

If Parents Stopped Enabling Their Kids, Maybe There Wouldn't be as much Student Loan Debt

A recent [Star Tribune article](#) nails a major issue in the student debt crisis: Too many parents are enabling their children by helping them take out massive loans for colleges they can't afford.

This has caused a lot of young people to cripple their financial futures in pursuit of a goal many later discover was not worth it. According to a recent Gallup poll, only [38%](#) of recent grads strongly agree that their undergraduate education was worth the cost.

Some politicians are working on plans to forgive student debt. But in the article, Gail Rosenblum writes that it would be far more effective if parents would start being realistic with their children about what colleges they can afford, and the far-reaching implications of student debt:

“‘A lot of folks think of this as an adult conversation,’ Grocholski [senior vice president for Junior Achievement (JA) USA] said. ‘They’re not sure how to approach it with their kids in a way kids will understand. And nobody wants to ratchet back their child’s dream.’

But parents, we need to start talking.

The good news is that our kids are ready and willing, if not wholly able. A recent JA survey found that 65 percent of teens accept responsibility for paying off their own college loans. But it's unfair to expect them to fully grasp just how life-altering their young and idealistic choices might be.”

Some things are difficult to fully comprehend before you have lived through them, and struggling to make ends meet while managing debt is one of those things. There is a parental obligation to help children, as much as is possible, understand the ramifications of their choices. And where children cannot comprehend there is need for tough love, even if that forces them to let go of some future hopes.

The issue speaks to an overarching problem with parenting in this country: many indulge their children's immediate wants by forsaking their future well-being.

Don't they owe their kids more than that?