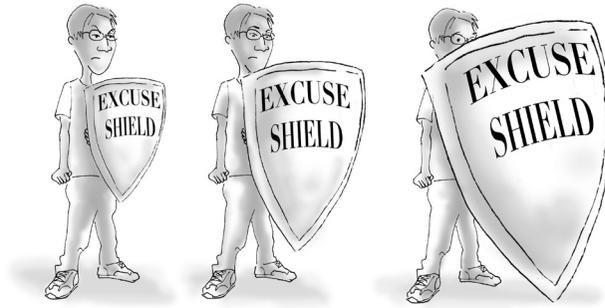


Thrower, the Excuse Shield also backfires. Trying to protect ourselves by making excuses is a surefire way to remain stuck and at the mercy of what is Out There. Rather than harnessing the strength we have on the Inside, we allow ourselves to become victims by surrendering our personal power at the feet of all that we cannot control.



The Big Shift

You've spent your life learning lessons from and following the directions of other people. You haven't had the skills or ability to care for yourself, so parents and guardians have cared for you, with the help of extended family, teachers, and faith leaders. But during your early teen years an awesome change begins to take place within you. You might experience it as wanting more independence and choosing to hang out with your friends more often. Maybe you find yourself disagreeing with your teacher during an important discussion in your classroom. You might be paying attention to the news and wonder why the world seems so screwed up and what you can do about it.

These are indicators of The Big Shift. It's taking place in your brain. An *explosion* of brain development takes place during your teens and into your early twenties. Your ability to learn will never be greater than it is during this critical decade. More importantly, you will develop skills that are signatures of adulthood: self-control, wise decision making, empathy, and impulse control. **The Big Shift refers to the maturing of your brain and the new skills you can acquire as a result.** This process will prepare you to take the reins of responsibility for your life from your parents and hold them confidently in your own hands.

Ultimately, the fact that you are approaching or have already begun The Big Shift is the best news ever. Really. It means that the choice to PATH and the power to be successful are sitting in the palm of your hands. You get to decide where the road ahead is going to lead and how you are going to navigate it.