

*I threw the following question out to some of my colleagues this morning:
“What do your parents still tell you to do, even though you’re an adult?”*

The question was on my mind after a radio segment described the frustrations of cocooning-aged parents who are fed up with the 2020 phenomenon of being “*treated like children by our own children*”. Covid has triggered a premature role reversal, whereby adult children have become the over-protective parents of our own parents. We feel an anxious compulsion to force health and safety advice down their throats: “*Beware the previously unknown dangers of the sinister shopping trolley!*” etc.

(Apparently, it’s a little patronising and—what did my mother call it?—infantilising.)

And while I sympathise with my own parents for my incessant Covid-related instructions, I can’t help but recall so many times when I have had to remind them that I am, in fact, a functioning adult! So perhaps the brat in me asked my colleagues that question this morning, and a tsunami of examples ensued.

Below are some nuggets of advice that our (adult!!) staff STILL hear from our parents:

- *I’m ringing to tell you it’s sunny, and you should get out for a walk!*
- *Listen! —Here are long and specific directions to a destination you’re already familiar with.*
- *Have you heard of the new technology of contactless payments? Oh you have? Well I’ll walk you through the steps anyway!*
- *If you’re going out, wear a jacket. And remember to pee before you leave the house!*
- *I hope you know it’s time for a haircut.*
- *Be careful with the possible frost that may-or-may-not-be-on-the-roads someday soon.*
- *You’re not feeling well? Have you been eating enough vegetables?*

To all of my colleagues who are merely expressing concern for our parents in these difficult times, and to all of our parents who now echo our weary slogan of,
“I’m an ADULT!!!!”...

... this poem is for you.

Sentimental Moment or Why Did the Baguette Cross the Road?

Don’t fill up on bread
I say absent-mindedly
The servings here are huge

My son, whose hair may be
receding a bit, says
Did you really just
say that to me?

What he doesn’t know
is that when we’re walking
together, when we get
to the curb
I sometimes start to reach
for his hand

Robert Hershon