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Subramuniyaswami, Sivaya H.H. There is an old saying: "If you can't beat them, join them," and this is wise in certain respects. We are thinking of the young adults who will not follow the traditional family patterns of their parents. Admittedly, they can be made to fear their parents and be forced to obey for a time. The problem with such an approach is that it usually ends up with the sons or daughters losing respect and leaving home as soon as they are able. Often parents take the authoritarian approach, not realizing there are alternatives. In actual practice it is more useful to work with children as they grow and mature. They can be reasoned with and will be very open if the parents show a definite interest in their way of life, their natural inclinations. To lament the modern young adult's behavior, to merely criticize it, is not going to help. My advice has always been to stay close but at the same time give them some space to grow and mature in today's world. Today's world is not all that bad. True, it has its challenges, its temptations and definite drawbacks, but it is today's world and the world of tomorrow. We have to move forward. We cannot recreate yesterday's world or wish for the return of olden days.

Parents of all ages and all cultures have always worried about their teenagers. They are perfect devas until puberty, when so many changes come, when prarabdha karmas - karmas of this birth - begin to manifest and the growing-up process intensifies. Is there a set way, a rule book, for raising Hindu children in a society that is such that the world has never seen? I think not. But the basic principles of Hinduism have never failed. Teach the young adults to look ahead mentally into the future before making a decision and to base their decisions for life on the value judgments of Sanatana Dharma. What are these values? Peace, harmony with our fellowman, tolerance of others, appreciation of the wisdom of those who have gone before us, purity of thought, word and deed. Many parents hesitate teaching Hinduism to their children as they do not want to make them different than their school chums. But it is only a "storybook Hinduism" that would do that. We do not need stories these days that were created for a society that no

longer exists. We do need the metaphysical and psychological Truths which are as eternal as space. These should be well implanted into their minds. One is never too young or too old to learn Truths that never fail. World thinking is built on a few Truths and more than a few false concepts. Never give up on your young adult, whatever the problems that arise. He or she will be just fine. They need you as a friend, someone to come home to when the going gels rough - someone who accepts and loves and tries to understand. It is possible, you know, to close the door on them in heart and mind (especially when they are not obeying). Remember that there are others out there who will take them in and may lead them further astray. Be a friend and always keep the doors of heart and mind open. Listen to their problems and their needs, even when you may not agree with them.

The new breed of swamis that have come up in the past three decades relate well to the young adults born as Hindus but raised as modern youth with little knowledge of their religion. These swamis (the leaders of the Rajarajeswari Peetham come to mind) know the problems, the pitfalls and the solutions. They too were raised "modern" and by their own conviction learned Eternal Truth and now preach it with a vigor and practical clarity that is unsurpassed. Introduce your young adult to them, and he or she will find an understanding friend. This group of religious leaders have made themselves available through summer and winter camps, personal appointments or live-in ashram programs.

When we are young, the old ways can seem stiff, old-fashioned or just plain silly. Help your young adult see into the reasons and discover the meaning in our dharma. Then it will belong to them, never to be lost, but to be preserved and passed along to their children when the time comes and the cycle begins again.