

At Age 14

Ok, I was not a macho dude; but on the contrary, my height and weight were somewhat on the small size. Yes, a late bloomer, I was now fitted with glasses and had the undesired feature of curls in my hair.

Such concerns (glasses, hair and size) seem ridiculous now; but when your 14, it can be major issues. So influenced and subject to the little world of high-school, we are literally slaves to a society made-up of kids like us - who are hardly in position or frame of mind to judge us.

I don't miss the days of my youth and, in particular, the transition of those teen years. Emotionally, it is a tough time that can be measured by perceived popularity, physical attraction and maturity, and other such superficial matters that, at the time, are monumental and life-changing.



At 14, an unreturned love (or infatuation) can seem like the *end of the world*. Humiliation and embarrassment can arrive on the heels of what "she said" or what "they thought" or what "you are wearing" and so on and so forth and...who knows what else?

At 14, I moved from South Carolina to Alabama; going from a predominately black school to majority white school; from a middle school (called junior high) to a consolidated school of grades seven through twelve. At this new school, students could smoke (at the "smoking" tree) and could chew or dip tobacco in physical education. Besides these memorable differences however, kids are kids and schools are...well, schools.

This age can be a difficult time but, thank the Lord, is a time that we can soon overlook if we need to – because 14 is just one year of a very young life. Being only one year, this age hardly determines who we are – or more importantly – who we turn-out to be. You may be great, popular student at 14 and, by 17, something bad has gone wrong; conversely, 14 may be better left behind when 17 brings you to cool-dude stardom or some similar title. Who knows what will happen in those unpredictable and unexplainable teen years.

Older folks have mixed feeling about high school and those years such as 14: some remember them to the detail, others have put them in some deep corner of their memory, and still others are occasionally reminded by the events and age of their own children. I would like to think that my circumstance is the later where, as each of my children experiences a birthday, I think of my own similar age and try to imagine what they are doing, thinking and just being...

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