



# The Sandwich Generation: Caught Between Growing Children And Aging Parents

*H. Michael Zal*

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The 50 million baby boomers now entering middle age are finding themselves in the unique struggle of coping with the demands of their growing children and their aging parents. The Sandwich Generation is an excellent examination of adults who must juggle the roles of parent, spouse, and child, while trying to maintain his or her identity. Dr. Zal uses compelling vignettes to illustrate the stages of life and the various ways three generations of a family cope with and respond to these stages. He looks at the expectations and frustrations which affect the tripartite family relationship, including, a growing child's demands for independence from parental influence; the subtle changes in relating to an adolescent as compared to a grown child living outside of the home; personal dissatisfactions resulting in midlife change; incorporating the physical, emotional, and financial needs of an aging parent into one's lifestyle. The book also covers the different mental health problems that may typically occur at specific stages, such as : search for identity in adolescence which can lead to substance abuse, eating disorders, and even suicide; college,career, and relationship choices in young adulthood which can lead to anxiety disorders and bipolar disorder; shattered dreams and expectations, menopause, adjusting to post parenthood, and facing your own mortality in midlife which can lead to depression; loss of a spouse, and sometimes dementia in old age which can lead to stress and burnout.



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