WHY I WANT A TEENAGER

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[Assignment: Respond to our readings and the issues we have discussed in class by writing a short essay making a point about families and family relationships.]

(1) Parents and teenagers usually have different ideas about each other’s roles. The teenager does whatever the parent wants done immediately after being asked or better yet, before being asked. Don’t get me wrong, my parents were not slave drivers nor did they abuse me, but the lines of authority were clear in our household. I have done many things for my parents and usually hated doing them, but I did do them. Most of the time these things were done with great care and on time. Many times my parents would take credit for the good work I did, especially when company came over. So let others seek wives and husbands, I want a teenager.

(2) I want a teenager who cuts the grass and weeds my flower garden so that when my friends come over, I can tell them how hard I’ve worked to make my landscaping beautiful. I want a teenager who dusts the furniture, vacuums the carpet, does the dishes and the laundry so that I may, once again, show my friends how neat and clean I keep my house. I want a teenager who does all these things without being told and without complaining because that is what I did when I was a teenager. I want a teenager to do all these things so I have time to go out to lunch with my girlfriends or so that I may watch all my soap operas and still have free time to spend with my husband when he comes home from work.

(3) I want a teenager who stays home from a date to spend quality time with me and my guests. When my guests arrive I will be fashionably late, and my teenager will gladly entertain them. When my guests and I are thirsty, my teenager will bring us coffee and tea. When my guests and I are hungry, my teenager will serve us our food. When my guests and I are talking, my teenager will politely leave the room. When my guests are ready to leave, my teenager will bring them their coats and hats. And when my guests are walking out of the door, my teenager will tell them how nice it was to see them again, even though my teenager has no memory of ever seeing them before.

(4) I want a teenager who is athletic so that I may tell all my friends how much time and money I have spent to enable my teenager to play with the very best equipment on the very best teams. I want a teenager who is musically inclined so that I may relate stories of how great I was as a teenager at all of my recitals. I want a teenager who is intelligent so I can tell all my friends that my teenager is number one in the class. I want a teenager who has an after school job so that I will not have to give her any money. I want a teenager who gets involved in charity work so that I can tell my friends what a great person I brought my teenager up to be.

(5) I want a teenager who knows she can talk to me about sex so that I can throw it back in her face after the next church service. I want a teenager who has a steady boyfriend so that I can tell her she does not need
to be so serious with him. I want a teenager whom I can con into going out with my best friend's son, of course, only as a favor so that the poor fellow has a date. I want a teenager who loves it when I try to be Cupid after failing many times before. And I want a teenager who wants to listen to stories about me when I was dating many nice young men in high school.

(6) I want a teenager who comes home one minute late for her curfew and wakes me from a deep sleep so that I can yell and say that I have been up all night worrying. I want a teenager who comes home from eight hours of school and three hours of practice so that I can tell her what a rough day I had at home. I want a teenager so that when I have a bad day I can blame it on her when my husband gets home. I want a teenager who complains about never getting a break because of school, sports, homework, after school job, and church so that I can remind my teenager how hard I had it as a teenager. I want a teenager who complains about not having enough time so that I can explain how hard it was to fit in my aerobics between my soap operas.

(7) As you were reading the essay, you may have concluded that my parents probably have a different story to tell. Undoubtedly, the life of a teenager looks very different when viewed from a teenager's or a parent's perspective. As parents try to figure out teenagers, they need to remember that teenagers are not objects that they own. We teenagers are human beings and deserve respect for the things we do for our parents. My parents have done a lot for me too, but it was their choice to have a child, and they need to take full responsibility for that. I agree that teenagers need to help out and do their part around the house, but they also need their own time and space to grow into their distinct selves. Doing everything the parents want, exactly how the parents want it done and when they want it done does not allow much freedom to grow.