

Raising Yourself — If You Are a Male

Role Model (yes, you)

Looking cool may lead to a not-so-hot future

Are you a gentleman or a jerk?

Sex and you (no, not gender, but the *act of sex*)

Role model (yes, you)

Someday you'll be a role model for someone else — perhaps for your brother, your sister, a neighborhood kid, or (in the future) your own children. That's a big responsibility.

Chances are, you currently have a role model that you look up to. Consider the qualities this person has. Write them down. Figure out what it will take for you to become a positive role model for someone else.

Think about it. If you don't have your own act

together, how can you expect others to look up to you? And if someone does look up to you, wouldn't you like to be worthy of it? Isn't it far better to have a positive influence on others than a negative influence?

The qualities of a good role model are:

- Integrity (honesty)
- Commitment
- Responsibility
- Leadership
- Respect for others
- Charity
- Excellence in work
- Vision (ability to look ahead)

If you are involved in drugs, gangs, vandalism, and violence, you run two risks. One is that no one will look up to you at all. The other is that someone will look up to you, and be destroyed along with you. Either way, society has very little tolerance for people who engage in criminal activity. It is bound to land you, and the people you influence, in deep trouble.

Looking cool may lead to a not-so-hot future

Coolness is an issue that almost everyone faces at some time or another.

The desire for coolness is usually based on vanity, which is a deadly human weakness. The search for coolness often leads to destructive behavior such as smoking, drinking, and using drugs. The antidote for self-destructive coolness is humility. By "humility" I don't mean self-hatred or masochism; I mean exactly the opposite. True humility is actually a form of self-confidence. It's a personal attitude that doesn't seek peer approval, and refuses to give in to pressure or popular fashion. It means living life wisely and with a clear head.

Humility is not something that everyone has naturally.

It comes over time, and if it comes too late it can be devastating. Most “cool” people experience a painful stripping of coolness later in life. As the years go by, they watch the other kids mature and succeed, gaining self-confidence, wealth, independence, and respect.



Hanging out and looking “cool” might win a few friends now. But one day you could end up hanging out at the corner looking for day jobs. How “cool” will you feel then?

Are you a gentleman or a jerk?

It’s another one of those choices you make as you pass through the teen years.

You can already see how some of your peers treat others — including the opposite sex, people with disabilities, people of different races, and other living creatures such as pets.

Some people consider it “cool” to make sarcastic remarks, or to comment on others’ physical appearance. But the impression such people really make is almost always negative. Almost everyone considers them jerks. When anyone tries to make friends through rudeness, don’t fall for it.

Even if you cannot influence your peers who display

“jerk-like” behavior, you can distance yourself from them. People will most likely associate you with these peers even if you do not display the same behavior.

Think of how much better it will be for your self-esteem if people around you consider you a decent, kind person. You’ll have an enviable reputation.

Remember, “You don’t get taller standing on other people.”

Sex and you (no, not gender, but the act of sex)

The act of sex without protection can be deadly. It’s not just the girl’s problem if she gets pregnant. It’s yours too. You too have a responsibility, and if you think you can walk away, think again. There are laws now that will hold you accountable for your actions.

An unwanted pregnancy can significantly affect your life. Suddenly your responsibility will triple — you will need to provide for your partner, the child, and yourself.

Apart from getting your partner pregnant, you risk getting sexually transmitted diseases. And of course, if you get AIDS, there is no cure.