

Counteracting teens' logo lust: Supportive parents can reduce materialism in teens

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Today's adolescents have been characterized as the most materialistic generation in history: a brand-oriented and consumer-involved group who derive self-worth from owning luxury handbags and the latest technology devices.

Many blame [parents](#) and peers for the increased level of teen materialism. In fact, research suggests that parents and peers act as role models of behavior and therefore, highly materialistic parents and peers are likely to encourage materialism in teenagers.

A new paper from University of Arizona assistant marketing professor Lan Nguyen Chaplin of the Eller College of Management assesses the issue through a different lens.

"Instead of just looking at how parents and peers encourage materialism in teenagers, we also examine how they decrease materialism. We view parents and peers as important sources of [emotional support](#) and psychological well-being, which ultimately affects teenagers' level of materialism" said Chaplin. "We find that supportive parents and peers boost adolescents' self-esteem, which decreases their need to embrace material goods as a way to develop positive self-perceptions."

Along with co-author Deborah Roedder John of the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management, Chaplin studied 12- to 18-year-olds and found that it is possible for parents to reduce their adolescents' drive for material goods. The resulting paper, "Interpersonal Influences on Adolescent Materialism: A New Look at the Role of Parents and Peers," is forthcoming in the *Journal of Consumer Psychology*.

The authors found that [teenagers](#) who have supportive and accepting parents and peers in their lives are less materialistic. Parents and peers can provide the support and acceptance that teens

crave, which reduces their need to focus on expensive material goods as a substitute for self-worth.

"Parents and [peers](#) play a very important role in teenagers' lives. They provide the much needed emotional support and contribute greatly to teenagers' feelings of self-worth," said Chaplin. "When teens feel better about themselves, they are less likely to feel the need to use material possessions to boost their self-esteem and achieve happiness."

Provided by University of Arizona

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