

Lesson 2

Grow Up!

"If I had known that I would lose my job and have to start over, I never would have allowed myself to get in trouble."

Mark Fairchild, 31, Landscape Designer, Asheville, NC



Tom looks over at Alan's empty desk and remarks, "I can't believe he's late again."

"He was probably out partying last night as usual. I don't know how he does it," Margie shakes her head.



Craig adds, "I don't know why he does it. Partying gets old after a while."

"Well, if he's not careful, he's going to lose his job," Tom sighs. "He sits around waiting for someone to give him work. He should be asking how he can help."

Grinning, Craig says, "The way Alan talks, you'd believe he is headed for a big promotion. He admires himself too much!"

"Come on!" Margie says. "He can't really believe he'll get a promotion. He rarely shows up on time. He needs to grow up."

Action: Alan is over 18 and has a full-time job, but his coworkers don't view him as an adult.

List two adult characteristics that Alan needs to develop to change his coworkers' opinions.

- 1.
- 2.

What Makes an Adult?

In most states of the U.S. you automatically have the rights and responsibilities of an adult on your 18th birthday. But what does it mean to be an adult? What does it feel like? How is being an adult different from how you are now?



Action: Express your views on adulthood by filling in the blanks below.

1. An adult is someone who

2. I'm looking forward to being an adult because

3. I'm not looking forward to being an adult because

What Makes an Adult? (Continued)

4. I'll know I'm an adult when

The kind of work I do as an adult will affect the following areas of my life:

1. Economic independence
2. Self-image
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Three obstacles that could damage or ruin my chance of a successful career as an adult:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Three of my adult role models and the reasons they are role models:

1. Adult's name or relationship:

Role model because

What Makes an Adult? (Continued)

2. Adult's name or relationship:

Role model because

3. Adult's name or relationship:

Role model because

What adult qualities do you already exhibit that will help you be successful in a career and in your day-to-day activities? What qualities do you exhibit that others would consider childlike, ones that would endanger your career?

My adult qualities that will help me in a career include:

My childlike qualities that will endanger my career if I don't change include:

One Mistake, One Doomed Career

Will most mistakes be overlooked when you're an adult? Can all obstacles be overcome? What can you do to get around an obstacle?

Teens and children usually get several chances to correct their mistakes. Even the courts are lenient on first-time and second-time youth offenders. However, that changes when you become an adult. One serious mistake or error in judgment can bring a dramatic change in your adult life. Read Mark's story. His life was sidetracked by bad judgment.

Mark, 23, pictures himself climbing back into his big rig one day. Like most truckers, he loves traveling the country with no one looking over his shoulder. He enjoys the company of other drivers, and long-haul truckers make a good living. Last year, he bought a house and a pickup truck. He also met a new girlfriend he's crazy about. His excellent driving skills and high school diploma once made him a popular driver.

Drivers with Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDLs) are subject to random drug and alcohol testing at all times. Mark has always known that to earn and keep a CDL, he must use good judgment and self discipline.

One weekend, Mark's girlfriend persuaded him to join her and her friends when they smoked marijuana. The very next day he was chosen for a random drug test and tested positive for marijuana. His life changed overnight.



One Mistake, One Doomed Career (Continued)

Here are the consequences of Mark's actions:

- He had to stop long-haul driving immediately and could not return to duty until he completed a Department of Transportation (DOT) substance abuse evaluation and treatment program.
- Although Mark's employer thought highly of him, there was no non-safety sensitive work available for him in the company. He lost his truck driving job, and he had to find other work to provide income until he completed the required substance abuse program.
- The DOT program cost Mark over \$1,000 and took four months to complete. Now that he is finished he has to be randomly drug tested 12 more times during the next year and pay for the tests himself.
- Although Mark was legally allowed to return to duty after the program, no trucking or transportation company is likely to hire him.
- A year later, Mark is still trying to get back into trucking. He works as a day laborer, but the work doesn't pay as well as truck driving.
- Mark was not able to keep up the payments on his home or new truck and lost both. He still has his girlfriend.
- Mark's trucking friends are shocked. They all know that a failed drug test means that his trucking days are probably over for good.

One Mistake, One Doomed Career (Continued)



Action: Mark has to take a look at his life and decide what to do next, now that his career is damaged. You can help him pull his life together. Write your answer to each question.

1. Commercial drivers know that one failed drug test can destroy their careers. What do you think of this consequence of Mark's one mistake?

2. Mark's mistake cost him more than just a good income. List two things that Mark lost in addition to money. One example is provided for you.
 - a. Satisfaction in his job
 - b.
 - c.

Love Won't Feed the Baby

Like some adults, many teens who fall in love allow their emotions to trump their better judgment. For both adults and teens, this can lead to a sexual relationship, especially if they are involved with a special girlfriend or boyfriend.

One difference between adults and teens in a relationship is that adults often have the income, education, and experience to help them get past hurdles and barriers that life throws their way. For teens, these barriers can be very hard to overcome. Read Rob and Katie's story.

When Katie discovered she was pregnant, she and Rob decided to raise the baby together. They hadn't planned on being teen parents, but they were in love and didn't like the alternatives.

Katie dropped out of high school and decided to get her GED after the baby was born. Rob completed high school and began working at a friend's automobile service station. He hoped to learn to be a mechanic while he earned money. Even with overtime, though, Rob's paycheck wasn't enough to support a family.

When the baby was four months old, Katie took a full-time job as a receptionist at a fitness studio. With Katie and Rob working at low-income jobs, they decided to live with Rob's family so his mother, who cares for other babies, can take care of their child also.



Love Won't Feed the Baby (Continued)

Now, Rob and Katie work most of the time. They're always tired, and they have regular arguments about money and responsibilities. After one serious fight, Katie decides to take the baby and move home with her mother.

Katie tells her best friend, "I can't believe we fight. Rob still loves me, but he wants to be with his buddies more than with the baby and me."

She sighs, "My mom is tired at night. She says it's my job to look after the baby, but Rob doesn't like it if I bring the baby when we go out. I didn't think it would be this hard. Now, I don't know what to do."

Here are the consequences of Katie's and Rob's actions:

- Katie and the baby live with her mother who also works. The baby's daycare takes a big chunk out of Katie's paycheck.
- Child support payments are taken out of Rob's paycheck and automatically sent to Katie. This will continue for over 17 years, until the child is 18 years old.
- Rob's pay is low, so the amount for child support isn't much. Even so, Rob can't afford to live on his own. He's decided to move in with his brother.
- Katie plans to make time between working and caring for the baby to take a GED course. But, so far she hasn't found the motivation or energy to accomplish this goal.

Love Won't Feed the Baby (Continued)

- Rob can't find a shortcut to becoming a mechanic. It will take time, more training, and certifications to earn a good income.
- Katie looks for better paying jobs, but she doesn't have the required experience or skills.
- Katie dreams of continuing her education after she gets a GED, but having to care for the baby will interfere.
 - She won't be able to travel for her job.
 - Working long or odd hours will be a problem.
 - She will need unexpected time off when the baby is sick.
 - She must work in a location where child care is nearby.
- Katie doesn't see much of her high school friends. Sometimes a girlfriend asks her to go out, but Katie doesn't have free time or money to spend on herself . She is becoming isolated and lonely.
- Rob is attracted to another girl. She is fun to be around and can go out any time. It's a relief to be with someone who doesn't depend on him for anything and who doesn't complain so much. He feels guilty about Katie and he knows he is failing in his responsibilities.



Active and Passive Decision Making

Active decision-making means choosing goals and taking steps to reach them. *Passive* decision-making means going along with whatever happens in life. This can lead to remaining around in circles or in a lot of different directions.

Rob and Katie are passive decision-makers. They didn't choose to be teen parents; they let it happen. They didn't choose careers; they took jobs they could find. Katie is thinking about obtaining a GED, but she has not followed through. Her passive nature shows in the decisions she makes, including decisions about her relationship with Rob.



Action: List active decisions Katie and Rob can make to improve their career outlook, overcome their negative feelings, and balance their work and family life.

Rob and Katie can do these things:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Lesson 2 Self-Check

1. At what age most states of the U.S. do you automatically have the legal rights of an adult?
 - a. 16
 - b. 20
 - c. 18
 - d. 21

2. Which of the following statements is true?
 - a. The Courts treat youth and adult offenders the same.
 - b. The Courts never give second chances to anyone.
 - c. One major mistake in your adult life is not enough to cause damage.
 - d. Teens and children usually get more chances from Courts to correct their mistakes.

3. Smoking pot one time
 - a. cannot lead to legal problems in the United States
 - b. can result in job loss
 - c. is none of an employer's business
 - d. cannot have an effect on a person's career

4. Which of the following can influence your good judgment?
 - a. Peer pressure
 - b. Emotions
 - c. Life obstacles
 - d. All of these choices



Lesson 2 Self-Check (Continued)

5. Which of the following is true for many teenage parents?
- a. The young parents are forced to take on adult problems.
 - b. Making enough money to support a family is hard.
 - c. The young parents' education is interrupted.
 - d. All of these choices
6. Child support payments end at what age?
- a. 18 years in all states
 - b. 18 years in some states and 21 years in other states
 - c. 16 years in all states
 - d. 13 years in some states and 16 years in other states
7. Active decision making occurs when
- a. you choose your own goals
 - b. you take steps to reach your goals
 - c. you do not allow other people to make choices for you
 - d. All of these choices
8. Passive decision making occurs when
- a. you go along with whatever happens
 - b. you never listen to others' advice
 - c. you make all decisions for and about yourself
 - d. None of these choices.

Answers: 1. c, 2. d, 3. b, 4. d, 5. d, 6. b, 7. d, 8. a