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## Description

# How to adult like a pro. And by a pro, I mean like a teenager

By **Mona Andrei**

Confession: Sometimes I look at my teenagers with a slight tinge of envy. I'm guessing that I'm not the only one because from where I stand (usually atop a mountain of laundry), our kids have it made!

They have their entire lives in front of them.

Their bills are minimal, if they have any at all.

And their responsibilities include... what? Making their beds in the morning? Taking out the garbage? Perhaps. At this stage in the parenting game I've learned to pick my battles.

So yes. Sometimes I wish I could trade places with my teenagers. This feeling is at its peak when I come home from the office and realize that I'm being greeted by a sink full of dirty dishes while my teenagers (the humans I live with; the ones who have been home *FOR HOURS*) are lying on the couch watching something "important" on Netflix.

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Oh, and then there's that lovely question that gets thrown at me before I even have a chance to unburden my shoulders from the straps of my purse and laptop bag. I'm certain you've heard the question too:

*"What's for supper?"*

Slightly tired but mostly overwhelmed, this question triggers a switch. This is when I toggle over to auto-pilot and simultaneously start loading the dishwasher, clearing the counter, returning phone calls, and gathering what I need to prepare supper. If I'm lucky, supper will be about as elaborate as the left-overs from the night before.

(Let's take a moment to acknowledge the person that invented the microwave, shall we?)



Once the phone calls are returned and I'm fully immersed in the hustle and bustle of kitchen duty, this is when my mind eases into the very fine art of daydreaming. My thoughts drift to lazy summer days... lying on a blanket in a backyard... reading a book... a soft breeze... butterflies...

Hey wait a minute!

That's not a daydream. That's a memory! That's ME lying on that blanket as a teenager. The book in my hand was actually *required* reading because of summer school. And I wasn't just lethargically watching that butterfly either. I was fantasizing about being an adult and looking forward to the day when I'd get to make my own decisions.

Suddenly, it all comes back to me.

'I was fantasizing about being an adult and looking forward to the day when I'd get to make my own decisions.'

I was 14 years old and I COULDN'T WAIT to live in my own apartment so that I could do whatever the hell I damn well pleased. (Although I may not have used those words specifically because back then they weren't *allowed* in my vocabulary.)

In hindsight, *WHAT WAS I THINKING?*

Knowing what I know now, I can raise my right hand and pledge:  
Adulthood is not about freedom and making awesome decisions.

In fact, quite the opposite. Being an adult comes with responsibilities and exhaustion.

Being an adult is over-rated and comes with feelings of under-appreciation.

That sense of freedom I longed for? Newsflash: it doesn't exist!

Making my own decisions? Pfffft. When you're an adult, decisions are nothing more than a renumbering of all the things.

What things?

You know, *THE THINGS*. The things on the to-do list.

'Being an adult is over-rated and comes with feelings of under-appreciation. That sense of freedom I longed for? Newsflash: it doesn't exist!'

Shall I vacuum now or after I fold the laundry?

Should I make spaghetti for supper or tacos?

Can I pay the electric bill AND the phone bill this week or just one?

Yes, those things.



The dream of living on my own? Well yes. Maybe that's something I still fantasize about. Don't judge me. Here's an unspoken yet highly probable statistic:  
11 out of 10 parents think about running away from home, at least once \*cough\* a week.

Reality check:

Okay so maybe adulting isn't what we were expecting. But being a teenager isn't all roses and chocolate either. In many ways, being a teenager and being an adult have the exact same challenges. They're both coddled in feelings of insecurity and self-consciousness. Teenager or adult, tell me you don't question yourself sometimes... most of the time...

And here's the kicker:

Whether you're a teenager or an adult, they both take years of experience to master. Then just as you start to get into the swing of one phase of life, you realize that you're entering another.

'In many ways, being a teenager and being an adult have the exact same challenges. They're both coddled in feelings of insecurity and self-consciousness.'

No worries, I'm about to share a little secret with you.

In my many years of adulthood practice (like medical practice but with less patients and more 'oops'), I've come to realize that there's only one way to truly succeed as an adult and it's exactly the same as getting through the teenage years. It involves following a highly developed strategy. In fact, so highly developed that some may even call it sophisticated.

The strategy?

I call it, "*fake it 'till you make it.*"

Just keep doing what you're doing and hold your head up high as you're doing it.

Because here's the real secret:

Nobody knows the rules of adulting. And those that think they do, they're usually doing it all wrong too. But let's not tell them that. Watching the hoity-toity screw up is one of the true pleasures of adult life.

Oh wait! Let me rephrase that:

Watching the hoity-toity screw up *while sipping on a glass of wine* is one of the true pleasures of adult life. (Let's keep this our little secret.)

All that to say that I guess I don't want to trade places with my teenagers after all. (They're not allowed to drink wine.)

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From Mona Andrei's forthcoming book, **SUPERWOMAN: Confessions of a Single Mom**, a funny, messy, reflective look at single motherhood.



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**Mona Andrei** is a digital copywriter, writer, and social media strategist with over 20 years of

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