

## ***Escaping the Endless Adolescence***

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

Kelly Roell: <http://testprep.about.com>

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*The passage below is followed by questions based on its content; answer the questions on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage.*

**From *Escaping the Endless Adolescence* by Joseph Allen and Claudia Worrell Allen.  
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Line As fifteen-year-old Perry shuffled into my office, with his parents trailing tentatively  
behind, he glanced at me with a strained neutral expression that I'd found usually masked either  
great anger or great distress; in Perry's case it was both. Although anorexia is a disorder most  
often associated with girls, Perry was the third in a line of anorexic boys I had recently seen.  
5 When he came to see me, Perry's weight had dropped to within ten pounds of the threshold  
requiring forced hospitalization, yet he denied there was any problem.

"He just won't eat," his mother began. Then, turning to Perry as if to show me the routine  
they'd been enacting, she asked with tears in her eyes, "Perry, why can't you at least have a  
simple dinner with us?" Perry refused to eat with his family, always claiming he wasn't hungry at  
10 the time and that he preferred to eat later in his room. Except that that rarely happened. New  
menus, gentle encouragement, veiled threats, nagging, and outright bribes had all been tried, to  
no avail. Why would an otherwise healthy fifteen-year-old boy be starving himself? The question  
hung urgently in the air as we all talked.

15 Let's be clear from the outset: Perry was a smart, good kid: shy, unassuming, and  
generally unlikely to cause trouble. He was getting straight A's in a challenging and competitive  
public school honors curriculum that spring. And he later told me that he hadn't gotten a B on his  
report card since fourth grade. In some ways he was every parent's dream child.

20 But beneath his academic success, Perry faced a world of troubles, and while he took  
awhile to get to know, eventually the problems came pouring out. The problems weren't what I'd  
expected, though. Perry wasn't abused, he didn't do drugs, and his family wasn't driven by  
conflict. Rather, at first glance, his problems would seem more like typical adolescent  
complaints. And they were, in a way. But it was only as I got to understand him that I realized  
25 the adolescent problems Perry experienced weren't just occasional irritations, as they'd been for  
me and my cohort as teens, but rather, had grown to the point where they cast a large shadow  
over much of his day-to-day world. I'd later come to realize that Perry wasn't alone in that regard.

One big problem was that while Perry was a strong achiever, he was not at all a happy  
one. "I hate waking up in the morning because there's all this stuff I have to do," he said. "I just  
keep making lists of things to do and checking them off each day. Not just schoolwork, but  
extracurricular activities, so I can get into a good college."

30 Once he got started, Perry's discontent spilled out in a frustrated monologue.

"There's so much to do, and I have to really work to get myself motivated because I feel like none of it really matters... but it's really important I do it anyway. At the end of it all, I stay up late, I get all my homework done, and I study really hard for all my tests, and what do I get to show for it all? A single sheet of paper with five or six letters on it. It's just stupid!"

35 Perry was gifted enough to jump through the academic hoops that had been set for him, but it felt like little more than hoop-jumping, and this ate at him. But that wasn't his only problem.

40 Perry was well-loved by his parents, as are most of the young people we see. But in their efforts to nurture and support him, his parents inadvertently increased his mental strain. Over time, they had taken on all his household chores, in order to leave him more time for schoolwork and activities. "That's his top priority," they said almost in unison when I asked about this. Although removing the chores from Perry's plate gave him a bit more time, it ultimately left him feeling even more useless and tense. He never really did anything for anyone except suck up their time and money, and he knew it. And if he thought about backing off on his  
45 schoolwork...well, look how much his parents were pouring into making it go well. Sandwiched between fury and guilt, Perry had literally begun to wither.

**1. This passage is narrated from the point of view of**

- (A) a college professor studying the effects of bulimia on young males
- (B) a young male named Perry, struggling with the effects of anorexia.
- (C) a concerned therapist who works with struggling young adults
- (D) a doctor who treats eating, compulsive and sleeping disorders
- (E) a college student working on a thesis about eating disorders in young males

**2. According to the passage, Perry's two biggest problems were**

- (A) being an unhappy achiever and his parents' increase of his mental strain
- (B) his poor attitude toward school and his consumption of everyone's time and money
- (C) his fury and guilt
- (D) drug abuse and conflict within the family
- (E) his inability to prioritize and anorexia

**3. The primary purpose of the passage is to**

- (A) describe one young man's struggle with anorexia and in doing so, provide possible reasons a young person may resort to an eating disorder.
- (B) advocate for young males who are struggling with an eating disorder and the decisions they've made that have brought them to that struggle.
- (C) compare one young person's fight against his parents and the eating disorder that is ruining his life to the life of a typical teenager.
- (D) relate an emotional reaction to the shock of an eating disorder, such as that of Perry's, a typical young adult.
- (E) explain how today's youth often develop eating disorders and other terrible issues in their overactive lives.

- 4. The author uses which of the following in the sentence beginning in line 18?**
- (A) Personification
  - (B) Simile
  - (C) Anecdote
  - (D) Irony
  - (E) Metaphor
- 5. In line 39 of the passage, the word "inadvertently" most nearly means**
- (A) steadily
  - (B) monumentally
  - (C) incrementally
  - (D) mistakenly
  - (E) surreptitiously