

The generation gap

BY AMOS ARTHUR HOLMES

I have the most wonderful daughter a man could have. She has a fine sense of decency, a sparkling personality, and a warm, tender heart. I couldn't love her more if I tried. And I thought that all this talk about a generation gap was quite asinine.

Until last Friday night.

My daughter and myself were sitting at our dining room table, and I said, "Honey, I wish you would take more interest in books."

"Why?" she asked.

Because, my dear little girl, books give you a world of information. And this information allows you to be entertaining in conversations with friends. There is nothing in this world more ghastly than a boring person."

Jessie looked at me, shook her head, and replied, "Daddy, I know enough already to be interesting. Who would you suggest I read about?"

"Well, someone like Attila the Hun. There was an interesting individual. He was a leader, a warrior, and a conqueror. If you injected any part of his life into a conversation you would immediately become better liked by your friends."

"Daddy, my friends would kill me if I even mentioned Attila the Hun."

I was beginning to feel that dull ache that parents often feel while talking to their teenage children. But it was so vital that I help my daughter grow intellectually that I continued trying.

"Look, honey, you don't want to enter a circle of friends and not be able to add something worthwhile. You can't go through your life singing your stupid songs or dancing your stupid dances. You have to project your personality and you do this with the treasures you find from reading books. Character studies, facts of life, even trivia can help stimulate those around you. If you can transmit informative and pleasing information you are going to be readily admitted into any social group you might wish to join.

"I'm hungry" said my daughter.

"Look, goosehead, forget your damn stomach and worry a little bit more about your head. I'm asking you...without losing my temper...to make yourself a more desirable person. Why are you so dead set against learning something about Attila the Hun?"

"Because" snapped Jessie, "I wouldn't hassle my friends with a creep like that. I would rather talk about someone I knew something about."

"Like whom?" I asked.

"Like Alice Cooper."

"Who is she?"

"It's not a she. It's a he. He's a rock singer who works with snakes and beats up Santa Claus."

"Wonderful" I cried, "And who, besides yourself, has ever heard of this Alice Cooper?"

"Gosh, Daddy, everybody has heard of Alice Cooper. Just everybody."

"All right, Jessie, I'm going to show you how wrong you are. I'm going to show you that everyone in this world knows about Attila the Hun and that nobody...and I mean nobody... has ever heard of Alice Cooper."

My wife was in the kitchen ironing clothes. I would use her to prove my point. I just had to take away my daughter's juvenile philosophy that I was wrong and that she was right.

I called my wife, and when she was standing in the dining room, I said, "JoLoyce, I want you to tell Jessie who Attila the Hun was."



My wife looked completely blank. She scratched her chin and finally, with a negative shake of her head, replied, "I haven't the foggiest notion."

I felt utterly, fantastically defeated. To think that my own wife had let me down. I just couldn't imagine anyone admitting that they had never heard of Attila the Hun.

My daughter spoke up, "Mama, who is Alice Cooper?"

My wife, without the slightest hesitation, said, "He is a rock singer who works with snakes and beats up Santa Claus."

Jessie gave me a look of triumph and she and her limp-brained mother went into the living room to listen to their stereo system.

If it wouldn't have been detrimental to my health I think I would have killed myself.