

What is Adulthood? 20 Defining Characteristics of a True Adult

How can one classify a true adult? Many people directly attribute age to adulthood. The problem with this methodology becomes evident when you discuss the topic with various people of different cultural backgrounds. If you ask each of them what age they believe constitutes the point at which a person progresses from childhood into adulthood, their answers will always be different. Why? Because every one of the answers are based on subjective opinion. Adulthood is not based age; it's based strictly on emotional maturity.

So what constitutes emotional maturity, and thus adulthood? Here are 20 defining characteristics of a true adult:

1. Realizing that maturity is an ongoing process, not a state, and continuously striving for self improvement.
2. Able to manage personal jealousy and feelings of envy.
3. Has the ability to listen to and evaluate the viewpoints of others.
4. Maintains patience and flexibility on a daily basis.
5. Accepts the fact that you can't always win, and learns from mistakes instead of whining about the outcome.
6. Does not overanalyze negative points, but instead looks for the positive points in the subject being analyzed.
7. Is able to differentiate between rational decision making and emotional impulse.
8. Understands that no skill or talent can overshadow the act of preparation.
9. Capable of managing temper and anger.
10. Keeps other people's feeling in mind and limits selfishness.
11. Being able to distinguish between 'needs' and 'wants'.
12. Shows confidence without being overly arrogant.
13. Handles pressure with self composure.
14. Takes ownership and responsibility of personal actions.
15. Manages personal fears.
16. Able to see the various shades of grey between the extremes of black and white in every situation.
17. Accepts negative feedback as a tool for self improvement.
18. Aware of personal insecurities and self-esteem.
19. Able to separate true love from transitory infatuation.
20. Understanding that open communication is the key to progression.

Above all, true adults do what they have to do when it is required of them, and they do what they want when they can. They are able to distinguish between the two and manage their time and efforts accordingly.

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