

each of us turned sixteen our parents bought us a car. They did want us to learn responsibility so we had to pay for part of our cars on our own.

By being raised the same as my brother, I feel I have a better view on life. I do think that parents cannot escape society's stereotypes. I think parents, now and in the future, will always have a tendency to want to protect their daughters from harm more than their sons. I am aware that stereotypes will always be within our society, but hopefully parents will be able to treat their children basically equally. I feel my parents did a great job of treating my brother and me as equally as they could.

## THOSE UNFAIR PARENTS

by  
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[Assignment: Examine relationships within your family, comparing and contrasting them with each other. This analysis might rest along gender lines or age lines or time lines. With such a topic you might also explore the way your family relationships and/or roles have changed through time or how they remained the same.]

In general, it seems as if parents are over-protective and a little too strict with their first-born child. The oldest child is, more or less, the guinea pig of the parents. With their new parental power, Mom and Dad try out their rules and responsibilities with this first child, and, unfortunately for this kid, these regulations are somewhat on the strict side. Then, as the second and third child come along, these once severe parental policies appear to loosen up and even become non-existent. Unfortunately for me, my family demonstrates this concept perfectly. I am nineteen years old with two younger sisters, Candice, sixteen, and Carly, ten. Although some responsibilities and freedoms have been the same for all three of us, in general it seems as if I had it the roughest with my parents' rules and curfews, and life just got easier for my sisters.

The first example of this unequal treatment that I can remember is the big ear-piercing situation. My parents made the biggest fuss about me getting my ears pierced, and I had to beg and plead with them for over a year before they actually gave in to me. They acted like it was a big step in life, and I had to be more "grown-up" to wear earrings. To them it was a responsibility, but to me it was just a fashion statement. I wanted my

ears pierced because my friends had it done, and it looked cool. In the end, their final decision was that I would have to wait until I was the big mature ten years old before they would take me to get my ears pierced, and that was how it was. When I turned ten I got my ears pierced.

My sisters, on the other hand, did not have to wait until they were ten years old. In fact, they did not even have to argue with my parents. Candice asked to get her ears pierced for her eighth birthday, and she got a "yes" without any hassles. She did not even have to ask twice. Carly did not even have to ask at all. My mother just took her to get her ears pierced when she was in kindergarten because she thought "Carly would look cute." I will admit that I was not very happy with this situation. I felt a little betrayed and, of course, rather confused. I could not understand my parents' change of heart.

There were many other things that I had to wait to do when I was younger that my sisters, so far, have not had to wait for, such as walking the dog to Central Park or riding my bike up to Venture, but these "younger" things are not my main concern. Just recently, since my sister is now sixteen and a sophomore in high school, I have noticed many differences between the rules and freedoms that I had when I was sixteen and the rules and freedoms she now has.

First of all, when I was sixteen, I had an 11:30 p.m. curfew on the weekends and a 10:00 p.m. curfew on the weekdays. There were no "if's", "and's" or "but's" about it. I had to have my butt in the house at the time my parents set for me, and I could never even talk them into an extra half hour. Also, before I walked out of the house they had to know exactly where I was going, who I would be with, and if there was a phone number. They wanted a detailed list, and to add to that, I was never allowed to go out with a friend until my parents met her. When I was sixteen, going out on Friday night with my friends was such a hassle. For example, if I wanted to go with a group of girls to a high school football game, my father wanted to know who was playing, where the game was, how long the game would be, who I would be with, who was driving, where I would go after the game, the phone number of the driver and so on. It was like twenty questions with him. I also would have to be the last one picked up so my parents could meet each and every girl that I was going with to the game. After the game, I had to call my father to let him know where I was going to eat, and then I had to call him again after we ate to let him know which girlfriend's house I was going to and give him her phone number. Finally, no matter what my friends and I were doing, everything had to be dropped so that I could be taken home by 11:30 sharp. Fortunately, my friends were very understanding. Although my parent's rules sometimes spoiled our fun, they never gave me a hard time. They knew that it was not my fault that my parents were over-protective.

Somewhere along the line I guess they realized that they did not have to be so protective, because Candice has it rather easy now with her social life. She really does not have a set curfew, for all she has to do is call my parents and let them know where she is and about what time she will be home. Her plans do not have to be concrete before she leaves the house, and my parents do not demand names and phone numbers from

her. Usually my parents are not even home when Candice makes plans, and she just leaves a note like "I went to the football game, I'll call you later." She does not let them know where the game is or who she is going with, and my parents do not seem to care. Candice will call after the game, tell them she is going out to eat and spending the night at a friend's house, and that is just fine with Mom and Dad. Obviously, there is a big difference between my nightlife when I was sixteen compared to my sister's now.

The phone situation is another big difference in the rules that my parents set for my sister and me. As a typical sixteen-year-old, the phone was my best friend, and, for some reason, my mom and dad did not love me talking on the phone. They gave me a phone curfew, no calls after 9:00 p.m. on the weekdays and no later than 11:00 p.m. on the weekends. If I wanted to use the phone after 9:00 p.m. on a school night, I had to have a really good reason or a really big problem. Phone calls from boys were also a big deal with my parents. They always wanted to know who this boy was, why he was calling, and they usually would not let me talk to him for too long. Also, I was not allowed to have a phone in my room until I was a senior in high school. Actually, I never really questioned these rules until my sister turned sixteen and now does not seem to have to abide by policies like this. First of all, she already has a phone in her room, and she even has her own phone line. To top it off, she does not have any phone curfews, and my parents could care less if she talks to guys on the phone. Like I mentioned before, life just gets easier for the younger children.

One last major contrast between my life at sixteen and the life of my sister who is now sixteen is the big sophomore turnabout dance situation. Once again, my parents were quite strict when it came to me going to my first semi-formal dance with a boy. First of all, they had to meet Sean, the boy I was going with, and his parents, and they also had to meet the two other couples we were going with to the dance. They would not allow me to go in a limousine either. According to them, I was too young and a limo was unnecessary. We had to go to a restaurant that was within a half hour driving distance because my parents did not want us to get lost or to drive on the expressway because the driver had only had her license for a couple months. To top off the evening, I had to be home by 1:30 a.m., unlike everyone else.

My sister, on the other hand, had quite a different experience with her sophomore turnabout dance. My parents already knew the boy that she was going with so it was no big deal to meet him, and they never requested to meet any of the other kids or parents. Unlike me, Candice was allowed to take a limo to the dance, and she took the limo out to Chicago after the dance for dinner. Not only did she not have a curfew, but she also was allowed to spend the night at a friend's house with all the guys and girls she went with that night. My parents did a complete turn-around with this situation, and I am still in shock. For some reason, I am not upset about this; I guess I have gotten used to this kind of situation.

Although there are many contrasts between the rules and experiences of my sister and me at the age of sixteen, there are some

similarities in some rules that my parents set down for us. First of all, my father was very strict with me when it came to wearing make-up, and he is the same way with Candice. I was not allowed to wear any type of make-up until I was fifteen, and when I did get to wear it, my father had the authority to tell me I had too much on and to go wash it off. My dad enforced the same rules with Candice. She could not wear make-up until she was fifteen, and he tells her when she has too much on her face.

Another major similarity pertains to my sister and me getting our drivers' licenses. Before either of us were allowed to get our license, we had to know how to drive a stick shift, change the car tire, fill the washer fluid and check the oil in the car. We both also had to have our permits for over six months and drive with my parents as much as we possibly could. My parents remained strict with the car rules, both before we got our license and after we had them. Candice has the same rules that I did when I was sixteen and got my license. Just as I did, she has to have my mother's car or my father's truck in the driveway by 9:00 on weeknights and by 11:00 on weekends no matter what. She always has to have permission to take a car, and she cannot just leave with a car when she feels like it.

Overall, the differences most definitely outweigh the similarities. Actually, I have come to the conclusion that the oldest child sets the stage for the following children. Parents put high expectations and harsh rules on their first born, and when that child turns out unharmed and wonderful, the parents figure each of the following children will be the same without their constant supervision and crazy regulations. I personally feel that my sisters have me to thank for their freedoms and early privileges. I was a good kid, and I showed my parents that I was capable of making the right decisions without them looking over my shoulder. My sisters owe me big.

## A TALE OF TWO BASSES

by

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In the past fifty years a quiet revolution has taken place in the world of the bassline. It's called the electric bass. Since its invention in 1951 by Leo Fender, it has come to dominate pop and rock music, and, to a lesser extent, jazz and country. The acoustic bass (also known as the upright bass, double bass, and bass fiddle) which it replaced, has faded to the point of being almost a specialty instrument for many bass players. The electric bass (or "bass guitar") is the easier of the two to play and,