

A generation gap of a different kind

by Paula Howard

In this age of multiple marriages, I find myself in a position I thought unusual, but discovered is common. I am blessed with two children, ten years apart. My daughter will soon turn twelve and step into the twilight zone of teenhood. My son verges on the tumultuous, torturous, terrible twos. One sobs her way through puberty and the other believes he's omnipotent; a girl with her head stuck in the clouds, and a boy with his head stuck in

a chair.

Although it sounds as if I'm a prime candidate for a rubber room and finger paints, the situation actually has more pros than cons. I don't worry about early morning, before school arguments — mainly because the two-year-old's vocabulary is rather limited. Neither complains about the other borrowing clothes. And jealousy over my attention seldom enters the scene because they have such different needs.

The only real problem comes when my son plays with the twelve-year-old's things. The lone solution for the dilemma is to make sure their shared room stays picked up. For the first time in twelve years, my daughter must keep her room neat and tidy. This truly irritates, aggravates and annoys her.

Otherwise, the two get along in grand style. My daughter diapers, clothes, feeds and bathes the baby. He, in turn, showers her with sticky hugs and slobbery kisses. They play, read, do puzzles and laugh together. Despite their differences, they adore each other. And I cherish them both.

Considering the fact that a famous personality test can't distinguish between neurotics and parents of teenagers, a ten-year breather could be what I need to save my sanity.

But, perhaps the biggest plus to having such a large gap between children is yet to come. While most parents lament, "If only I could do it over again!" I've got the chance to live it. Personally, I think everyone should have children ten years apart.

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