THE SHACKLES THAT IS PEER PRESSURE

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“Teenage and high school years play an immense role in shaping the person you are going to become.” --- Alyssa Damm

There numerous studies that showed and proven that the teenage years are the most imperative in the development of a human being. Teenage is the awkward age wherein a person is technically in between childhood and adulthood, it is when the person is preserved like either or neither. Basically, teenage is a bunch of years of confusion, self-doubt, and discovery. People deal with these aspects differently. Some may just breeze through teenage without any problem and some comes out of like a soldier from a warzone, all broken and bruised. Most of the times adults underestimate the hardship of these changes and confusion because their own teenage years are too long ago and in a different time. It is in teenage years that the external pressure from friends, family, and the society takes its toll on an essentially growing child. And parents and teachers sometimes miss the red flags until the damage has already been done.

Peer pressure can affect a child’s state of mind and their disposition especially about themselves. It when they start to doubt themselves and their ability. A confident and vibrant child can turn insecure and unsure through the negative criticism that comes from those around them. It affects the social behavior of the child and the way they present themselves to people. There are cases wherein the child distance themselves from Families and Friends just to avoid the judgement they think that will be cast upon them. If the pressure is coming from the family, some kids turn to their friends for comfort which can either be their solace or a distractive move that can further send them to a
continues spiral. There unfortunate instances that instead of relief from the pressure that the family flung, the children were subjected to even more pressure just to keep up with their ‘friends’. And because they feel like they have nowhere to go, they will hold on to that concept of friendship. On the contrary of what some adults may think, teenagers are smart individuals who already know how to distinguish right from wrong, but they sometimes consciously or subconsciously choose to blur the lines between the two for the sake of fitting in. This when they are very susceptible to persuasion and manipulation which can lead to numerous negative outcomes. This where substance abuse can play in. Teenagers are confused and curious at the same time, a very dangerous combination. Through the influence of social medias or some adult curious kids can dive in head first to alcohol, smoking, and even drugs without thinking of the consequences especially when they have troops to edge them on and back them up. A simple ‘just a try’ can result to a lifelong problem of alcoholism and addiction. Peer pressure can even push a child to commit felony as a form of rebellion or some sort of sport to indulge in with friends. These are the case where children try to please and be accepted. But there are cases were the child just gives up and result to self-loathing and self-harm, the suicide rate charts attest to that. The self-doubt can easily be turned to self-hatred which drives them to a dark corner where they wallow in that defeatism. Hurting themselves and feeling the pain removes other anxiety and thoughts from their heads and they find the numbness consoling. It is morbid and dark. If it is frightening to adults imagine what it’s like for a helpless and lost child.

Peer pressure is a concerning reality that grows with the changing times. As the technology grows the spread of these problems intensify due to the influence of social media wherein things can escalate really quickly and where the standard a person should uphold is so unbelievable high. That is why it is important for adults to asses where the pressure is coming from so that they can intervene early and to make sure that they do not add to the weight. Early counseling is a great preventative measure, to be able to make early teens understand that they are free to choose what they what to do and who they
want to be no matter what people say as long as it does not cross the boundary of morality. Being different and not following what the crowd is doing is not a bad thing, especially today where the oddity of the past are all normal occurrences. Just give it time and all the struggles will fade and all the things that seem to be important to young confused child will be irrelevant in comparison to the future they will achieve.

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