

## Segment 3

I'd like to highlight four problematic views that society tends to have around the transition from adolescence to adulthood. First, there's a common misperception in the media and among the public that these are great years of personal freedom, exploration, and plentiful choices. Yes, this is true for some, but not for the majority of young people. Many young people are not exploring as much as they are drifting, searching for a niche, waiting for a break. Some amount of exploration is clearly good, but ungrounded exploration is expensive in terms of additional tuition, or lost earnings and opportunities. Second, since 2008, we've been bombarded with messages about the toll that the recession has taken on young people. It's good that the recession has brought much needed attention to this period of life. But the recession didn't suddenly produce the trends we've talked about today. It has simply heightened a set of trends that were already well under way. Third, the post World War II script for life. A fast path into adulthood in which home departure was quickly followed by, or with simultaneous, with school completion, full time work, especially for men, and family formation, remains etched in the American psyche as if it's somehow the normal course to adulthood. And yet it's not. In the larger, historical picture, the post war period is actually the anomaly and we do young people a disservice when we use that outdated path to measure young people's progress into adulthood today. In a way, young people have more in common today with their peers. In the early decades of the last century, they too experienced longer periods of semi-autonomy and more scattered routes into adulthood. They too lived with family members, even at higher rates than we know today and relied on family members for their well-being. Finally, when we focus on and even demonize the millennial generation that's now in early adulthood, we fail to see that it's the period of life that's been restructured. Much more than it is about the people who are now in that period. Yes, each generation approaches the transition into adulthood in their own way. But much of what we're seeing will likely be true for the next generations as well because it's the period of life that's changing. Especially as a result of the mass pursuit of higher education and economy that prizes knowledge and technology, the growing inequality in our nation, the limited support of government for people after the ages of 18 and 21, and an Ethos of parenting and schooling, that place a premium on children's growth and development.