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## Vocabulary

**Emo:** punk music that focuses on hardcore emotions.

**Blog:** a web-based log, an online running commentary.

**Twitter:** a free social networking and micro-blogging service that allows users to send text (a tweet) up to 140 characters long to the user's profile page and instantly deliver the text to all who signed up to receive them.

**“THE HUMAN BRAIN STARTS WORKING THE MOMENT YOU ARE BORN AND NEVER STOPS UNTIL YOU STAND UP TO SPEAK IN PUBLIC.”**

**— GEORGE JESSEL**

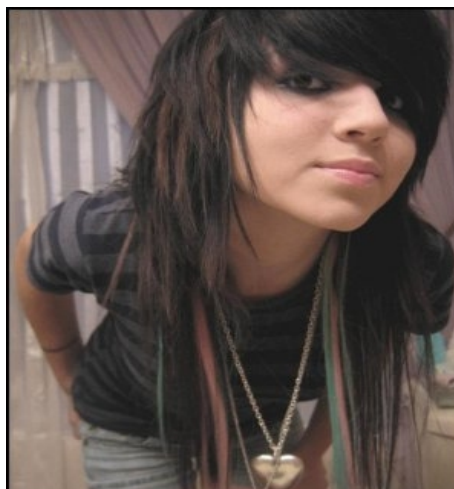
## TEENS AND EMO

[Studies](#) on the development of the teenage brain are showing surprising differences in the way teenagers and adults use their brains. This may explain why a charming, obedient child suddenly turns into a sullen, uncooperative, emotionally explosive stranger.

Neuroscientist Deborah Yurgelun-Todd used an MRI to monitor the brains of teenagers and adults as they responded to pictures. The brain scans showed that the most active region in the adult brains at the time was the frontal cortex. This area of the brain is used in higher brain functions such as logic and reasoning. A completely different area was activated in the teenagers' brains. They were processing the photos using a part of the brain called the amygdala.

This amygdala is in the emotional center of the brain – the part activated by strong emotions like fear or aggression. It is also the seat of many of our instinctual responses. Input from our eyes and ears can go directly to the amygdala without first being processed by the frontal cortex. The result is an instant, emotional response.

This difference in brain functioning can give rise to difficulties in communication between adults and teenagers. An off-hand comment from Dad could cause an inexplicably emotional response in his



THE EMO LOOK, HAIR AND EYES

daughter ...or a set of seemingly clear directions could be misinter-preted, leaving a son who thinks he did nothing wrong and a mother who is angry at him for being disobedient.

The parts of the brain-supporting functions such as self-control and rational judgment don't develop fully until the early twenties. However, the parts supporting emotional responses and for risk taking are up and running in adolescence. Short and simple emotion rules! The romance, fear, excitement, and pleasure centers are already responsive. This helps explain why horror movies, emotive music, depression, embarrassment, suicide, and adventure have the role they do in the youth world and why they lose force as someone matures.

Those running the youth media understand this reality. If they control the amygdala, they control the kid. Capitalism understands it also. If they can control the amygdala, they can control the wallet.

### Youth work faces a dilemma

Teenagers respond much more to an emotional pitch. It engages a very responsive part of their brain. An exciting youth group is much more likely to succeed. The down side is that it can reinforce the adolescent world-view: emotion is what matters.

The issue plays out even more clearly when distinguishing emotion and inspiration. They look very similar but only one brings lasting change. When the retreat is over and the emotional high is gone, a few things remain by which we can judge the success of our work. Did the young people who attended learn anything of lasting worth? Did they develop relationships of significance with peers and youth workers? And most important, did they encounter the transforming grace of God?

Brain development cannot be rushed. Remembering that your own teenage brain eventually became an adult brain may help you with your patience.

*research writer: Joanna King*

How did the Scarecrow know  
he didn't have a brain?

## CONTINUOUS PARTIAL ATTENTION

Continuous partial attention is not multi-tasking (seeking to be more productive by doing multiple things like knitting and watching TV). It is seeking to stay connected and not miss a thing. Everything is on: radio, cell phone, TV, facebook, and reality. You pay partial attention to the top level connection and partial attention to all others, alert for something more important. The top level concern shifts continuously. You are always busy and that means you are important.

In 1930 it was letters, radio and newspapers that kept you connected daily or weekly. Then the telephone and TV connected you more immediately. In the 1980s the pager made you yet more connected. But it is the internet and the cell phone that make continuous connection possible.

Interestingly, some people are opting out. Try...

**Disarming:** removing (not just turning off) all communication devices from proximity to the dinner table and bedroom.

**Consolidating:** limiting your social networks and communication devices to just one.

**Full focus attention:** ignoring that one device when you are in another's real-time presence.



*This was never the way I planned*

*Not my intention*

*I got so brave, drink in hand*

*Lost my discretion*

*I kissed a girl just to try it...*

*It felt so wrong. It felt so right...*

*I kissed a girl. I liked it. I liked it.*

*You're my experimental game*

*Just human nature*

*It's not what good girls do*

*My head gets so confused*

*us girls we are so magical*

*Soft skin, red lips, so kissable*

*Hard to resist so touchable*

*Ain't no big deal, it's innocent*

*I kissed a girl. I liked it. I liked it...*

### Read My Mind

Emotiv is releasing a headset to the gaming industry that reads the wearer's mind. It reads 30 different intentions and makes your computer respond accordingly. The interface between the human mind and the computer is changing rapidly. (At some point it may be able to tell me why I have three black socks, not two or four.)

Comments and ideas can be sent to [Kairos.editor@gmail.com](mailto:Kairos.editor@gmail.com)

Back issues of the Kairos Youth Culture Newsletter are available [here](http://www.kairos-na.org/newsletterarchives.htm):

The look:

- Retro (to 1955)
- Emo and
- Porno (especially the video)

The morality:

- A random, no-boundaries approach to sexual experimentation.
- Alcohol makes you brave.
- You are just my experiment.
- Confusion is justification.
- Rebellion: what feels wrong is right.
- Resistance to sexual desire is futile.
- Morality is no big deal

***I Kissed a Girl*** is ranked #5 in the USA. It is #1 in Canada. There is not much shockingly new here. However, it does infect a new generation of young teens with profound moral confusion.

What to expect in the near future? Other sexual taboos will fall – sibling incest, sadism. Sadly, parents need to equip children earlier than ever to defend them from moral confusion.

What to do? Try asking your son or daughter if they have heard the song.

Katy Perry sang gospel music until she was seventeen and says she is still a Christian.

## Lies & more lies & statistics

### The Mobile Wallet

◆ With a Nokia 6131 phone and Blaze Mobile you can just touch your phone to the Paypass reader at your Seven-eleven to pay your bill. Say goodbye to your credit and debit cards.

### Finding Nemo Online

◆ Disney.com is streaming full-length movies online. The films air on ABC on Saturday nights and then are available for free streaming for one week. Soon they will come to your mobile phone.

### Don't be left behind

◆ YouveBeenLeftBehind.com will enable you to send an e-mail message to 62 people exactly six days after you've disappeared from the face of the Earth due to the rapture.

### Olympics on my cell phone

◆ You can receive coverage of the 2008 Olympics on your mobile phone via MOBITV.com. It has 34 other channels and costs \$9.95 per month. You now can have a TV in your pocket.