

Read the selection below and answer the questions that follow it.

SIGNPOSTS ON THE JOURNEY

- When raising teenagers, there are not a lot of signposts on the highway of life that tell a parent how the journey is progressing. 1
- Those that do pop up on the horizon are often negative—poor grades, failing grades, no grades. A bad attitude or trouble with friends, perhaps even trouble with the law. 2
- Maybe that's why parents of teenagers spend seven years holding their breath, crossing their fingers, and repeating over and over, "No news is good news. No news is good news." 3
- I have a sixteen-year-old son. To a sixteen-year-old man/child, life can be condensed to four basic necessities: a reliable TV converter, a comfortable couch, the need to remain horizontal (and motionless) on said couch for hours at a time, and the need to practise driving the car as much as possible. (There are only two subgroups of children that enjoy a trip to the grocery store—those under the age of five who think the visit might end with candy in the checkout line and sixteen-year-olds with a learner's permit.) 4
- The other night, my son attended a banquet where he works. He looked quite handsome and strapping in his suit and snappy coat. I had forgotten how tall he's become but, of course, we rarely see him upright (see above, basic needs one to three). 5
- When I arrived to pick him up from the dinner, he started to get in the car, then stopped, looking distracted. "Just a minute," he said. 6
- I pushed open the door and asked him what was wrong as he walked towards the parking lot. 7
- "I think those guys are going to try and beat up another kid," he said. I watched him walk over and step into the middle of the fray. I couldn't hear what was being said but the crowd started to disperse. 8
- Later, he would tell me it was the second time that night he had stepped in. 9
- I then saw him take a smaller boy under his wing and walk him back to the front door. He made sure the boy was getting a ride home and then told him to stay by the front, where the adults were standing. 10
- When my son finally got back in the car, he told me that the boy is often the target of bullies, and just as often, my son comes to his defence. I knew none of this until the other night. It was one of the most satisfying signposts that had passed by us on our journey. 11
- In the overall scheme of things, it may not have been much. It won't feed hungry kids or bring world peace. 12
- But he did a good and decent thing. He did the right thing. 13
- I learned that he's making the right choices. And I couldn't be prouder. 14
- He needs to know that. 15

—STEVE BUIST

- 1** The writer states that parents “spend seven years holding their breath” (paragraph 3) because they
- A. hear little about their teenager’s life.
 - B. hear repeatedly about teenage tragedies.
 - C. know that teenage life is a difficult time.
 - D. know that all teenagers are irresponsible.
- 2** When parents repeat the phrase “No news is good news” over and over, it emphasizes their need to
- F. be worried.
 - G. avoid trouble.
 - H. stay involved.
 - J. reassure themselves.
- 3** By referring to the son as a “man/child,” the writer emphasizes the idea that
- A. his son avoids all responsibility whenever possible.
 - B. teenagers often only pretend to be mature.
 - C. his son does not communicate well with adults.
 - D. the teenage years are a time of transition.
- 4** In referring to the son’s rare “upright” appearances (paragraph 5), the word that **best** portrays the narrator’s intention is
- F. disgust.
 - G. humour.
 - H. irritation.
 - J. empathy.
- 5** In the anecdote, the writer’s feelings toward the son shift from
- A. amused dismay to pride.
 - B. envy to surprised approval.
 - C. sarcasm to hesitant approval.
 - D. confused irritation to concern.
- 6** To create greater emphasis in the last five sentences, the writer uses
- F. a series of surprising statements.
 - G. powerful and evocative imagery.
 - H. fragments and short simple sentences.
 - J. the repetition of key words and phrases.
- 7** As it is used in paragraph 5, the meaning of the word “strapping” is
- A. stylish.
 - B. muscular.
 - C. confident.
 - D. enthusiastic.
- 8** The word “fray” (paragraph 8) means
- F. discussion.
 - G. scuffle.
 - H. gang.
 - J. situation.
- 9** The phrase “under his wing” as it is used in paragraph 10 means that the smaller boy is
- A. closer to home.
 - B. away from harm.
 - C. behind the son’s back.
 - D. under the son’s protection.