

# Random Thoughts 78

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## The Teens

Do you remember when you became a teenager, when you turned 13? I do. It was in the fall of 1959 so actually 1960 was the year I remember, especially when I listen to songs of that year. Here is an abbreviated playlist of some of the top songs of that year. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5aVj6k7y1s>

The early teens were not easy because that is the start of puberty when we begin to transform from children to adults, or almost adults. No longer a child, we are expected not to behave like one often being told “you are too old to be doing that” and yet not old enough to do what older kids could do, the reprimand then being “you are not old enough to do that.” It is an uncomfortable time and the sudden occurrence of acne doesn’t make it any easier. It didn’t seem like there was much we could do when we were 13 and 14.

However, it was also a time when we discovered the attractions of the opposite and felt the first stirrings of romance. It was a time when at school we were given dance lessons in the gym every Friday and suddenly realizing how wonderful that was, that soon led to dance parties at each other’s homes on weekends, supervised, of course, by parents. At those times we would play the popular sounds of the period on 45 rpm records and dance to them until it was time to go home.

Life began to get better at age 15 because it was at that age when, in Oregon, we could get a driver’s permit. That allowed us to drive a car if we were accompanied by an adult who had a driver’s license. We pestered our parents to let us drive every chance we could get. Then at the age of 16 we could get a driver’s license which would allow us to drive a car or motorcycle on our own. In high school there was even a Drivers’ Education class that was similar to the driving schools in Japan. A driving instructor would teach students how to drive and later get a license.

So from 16 on life become more enjoyable because we suddenly had more freedom. I did not have my own car, as some of my friends did, but I did have a motorcycle. But on weekends I could use my parents’ car, which I usually washed and polished before going out. Usually on Saturday we would go to hamburger joints where we could sit in our cars and order food. It was brought to the car and put on a tray that fit against the window. On dates we would either go to movies, especially drive-in movies, or a dance club.

By the time we reached the age of 18, usually corresponding with the last year of high school, we were anxious to leave our hometown and go out into the world, usually to university, but for my age group, it often meant military service because of the war in Vietnam. All-in-all it was a good time.