

Youth Culture Lesson
Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
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Risky Business

Why Some Teens Take Chances

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What Happened:

“Teens act like they’ll live forever.”

That’s what some adults say when they see teens drive too fast, play too hard or (ahem) take unnecessary chances.

Some teens do strange, risky things for the opposite reason: They believe the clock is ticking, and they only have a few short years left.

According to new research,*about 15 percent of teens believe they have only a 50-50 chance of reaching age 35. Some – about 1.4 percent of all teens polled – said there was virtually no chance they’d live to see their mid-30s.

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Experts say this sort of pessimism can turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy. During the next seven years, scientists found these teens were more likely to:

*Contract AIDS

*Get in serious, injury-inducing fights

*Attempt suicide

Talk About It:

Taking risks can be fun and even rewarding, but it also can be dangerous.

What’s the riskiest thing you’ve ever done? Were you happy you did it?

Why do you think you took that risk? Is it because you’d thought it’d be fun?

Were all your friends were doing it?

Do you know people who take risks because they don’t have very long to live?

Why do you think they feel that way?

What the Bible Says:

“Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. For man does not know his time” (Ecc. 9:11-12).

“Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly” (Prov 26:11).

“This is the path of those who have foolish confidence; yet after them people approve of their boasts. Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd And the upright shall rule over them in the morning” (Ps. 49:13).

“The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it” (Prov 22:3).

“My times are in your hand” (Ps. 31:15).