

5 Reasons Your Parents Don't Understand Your Stress Level

By Elyssa Andrus



Before he was a husband, dad, and gazillionaire movie star, Will Smith was just a teenager with a bad '80s outfit and a message: "[Parents just don't understand.](#)"

Sure, he'd go on to battle aliens, save the world, and make out with Eva Mendes, but the stress the

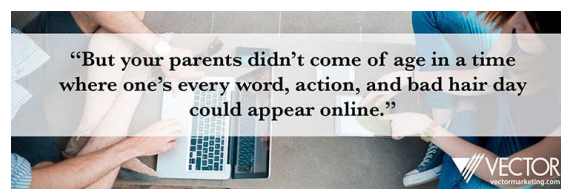
Fresh Prince was feeling as a young adult was real. His parents didn't get it. And yours may not either.

School. Work. Extracurricular activities. Snapchat. You've got a lot going on. In fact, in a survey we conducted of more than 1,300 students, 74 percent of high school students said their number one challenge was balancing their responsibilities. It's hard to manage it all. Your high school years can be totally stressful, but your parents may have a hard time sympathizing. Here's why:

1) They didn't grow up in the digital age. Sure, Mom finally figured out how to take a selfie (well, kind of) and post it to Facebook. Dad's pretty stoked about his LinkedIn profile. But your parents didn't come of age in a time where one's every word, action and bad hair day could appear online.

They didn't grow up under a digital microscope, and they didn't have to deal with time-sucking smartphones and social media when they were young. Did your parents ever get 75 texts during a biology lecture? Didn't think so.

That's why they may not get that avoiding distracting technology requires ninja-like focus. And it can be really stressful at times. (If you've got a good technique for managing time spent on social media, tell us in the comment section below.)



2) They've forgotten what it's like to be a student. So your parents get all teary-eyed and wistful every time they hear their school fight song. Of course they do. Two decades after the fact, it's easy to romanticize school into a time of parties and football games.

But they're forgetting the hard parts: pop quizzes, essays, mid-terms, finals, and that teacher who takes pride in making students cry. School isn't all fun and fight songs. You've got a lot to juggle. It's no cakewalk balancing school, work, and a social life. And everything sure looks easier in hindsight.

3) They've got their own heavy stuff to deal with: Bills, taxes, mortgages, cholesterol. Adults have adult-sized problems, which can make your stress seem small in comparison. Maybe they are having their own relationship problems and so have written off your (very real) heartache. Maybe stress at work has left them unsympathetic to your stress at school. Whatever the reason, you need to respect that your parents have a lot of grownup problems to deal with. At the same time, they need to respect that you've got your own challenges to face.

4) The decisions they are making aren't determining their destiny: Sure, it's tough to decide what color to paint the guest room or whether to re-seal the back deck. But, most of the decisions your parents are making are small potatoes compared to what you're tackling. Like, um, [what to do with the rest of your life](#). You're at a crossroads. Choosing a career trumps choosing a chiropractor any day. But because your parents have most of the Big Questions figured out, it might be hard for them to remember the stress that accompanies them.

5) They've had years to learn how to manage stress: When it comes to juggling responsibilities, your parents have had decades of practice. And certainly they've picked up a few stress relief and management techniques along the way. Whether they practice yoga or just have insane [time management skills](#), they're probably better at handling stress than you are. (No worries. You are way better at texting.)

Maybe they've learned not to procrastinate. Maybe they don't over-commit the way you do. It's cool — they've had years and years and years to figure it out. Some day you'll be a Zenlike a stress-busting master.

But until then, your folks need to back the H off when running out of Mountain Dew during finals week gives you a full-on meltdown. You may have to remind them, but they were young once too. Just ask Will Smith about it.



Now, of course, this whole article ignores one important point. Just because your parents may not understand your stress level doesn't mean that you're off the hook for managing your time properly. In fact, people who manage their time properly at a young age set themselves up for an exciting future.

In other words, if you can say NO to constantly checking your Instagram feed at 16 years old? You'll be a lot more likely to say NO to [whatever-might-be-distracting-you](#) from starting that business, working that corporate job, or saving that extra money when you're 20, 30 and 40. We all know adults who never learned this skill and are paying for it now.

If you want to learn time management OUR WAY check out the Christ Centered Time Management in the STRESS LESS resources from CCYM.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference Council on Youth Ministry (CCYM) is open to youth in grades 6-12. For more information, contact CCYM@BWCUMC.org.