

Emerging Adulthood – The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties

by Jeffrey Jensen Arnett

If only I had read *Emerging Adulthood – The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties* by Jeffrey Jensen Arnett when my daughter was a freshman, I would have had a better understanding of how and why her college experience and her view of life after college differ so much from mine.

Arnett describes the years from 18 to somewhere around 25 as the period of “emerging adulthood” – a period of identity exploration, instability, self-focus, transition, and seemingly unlimited possibilities. No longer do our children expect to finish school, get a job that leads to a career path, marry and start a family in their early twenties. Rather, current American society encourages young people to explore, try out new experiences, dabble in romantic relationships, and wait before getting married and having kids. According to Arnett, what used to occur in the early twenties is now taking place in the late twenties or even beyond. No wonder my daughter and her friends seem unsure of their plans for after graduation. They basically have no specific plans and, according to Arnett, probably don’t even think that they should.

Jeffrey Jensen Arnett’s *Emerging Adulthood* is an informative read for parents with children ages 18 through 25. The writing is clear and the research well documented. His explanations helped me understand how changing norms in society have actually delayed the age at which young people consider themselves adults. And he very clearly explains the stages they typically go through before becoming self-sufficient and seeing themselves as adults. This is a book that every parent should read.

Judy Maillis

