

A. Good morning. I'm pleased to welcome Anna/Alan Manzoni, a sociologist, to our program. In a study published in August in the Journal of Youth and Adolescence, Dr. Manzoni found that young adults who are given financial help instead of living rent-free at home do better professionally. Dr Manzoni, can you tell us more about this?

B. Of course, Emma/Eric. Our study looked at about 7,500 18 to 28-year-olds. It found that college graduates whose parents offered their children money did especially well professionally, while those who lived at home did particularly poorly.

A. Can you give us specific figures?

B. Graduates who got the most cash got \$15,000 a year or more. They did best of all, ranking six points higher on a scale of occupational status than those who got little or no financial help. Graduates living with their parents, on the other hand, ranked 10 points lower on the occupational status scale than their friends who lived independently.

A. That's a considerable difference. Are there any clear explanations?

B. One factor is that when you receive direct financial help, you can use that money to move to a city where you have better job opportunities. A new graduate from Mississippi who studied theater, for example, would find better career prospects in New York and could afford to move there. A second factor is income inequality. Parents who give directly may have higher socioeconomic status than parents who say, 'I can't give you a check, but I can let you move back home.' That indicates that children of the well-to-do are likely to have better connections and access to individuals at influential companies.

A. So parents should prevent their graduate children from moving back home?

B. If they can afford it, definitely. Especially as all studies show that the parents' quality of life takes a hit when their adult children move back. A report from the London School of Economics recently was entitled "Parents' Lives Made More Miserable by the Boomerang Generation Returning Home ». That says it all. Besides we all know that once back home some graduates have a harder time leaving home for good.

A. Oh, yes. One of my friends' daughters came back home. It took her forever to leave because she could afford to keep waiting for the perfect job instead of taking one that could be less sure. She was happy for her mother to do the laundry and cook her meals. But it's hard to know what's best to do. Any advice?

B. First, if parents have decided to give money to help start a child's career, it must come with conditions. Parents must say, "Here's the money, go make it work." It can't be a recurring payment, or it will create financial dependency.

A. That makes sense. Sometimes, young adults seem to assume that the money will keep coming forever.

B. Indeed. Limitless help will backfire. Parents may give money to their children because they love them but they may be doing psychological harm. Financially dependent people report lack of motivation, lack of creativity, and even resentment toward the person giving them money.

A. Then helping out may do more harm than good. How can we help and not fall into that trap?

B. Before parents hand out money, they must think about their previous experience. What has your child done with opportunities in the past? Did they take your financial support and stay home playing video games? Or did they put it to good use? Depending on the answer, parents may decide to give or not, or to request a change in behavior.

A. But is there any advice for when the adult child is home and parents think they might stay forever?

B. Yes, indeed. Ask your grown child to contribute to all the costs, chores and responsibility that go with adult life. And give them a leaving date!

Outline: Anna Manzoni, a sociologist, published a study which found that young adults who are given financial help instead of living rent-free at home do better professionally. Several reasons are given to account for this. Moreover, graduates coming back home are a cause of concern both for parents, and graduates themselves, who find it difficult to move forward. A financial psychologist, offers advice for parents unsure about how to best help their adult children thrive. These tips apply to money matters but also to how to handle that boomerang generation.

1. Questions: Is it really such a bad idea for young people to live with their parents when they graduate?

2. What factors encourage the 'boomerang generation' of young people to stay at home?

3. Is it inevitable that young adults whose parents are well-off will do better in their careers?

4. Parents and adult children living together used to be the norm. Why is it different today?