

Adolescence is a time in your life when you begin to assume new responsibilities, and other people's expectations of you change. For example, you agree to mow a neighbour's lawn while she's away. You forget, and when she returns she tells you that she'll find someone else to do it next time. When you were younger, people were more inclined to overlook this kind of forgetfulness. Or maybe your mother or father would have reminded you.

New responsibilities and expectations give you the opportunity to become more independent and reliable. But you may also feel that your relationships with adults are not as comfortable as they were. Parents, teachers, and other adults in your life may seem more critical of you. In turn, you begin to notice that they are not perfect, that they have faults and weaknesses. This experience is a part of growing up.

Changing relationships always involve some stress, but they also provide an opportunity to grow and to learn. The development of deeper, more mature relationships with family members and friends is a special challenge during adolescence. Since each person is unique, no one can predict exactly how well or how easily this challenge will be met. But it is sure that this challenge cannot be avoided. It too is part of growing up.

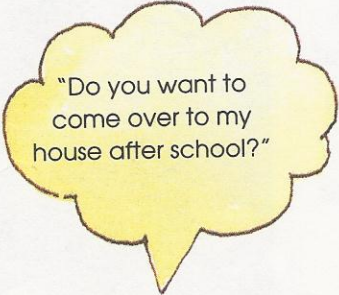


A New Look At Relationships

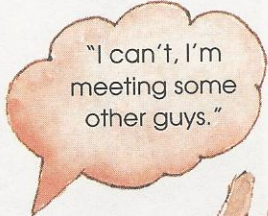
It is natural that relationships change over time. This is especially true during the life stage of adolescence. Tom and his sister, for example, were very close when they were small children. Yet, for the past year, they have had difficulty finding a new way to be friends now that they are older. In a few years this problem may resolve itself, and they will again be able to enjoy each other's company.

If you can remember what you were like when you were only two or three years old, you will realize how much your family relationships have changed. At that age children depend on their parents for everything — a snack when they're hungry, a bath when they're dirty, a hug when they fall and hurt themselves. You continue to depend on your family, but in different ways. You can make yourself a snack and take a bath, but you still need guidance and love as you mature and make decisions about your life.

Your interests are also changing, and this affects your relationships. A hobby or activity that you used to share with a friend may no longer be important to you. You might find that you spend less time with that friend, and that your relationship is more superficial. You develop new interests and new friendships.



"Do you want to come over to my house after school?"



"I can't, I'm meeting some other guys."