

Adolescence
by Ian McMahan

Chapter 12
Intimacy

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The Importance Of Friends
In Adolescence

- **Self-disclosure: communicating intimate information to another**
- **Reassurance, support about adolescent changes**
- **Increased ability to see another's viewpoint**
- **Understanding, sympathy, mutual trust**

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How Friendships Develop

- **Sullivan: changing interpersonal needs, relationships**
- **Preadolescent need for intimacy, same-sex "chums"**
- **Adolescence merges intimacy, sexual needs**
- **Erikson: young adults and intimacy versus isolation**
- **Bowlby: working models affect later relationships**
- **Secure parent attachments predict closer friendships**

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Who Becomes Friends With Whom

- **“Birds of a feather flock together”**
- **Common interests, activities, ways of thinking, behaving**
- **Similar age, gender, ethnicity, class, religion**
- **Interacting influence of selection, socialization**
- **Other-sex friends widespread by middle adolescence**
- **For boys, female friends more rewarding**

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Friendship Benefits And Risks

- **High-quality versus low-quality friendships**
- **High-quality: intimacy, trust, warmth, support**
- **Low-quality: domination, conflict, rivalry, betrayal**
- **Self-esteem linked to friendship quality**
- **Close friendships protect against bullying, victimization**

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Adolescents And Dating

- **From same-gender to mixed-gender groups**
- **From group dates to boyfriend/girlfriend**
- **Almost all have dated by age 15**
- **Similar dating trends across US ethnic groups**
- **Dating mostly a North American custom**
- **Traditional cultures limit teen mixed-gender socializing**

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How Romance Develops

- Attachment, passion, sexual attraction merge in adolescence
- Early adolescent infatuation to affiliative relationships
- Middle, late adolescence—intimate, committed relationships
- Sternberg: love blends intimacy, passion, commitment
- Early attachment linked to romantic relationship quality
- Rejection sensitivity: looking for, expecting rejection

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How Romances End

- Almost all adolescent couples break up
- Generally, one partner rejects the other
- Leads to anger, pain, despair, sense of loss
- Self-blame, rumination linked to depression
- Initiator of breakup suffers less distress

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Culture And Adolescent Sexuality

- Adolescent sexual expression linked to culture
- Restrictive: no sexual expression before adulthood
- Semirestrictive: sexual restrictions not rigidly enforced
- Permissive: sexual activity expected in children, adolescents
- US sees teen sexuality as causing problems
- Many other developed countries less restrictive

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Sexual Activity In Adolescence

- In US, 70% experience intercourse by 18
- From solitary to partnered sex
- Boys choose younger, girls older partners
- Steady trend toward earlier sexual initiation
- Friends' attitudes, behaviors, predict sexual activity
- Abstinence education programs show little effect

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Sexual Minorities In Adolescence

- Sexual minorities: orientation not exclusively heterosexual
- Many teens experience same-sex attraction, behavior
- Sexual orientation and genetic, prenatal, childhood factors
- Sexual minorities face insults, harassment, rejection
- Difficulties finding friends, potential romantic partners
- Recently US acceptance has risen steadily

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Risks Of Adolescent Sex

- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes, HPV, HIV/AIDS
- HIV/AIDS widespread among third-world teens
- Most teen pregnancies in US unintended
- One-third of sexually active girls get pregnant
- Many more teen pregnancies in US than in Europe

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