare in a more healthy fashion for the weaning of the younger sister (H 47-48).

## 15: HOME WEANING OF ADOLESCENTS

15:6.4 Returning again to school, she was again so wretched that she could neither study nor mingle socially with the other girls.

She was much ashamed of herself, and in her inexperience had decided that she was “no good,” and that suicide would be advisable.

15:6.5 So acute was the emotional condition in this case that it seemed best for the girl to return to her home, and to attend the high school in her own town, undertaking in the meantime a very gradual process of psychological weaning.

This was brought about by going first for one week to an aunt’s house, with full knowledge that the stay was for but a week; later for two weeks; later still to a house not that of a relative.

Then the visit was for three weeks, then for four, until finally the emotional habits were sufficiently revised to permit of normal departure for a whole school term.

15:6.6 The parents in this instance fully realized the mistake they had made in allowing a child to sleep every night for sixteen years in the same room, and for twelve of these years in the same bed,

without ever once undertaking any revision of the habits thus formed until the drastic change was suddenly made of sending her completely away from home.

They began at once to prepare in a more healthy fashion for the weaning of the younger sister.\*

[\* From *The Psychology of the Adolescent*, by Leta S. Hollingworth. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, H. Appleton & Co., New York.]

[contd] Scores of instances like these could be collected from the experience of those in charge of boarding-schools and colleges.

Homesickness is a very serious disorder to one who is its victim.

Career, or marriage, or both may be rendered impossible by this affliction (H 48).

[Source?]

[In either case [of adolescent hostility] there is an absence of those *internal* and voluntary restraints which alone make *moral conduct* possible (Judge Ben B. Lindsey and Wainwright Evans, *The Revolt of Modern Youth*, p. 107).]

15:6.7 Scores of instances like these could be collected from the experiences of those in charge of boarding schools and colleges.

Homesickness is a very serious disorder to one who is its victim.

Career, or marriage, or both may be rendered impossible by this affliction.

15:6.8 Repeatedly I have called attention to the gulf that exists between two generations. This has to be bridged by patient perseverance, by trying to arrive at a sympathetic understanding, by achieving a working agreement. While the oldsters cannot pal with the youngsters, there can exist more or less perfect mutual respect, and this ideal will be realized if adults do their duty in helping youth face the facts, and in encouraging them to use reason as well as emotion in reaction to life's demands.

Let us remember that *moral conduct* is possible only when strong and effective *internal restraints* are functioning.

1. Sadler inserted himself into this story in much the same way he inserted characters such as Melchizedek, Godad and Bautan into the Salem narratives in Part III of the UB. For example:

Gautama was a real prophet, and had he heeded the instruction of the hermit Godad, he might have aroused all India by the inspiration of the revival of the Salem gospel of salvation by faith (94:7.4).