

The Modern House Adult

In the past few decades, a strange phenomenon has arisen that's crippling families and society. It is the house adult.

Who is a house adult? A house adult is someone old enough and capable to get out of his parents' home and have a job but remains home as a freeloader embedding his buttocks on a worn-out sofa, and in some cases is served breakfast, lunch, and dinner gratis by the house owners—mom or dad. Many house adults do not even wash their own clothes, bed linen, or dishes.

License social worker, Kim Abraham, in her article, "Why So Many Adult Kids Still Live with Their Parents," states: "Adult children living at home is called the "failure to launch" problem, and it's an epidemic these days. . . Over time, our kids stopped learning to solve problems for themselves. They stopped learning how to entertain themselves. And they look to adults to fix things for them. Parents may help their kids out of love and with the best of intentions, but over time we've gone from caring for our children, to caretaking. . . Caretaking is anything we do for our children that they can do for themselves."

Let me hasten to say that there are some adults who have jobs and are living with parents because they want to save money to blast off on their own soon. These adults are those who participate in household chores and keep their personal environment clean. They also contribute financially to the household expenses. These are dependable, responsible adults.

The house adult is usually an irresponsible adult who has been or is still being enabled by her parents. I am aware of some dynamics such as prohibitive rental cost that can compel working adults to stay at home longer. I am not referring to these adults. I am dealing with lazy adults who refuse to work or participate in home management and who are being enabled by their parents.

Parents who allow their adult children to stay at home and just lounge around are inept parents. They are not only doing injustice to their adult children, but also to society. They are enabling their adult offsprings to be dependent and not dependable. They are training them to become indifferent to community development and social cohesiveness. Anna Rita Manca in her article on Social Cohesion states: "Social cohesion refers to the extent of connectedness and solidarity among groups in society. It identifies two main dimensions: the sense of belonging of a community and the relationships among members within the community itself." It is my view that this connectedness and solidarity begins in the home, and it is inculcated by parents. These parents start from an early age teaching their children individual responsibility and community mindedness by requiring them to make up their own beds and do other household chores, go to sleep on time, when and why to turn off their devices, etc.

The phenomenon of the modern house adult must end. It is damaging our society. Parents must take the bull by the horn and begin a "get-out-my-house" movement. Here are some suggestions:

1. Parents, you need to first admit that your adult child(ren) living with you should either be living on their own; or if they will remain for a while, be an active participant in home care.
2. Parents, you need to require your child to find a job, no matter how small.
3. You can help them access training to acquire the skills to have a job.
4. You can stand up to your adult child living with you and say something like this:
“Son/daughter, I have enabled you for too long and made you an indolent adult. Now things are going to change. I am giving you six months to find your own place to live. Three months from now, if you choose to remain in this home, I will be charging you a monthly rent of \$300. As long as you are here, I will no longer be washing your clothes, serving you food, nor will I be cleaning your environment. You are an adult, and I will start treating you as one.”
5. You can assist your child to find a job. Help him navigate through the process by calling potential employers, filling out applications, etc.
6. You can also show them how to budget their potential income.
7. You can make a chart of chores in which the entire household will participate. That is, in addition to his or her own space (bedroom, etc.), the adult will need to participate, along with other family members, to keep the house clean and tidy.
8. If the adult child is addicted to alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other substances, get help for them. The New Life House article, “Lazy Adults Living With Parents: How To Support Without Enabling,” states: “If your child has been struggling with a substance abuse disorder, it’s important to be patient and understanding as you help an adult child living at home cope and transition into adult life. Substance abuse is a disorder and needs to be treated with compassion and understanding. Start by seeking professional help, such as a therapist or support group, to help your loved one understand and manage the underlying causes of their addiction.”
9. Parents don’t be lazy. You have enabled too long. Help your adult child create a dream and fulfill it.

Parents, start today to get your adult child out of your home or at least become a respectful, responsible, and dependable adult living in your home. Have no more freeloaders living in your home.

Barrington H. Brennen is a marriage and family therapist. Send your questions or comments to question@soencouragement.org or call or text 242 477 4002 or visit www.soencouagement.org.