

**How Having “Hippie Parents Affects One’s  
Lifestyle Choices**

**A Pilot Study of “Hippie” Family Dynamics in  
Northern California**

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**Introduction:**

I am the product of the union of two European world travelers whose ideals brought them to rural northern California. My father settled in the area and set up a homestead that he built from the ground up. Other men in the neighborhood would chip in when an extra hand was needed. At that time there was little money within the community so work trades and bartering were common practices. It was several years later that my father met my mother and they began their family together.

I was raised in a very tight knit community in the Mattole Valley. Despite both being raised as meat eaters my mother and father opted for the healthier more compassionate option of a vegetarian diet. After making the decision to be vegetarian in their teens/early twenties they chose to raise their children the same way. We had a large vegetable garden with year round produce, a fruit orchard that had plums, pears, apricots and raspberries. We also had a flock of chickens, that we had raised from chicks, for their eggs and companionship.

We lived off of the land as much as possible and I embraced nature as my playground. I spent the majority of my time, rain, shine or snow enjoying the great outdoors. The environment has always been very important to me and my family and we treat it with respect. We would recycle whatever we could. My mother is a talented seamstress and would often make us clothes, blankets, drapes and even toys, they are some of my most treasured possessions to this day.

My parents felt comfort in knowing that there wasn't fast traffic on the road or unwanted characters who may approach us. The only things that my parents had to fear regarding possible dangers for their children were mountain lions and rattlesnakes and we

were taught what to do if an encounter may arise. During the summer months I would always wear ankle bracelets adorned with small bells to warn the rattlers that I was coming.

My parents and many other parents in the community felt as though it was essential for their children to know how to take care of themselves. The biggest gift that they could give to us was the knowledge and capability to be self reliant. We were taught how to cook and clean, grow fruits and vegetables, disinfect water, build a fire, use tools, and take care of animals. We also had lessons on herbs and natural remedies. Homeopathy was always our first resort when an illness or affliction would arise. Living far away from a hospital it was very important for children to know what to do in an emergency situation.

My father worked while my mother tended to the children, house, and garden. My mother also took on the task of home schooling her children. Fortunately for us my mother took this job very seriously and we got a top notch education. I would argue even better than most because my mother didn't have to follow all of the restrictions of a public school curriculum. If we wanted to spend all day learning about dinosaurs or gravity or the settlers we could. I also had the pleasure of experiencing many other components of education such as learning about plants and their medicinal properties, art, music, philosophy and much more.

I received one on one guidance and attention. Asking questions was encouraged and at times it seemed as though my curiosity of the world around me was endless. I also had the pleasure of choosing my own religion. I was taught about all of the different religions in an unbiased way. I found that I agreed with aspects of many different world

religions and chose to adopt bits and pieces of several different ones.

My mother and father were both raised in strict patriarchal families. They rejected many aspects of their own upbringing and made the conscious decision to raise their children differently. When it came to parenting styles they took authoritative approach with all members of the family contributing to important decisions. I felt as though my voice was truly heard and my opinions respected. My parents encouraged open communication and honesty.

My mother felt as though it was very important to breastfeed her children, for health and bonding reasons. She chose to have natural births, free from the influence of drugs or even doctors. I was born by candle light, in a teepee in the mountains of Wilder Ridge. My fathers trusty Swiss Army knife cut the umbilical cord. My parents truly were pioneers, trusting in the natural wonders of life. Having faith in their own health, knowledge and strength.

When I look around at my friends from childhood I often see traces of their parent's ideals influencing their lifestyle choices. Many of us are still vegetarian with a deep respect for the environment. We strive to be educated, independent thinkers while rejecting the superficiality of our nation and the corruption of our government.

It is well known that our parents are often our primary source of socialization. The Socialization Theory is attributed to Karl Marx, a world renowned German sociologist among many other things. Marx claims that socialization is the process through which we learn the language and culture of the society that we are born into. Socialization begins to take place at birth. It is the responsibility of our parents and other close to us to teach us the norms of society as well as what roles we are meant to play.

Depending on your gender, status and other influencing factors you will participate in a variety of different roles throughout your life. If you are born a female, like myself, you are taught the roles of daughter, sister, granddaughter, niece, friend, student, and teacher.

Norms are social constructions by which we are expected to abide by. Due to the fact that “hippie” families are often removed from mainstream society some of these norms vary, such as the emphasis they put on certain values. We were raised without the influence of television, advertisements and mass media. Being raised in such a tight knit, rural community many of the beliefs of the parents were synonymous. The children often had similar experiences at their friends houses as they would at their own home.

However, the majority of the socialization process consists of how to take care of oneself (brush ones teeth, get dressed, feed oneself, etc.) There are also the unspoken “rules” of society, what is and what isn’t socially acceptable. For example how to dress. In the hippie culture name brands and expensive clothes were rarely worn, if ever. If a “hippie” child, wearing a tie dye t-shirt and dirty jeans were to be placed into an urban public school, they may be ridiculed by their peers for their “abnormal” attire.

Some of the things that “hippie” children were raised to think of as normal were being barefoot nearly all the time, having long hair regardless of gender, being vegetarian, wearing home made clothes and not having a television. Another interesting issue, unique to the “hippie” lifestyle was the usage of marijuana. Instead of hiding the fact that they smoked people would engage in the act openly. We thought that it was normal for adults in the community to smoke weed, it was never an issue. We accepted it as just a part of “normal”, everyday life.

George Herbert Mead’s Theory of Symbolic Interactionism describes how we are

products of our environment and these children were born into a very unique environment indeed. Symbolic Interactionism relates to the meanings that are placed on certain things. “Symbolic Interactionism sees meanings as social products, as creations that are defined in and through the defining activities of people as they interact” (Blumer, pg.5)

Our parents placed a high emphasis on being self sufficient and having a healthy diet. They taught us the meaning of coexistence, with nature, animals, and other human beings. They trained us to respect “mother nature” and appreciate all of her bounties. The parents of this community valued an open mind and communication within the family. They do not place a high value on money or the accrue ment of material wealth.

This ties into Karl Marx’s Conflict Theory. If these children do eventually go to public school and find themselves among peers from very different backgrounds they will probably encounter some conflict. These children may feel as though they are the only ones who have hippie parents and it may become a source of shame for them (no one wants to be the odd one out). They will have to reevaluate what they were taught by their parents. In order to fulfill that overwhelming desire to “fit in” many of these children will make changes and try to integrate into the mainstream culture. However, depending on age, values and morals tend to stay in tact.

Many of us grew up disliking certain characteristic traits of our parents and vowing that we would never be like them. Unfortunately (for some) it is inevitable that a few of those behaviors will end up being our own. On the other hand, there are other traits in our parents that we are thankful for getting such as skills, strong morals, and knowledge.

Growing up in a “hippie” household is a very unique experience, that is why I am so curious about this topic. Does the majority of us follow in our parents footsteps and embrace their ideals/culture or do we reject them and forge our own ideals/culture? I feel as though it will be a blending of both. Our parents laid the foundation and now it is up to us to build the structure of who we are.

I realize that due to my unique upbringing and the categorization of my own parents as “hippies” I have personal biases as to what a real hippie is. I believe that a true hippie is someone who rejects mainstream America and consumerism. Hippies try to free themselves from the constraints of corporate America. They reject television and mass media. They strive to live sustainable and reach a higher level of consciousness. They have a deep respect for the environment and all living things. This leads to their cultivation of the lands and use of alternative energy.

It is necessary to mention that there are many differences between the hippies of the 1960s and nowadays. My focus is on the hippies from the 1960s through the 1980s. It seems as though it was during the early 1990’s that many hippies in my areas of study began to migrate back to more metropolitan areas. “Do You Believe in Magic’ (the book) tells how many hippies returned to cities in their thirties, hoping to still pursue their ideals in the corporate world. Many of them described the nomadic life as tiring. Everyone was searching for something, always on the go, when they realized that what they really wanted was a sense of home. These people were struggling between two worlds that of “the child of privilege and the would-be revolutionary.” (p.135)

### **Literature Review:**

It has been very difficult for me to find specific information regarding the

influences that “hippie” parents have on their children’s lifestyle choices. I have not been able to find much information regarding “hippie” families in general. I have, however, found a great deal of information regarding the Hippie Movement and what factors influenced people to adopt the “hippie” lifestyle.

The community that I am most interested is people who chose to give up living in mainstream society due to a clash in ideologies. I am interested in how they raised their children, what values they instilled in them, what foods they ate, what their parenting styles were, and what education they provided for their children. Due to the lack of specific information on “hippie” families I have chosen to utilize subcategories: background, small communities/communes, parenting styles, education, diet, drug use, and environmentalism to explore the many facets of family interactions, structure, and outcomes.

#### Background:

“Do You Believe in Magic: The Second Coming of the Sixties Generation” by, Annie Gottlieb has been a great resource. This book is, as the author puts it, “a collective creation”, it shares the experiences of approximately 100 people. It’s pages are filled with countless revelations and historical facts from the people that Gottlieb interviewed. Through rich descriptions and close attention to detail Gottlieb paints a vivid picture of how people were feeling during the 1960s. Kennedy’s death and Vietnam were both profound events that marked a new era of political activism and social rebellion. This book helped me learn more about the specific events that led people to make drastic lifestyle changes and adopt the “hippie” identity.

This book takes the “hippie” journey even farther by sharing the many tales and experiences people were having during the “aftershock” of the 1960s. Many people wonder, “what happened to all the hippies” this book addresses the various routes that these people took after the 1960s. It sets the stage for a phenomenal time during which people’s hearts and minds were put to the test. This is another aspect of the movement that I found very interesting. Why did these people decide to settle in the places that they did? What about the location, community, etc. captivated them and ensured their settlement?

Many of the youth of the 1960’s felt as though their world had been shattered, everything that they were taught to believe in was a lie. They could clearly see the corruption within our government. They rejected the cookie-cutter lifestyle of their parents. They believed that there was more to life than getting a job, getting married, and having a family. There was so much more to life, so much more to learn, so much more to see, and so much more to experience. Gottlieb describes the many facets that these people used to explore these feelings and frustrations. Quite often these “fed-up” feelings towards society resulted in a nomadic lifestyle or settlement in a rural area. Continuous traveling was a big part of the 60’s generation, often in groups. That is why the VW van is often associated with hippies. People yearned to explore the world and live “free” from material possessions.

Gottlieb believes that the title “hippie” came from the Native American tribe, Hopi. The Hopi, meaning “the peaceful ones” have a prophecy that all of the spirits of the Natives killed during various invasions throughout our history would be reborn in a new generation. It was said that this new generation would spread the message of love,

harmony, and peace throughout the world. I found this interesting because the website *HippyLand* described the word “hippie” as a derivative of the word hip. It was used by African Americans to describe the young white men who tried to copy their style.

According to the book “Hippie” by Barry Miles music was a huge influence on people during the 1960s. New sounds and politically charged lyrics brought issues of war, race, and gender to the forefront. Watts riots and the Civil Rights Movement made people question their government, political policies and police actions. It was a time of change and people became increasingly aware of the struggles of their fellow Americans and those around the world.

With the ensuing Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement, American youth were becoming increasingly involved in their communities. Their compassion and increasing awareness of the serious issues facing other groups of people in America and the world drove them to take action. It was made clear that despite progress there were many more hurdles to overcome. The war and racial issues tore people apart and brought them together. For the more conscientious people they knew that standing together in solidarity with a message of peace and love was the only way to put an end to the death and suffering.

#### Small Communities/Communes:

One person mentioned in “Do You Believe in Magic” described her search for a compatible commune to live in. While traveling around the United States she said that she came across many communes that consisted of a lot of young people without many skills. They were described more as shanty towns reminiscent of “Hooverilles” from the Great Depression. She was in search of a place that incorporated nature with a strong sense of community and freedom. That is what almost everyone wanted, it was just hard

to find.

A big factor that is continually addressed throughout this book is that of being poor. Close to no one had “real” jobs therefore there wasn’t much cash flow. People had to rely on the old system of bartering. They would try to survive off of the trading of goods and services. It was undeniably a hard life but everyone was on their own quest towards enlightenment, freedom, clarity, or simply a sense of purpose.

“Do You Believe in Magic” gave me so much insight into how people lived, their struggles and accomplishments. There is a great sense of pride in creating your own Utopia and seeing your dreams become realities. This was the actuality of my parents, they built their homes from the ground up, planted seeds that grew into gardens, and established a close community.

Due to the fact that many of these people came from urban areas and had relied on the “luxuries” of society for many years they experienced a lot of failed attempts before getting it right. They had to become very resourceful and use everyday things in unexpected ways, such as the trunk of a car as a stove.

*The Mother Earth News* served as a guide for many of these people and it is still going strong today. The website, <http://www.motherearthnews.com/>, offers helpful advice and resources regarding everything that a person could need to live sustainably. The topics that the website covers are, Do It Yourself, Renewable Energy, Green Homes, Organic Gardening, Natural Health, Green Transportation, Nature & Community, Modern Homesteading, Sustainable, Farming, and Real Food.

#### Parenting Styles:

I mostly relied on websites for information regarding parenting styles. The

website that I found most helpful was About.com, when I searched the topic parenting styles at, [http://pediatrics.about.com/od/infantparentingtips/a/04\\_pntg\\_styles.htm](http://pediatrics.about.com/od/infantparentingtips/a/04_pntg_styles.htm), it gave a description of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles. It described the characteristics of parents using each style and their effectiveness or lack there of. The descriptions from this website are the ones that I will include with my interview questions.

I think that the majority of the people I interview will say that their parents were/are authoritative. I feel as though authoritative is the style that would most accurately describe the “hippie” parent. Many of them feel as though the family should be a democratic unit with a strong need for the child’s ideas and opinions to be respected and appreciated. I’m sure that there are “hippie” parents who are quite permissive as well. There are families who adopt elements of multiple parenting styles, after all there are all different kinds of families that engage in a wide array of behaviors.

“Social Structure and the Family: Generational Relations” edited by, Ethel Shanas and Gordon F. Streib has a very informative section on socialization. The book describes two different forms of socialization, dependent and independent. The first refers to the typically western forms of socialization where the child learns skills and information. The person is psychologically and emotionally assimilated with a divine sense of purpose. The individual does what he has to do to live life. The second is based on community membership and the idea that that there are social norms and expectations of the individual. He is compelled to do things as to not let down his peers.

With both forms of socialization, family is a central figure. The first model is based on cooperation and the family as a unit that works together to achieve certain goals.

Which I believe most closely describes the “hippie family”. The second is based more on dependent needs and does not display the same cohesiveness. The personality of the individual greatly effects the way in which they will be socialized. Someone who is nondependent is described through the following categories: sense of purpose, self-esteem, self-confidence, and pleasure. There are also subtypes: independent, pseudo-independent, and asocial or antisocial. The dependent person is described under the same categories but the subtypes are simple, masked, and pseudo-independent.

Alvin I. Goldfard author of the chapter “Psychodynamics and the Three-Generation Family” claims that what children experience as an infant pleasure or pain can have effects that last a lifetime. He believes that an infants experiences will relate to their future parenting skills (p.29). In Western culture there is the idea that children need to be protected from the woes of society. On the contrary many hippie families felt as though it was natural for children to be exposed to the world that they were living in. They did not feel as though there was a need to “hide” things from their children. Goldfard claims that socio-economic status plays a big role in a parents ability to properly socialize their child.

Parenting styles also ties into socialization. When children are included in the decision making process it helps them to develop their speaking skills and feelings of autonomy. It gives them a sense of belonging and acknowledges that they are human beings with creative ideas and valid suggestions. It builds their confidence as well.

#### Education (home-school v. public school):

Many hippies chose to home-school their children. There were several reasons why they chose to do this, a couple of which are location (many families lived in rural

areas) and a disdain for “the system” and its indoctrination of their youths.

“Family-School Links: How Do They Affect Educational Outcomes?” edited by Alan Booth and Judith F. Dunn has an extremely helpful model that I have been using to better understand the influences that parent involvement has on the child’s schooling as well as their development. This book does take the perspective of traditional schooling (not home-schooling) but its content is very in-depth and enlightening. It makes clear how multiple factors contribute to a child’s education and sense of accomplishment. This model takes several factors into consideration: parent/family characteristics, neighborhood characteristics, child characteristics, teacher characteristics, school characteristics, teacher beliefs, parent beliefs, teacher practices, parent practices, and child outcomes.

“Family-School Links” stressed the importance of parent involvement as far as education. It made me a little more weary of parents as home-schooling instructors despite my wonderful experience being taught by my mother. A child’s socialization is imperative for their development. Children need to be taught a variety of subjects with a teacher who has a firm grasp of the subject matter. It is something that needs to be taken very seriously. I feel as though I was very fortunate to have had such a well-rounded education from my mother but she was diligent and well-educated herself.

“Home Advantage: Social Class and Parental Intervention in Elementary Education, Second Education” by Annette Lareau brings the issue of socio-economic status (SES) to the forefront. She explains how SES affects a parents involvement in their child’s education. Parents who must work long hours and are exhausted when they get home are not going to have much involvement in their child’s education. They will also

probably have little time to do educational activities such as read to their child.

Lareau says that they are positive and negative aspects to parental involvement in their child's education. In our culture a child's academic success is a reflection on the parents. Many parents strive for their child to be the best, learning to read early and achieving good scores on tests. In general, middle class parents push their children to gain academic skills at a rapid rate. Unfortunately, many parents don't understand that this success is based on incremental developmental stages that cannot be rushed. The positive aspects of parental involvement are that parents closely monitor their child's work and ensure that homework is completed. They make sure that their children are properly fed and clothed before sending them to school. Nevertheless, too much pressure from parents to succeed can have detrimental effects. Some children suffer from headaches and stomach aches and other stress related disorders as a result of too high of expectations.

Lower income families see school and the home as separate from one another. They are often intimidated by the teachers. Parents fear that if they try to help their children they may teach them the wrong things or instruct them in the wrong way (Lareau 2000).

“Back to Nature” (Environmentalism):

I found several sources that had an abundance of information regarding very early examples of “back to nature” movements and alternative lifestyles. A website that gave a plethora of information was, HippyLand: Hippie Roots and The Perennial Subculture Archives at <http://www.hippy.com/article-243.html>, it gives in-depth chronological details about “back to nature” movements and paganism. It incorporates many different

people throughout history and how their thoughts and actions helped educate others and continue this way of thinking. The author of the website claims that the movement began in Germany beginning in the early 1700s.

“Lebensreform” (life-reform) was first used in 1896, the following were some of its practices and trends. Many of them are very similar to that of the hippie generation: vegetarianism, nudism, natural medicine, abstinence from alcohol, clothing reform, settlement movements, garden towns, soil reform, sexual reform, health food and economic reform, social reform, liberation for women, children and animals, communitarianism, cultural and religious reform.

#### Parents and Drug Use:

Jackson, Marni, M. “Pass the Weed, Dad” , 00249262, 2005, Vol. 118, Issue 45 brought to light the issue of marijuana use in a family setting. It described an open relationship regarding the consumption of pot in several Canadian families. It shares many statistics regarding pot usage among teens which are considerably high. The Canadian Addiction Survey reports around 70% of teens will have tried marijuana before they graduate high school. The article supports parents being open and informative with their children.

As I have I also found to be true, when parents don’t demonize pot there is more opportunities for open communication about its uses and subsequent affects. This article was helpful because it discussed issues regarding stereotypes. Many parents lie to their children about their habit as to not come across as a hypocrite. It was informative about how to encourage your child not to smoke when you do. It discussed motivation or lack of motivation issues related to the usage of marijuana.

It was fascinating to learn about the different uses of marijuana between the two generations. On one hand parents during the “hippie movement” would smoke weed to become more aware and become inspired whereas their children smoke to get high, forget their troubles and be sedated. The article also mentioned how there is a big difference in the potency of marijuana that was grown the 1960s and in the present.

### Diet:

“Do You Believe in Magic” describes the “hippie” journey as one of purifying the mind as well as the body, that is why it brings up the issue of organic foods and eating healthy. One line that really hit me hard was “once you’ve had a tomato off of a wild vine, why would you want one from a supermarket?” (p.85) Many people agreed with this quandary and that was why there was such a strong desire to live off of the land and grow one’s own food. It comes from a higher consciousness, knowing that what we put into our bodies is vital for a healthy mind and body.

This ties into Daniel Dombrowski’s book, “The Philosophy of Vegetarianism.” Dombrowski, along with many hippies believes that a life devoid of suffering (on behalf of the animal) is a key factor to true happiness. Dombrowski states that “it is possible for us to live without eating animals,” he thinks that people’s “repeated attempts to suggest otherwise indicate how the meat eater is often blind to the healthiness of a vegetarian diet.” The hippie philosophy is to live in harmony with all living creatures.

John Robbins book “The Food Revolution: How Your Diet Can Help Save Your Life And The World” describes all of the reasons why to adopt a vegetarian diet. It explains all of the negative impacts that the meat industry has on the environment and ones health. It shares personal stories of people who made the diet change from carnivore

to herbivore.

For anyone who is struggling with the decision of whether or not to go vegetarian this is the book that will answer all of your question as well as provide support and insight into the many issues surrounding the topic. It opens ones eyes to the suffering that these animals endure and the toxics that are contained within their flesh.

All of these sub-categories form the key components of a family. It is the feedback that I received from my participants that helped me intertwine the “hippie” experience into these different groupings.

**Methodology:**

I was able to find a very small amount of information regarding family dynamics in the “hippie” lifestyle. I went onto a lot of different search engines and typed in countless combinations of “key” words but found very little useful pieces of literature on the topic. This led me to break down the desired information into distinct categories that would be more easily accessible: background (on hippies), small communities/communes, parenting styles, education, “back to nature”, parents and drug use, and diet.

Due to this lack of information on my direct topic of “How having “hippie” parents affects one’s lifestyle choices” I decided to do in-depth interviews. What better way to see how “hippie” parents socialized their children than to get to the source, the children. I thought that this would be a good way to get the vital information that I needed regarding parenting styles, education, diet, etc.

Upon the completion of a consent form I conducted one on one, qualitative, structured interviews with ten people. Eight of the interviews were face to face and two

were over the telephone. All of the interviews were recorded with a hand held recording device. I interviewed six females and four males. I would have liked to interview the same amount of males and females but due to unforeseen circumstances one of my male subjects was unable to participate. The subjects ages ranged between 21 and 27 years. The participants and I met at an agreed upon location.

It was difficult to decide how to compile the data in a clear, coherent manner considering that the information had been gathered through 30-45 minute interviews. After careful deliberation I decided to pull 12 key questions from my original 40 and plug them into a chart to see what the trends were. I found that the majority of my interviewees answered yes to the questions that I had anticipated a yes answer to.

**Discussion of Data:**

	Male = 4	Female = 6	Total = 10
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Rural setting	4	6	10
Two Parents	4	6	10
Communal	4	6	10
Siblings	4	6	10
Authoritative	4	6	10
Authoritarian	0	0	0
Permissive	2 -combined w/ authoritative	0	2 - combined w/ authoritative
Vegetarian	1	4	5
Breast fed	4	6	10
Some home school	3	5	8
Low Socio- economic status	4	6	10
Activists	4	3	7
Drugs- marijuana	3	6	9
Majority of time w/ parents	4	6	10
Independent	4	6	10
Strong ties to nature	4	6	10

I found a great deal of similarities among the responses of my participants. All of the participants were raised in a rural setting and expressed strong ties to nature. Several people claimed that being in the outdoors was a great source of pleasure for them. When they shared what their favorite activities were with their parents many of them involved outdoors activities such as hiking, swimming, gardening, and even caving (where you hunt for caves).

The majority of those interviewed said that even though they were not raised in a

commune per say there was a very strong sense of community in the area where they grew up. Other parents felt responsible for their wellbeing and safety. It was also mentioned by a few participants that there would be a lot of big gatherings where all of the families within the community would come together and enjoy each others company.

None of the subjects were only children. The family sizes ranged from two children to eight. All of the participants claimed to have parents that were either Authoritative or Permissive, none were Authoritarian. There was a strong emphasis on the use of discussion as a way to work through conflicts. The participants all said that their parents would sit down and talk to them about what had happened, what they did wrong and how to remedy the situation. Isolation and/or time outs were also used.

Corporal punishment was used in severe cases of disobedience with three of my subjects but they did not say that it negatively affected their relationship with their parent(s). They also made it clear that this form of punishment only took place when they were fairly young and stopped when they reached double digits.

All of the participants were breast fed. I thought that this was interesting and followed my beliefs that these mothers were simply following the natural course of life. Females produce milk to feed their newborn child, why would they deny this process and feed them formula. However, there was another factor that may have influence their decision to breastfeed and that is socio-economic status. The majority of my participants said that their family was poor during their childhood. That may have been a contributing factor to choosing to breast fed, it is one less thing that you need to buy.

I found that all of the subjects except for one who was raised vegetarian remained a vegetarian into their adult life. As far as the person who said that they do now eat meat

it is small amounts and they still eat a very “balanced” diet.

The majority of the interviewees claimed to have had at least a little bit of home schooling throughout their academic career, all of which was administered by their mothers. For most of them it was in the very beginning of their education, pre-school and kindergarten. In two cases it was until third grade and in one case it was until fourth grade. Regarding the two other cases, it was at various times through out high school. There was one participant that went to a private school, a Woldof School, “that promoted education through creativity”.

All of the participants said that through out their childhood their families were fairly poor but that their parents climbed up the socio-economic ladder as they grew older. This lack of financial means was often attributed to the fact that these people were relocating to a new area and had not yet established themselves. They did not have their houses built or their gardens planted. They were not fully aware of the weather and native animals so many initial crops failed. Several of the primary settlers of the area were also looking for employment and it wasn’t until they landed well paying jobs that they could be considered middle or upper middle class.

Marijuana was the only drug that the participants mentioned their parents using during their childhood. In general they said that it had little to no effect on them. Several of the participants said that it was such a common or nonchalant occurrence that it didn’t even cross their minds as being abnormal. One participant related this to the fact that they lived in such a rural area. The other families that they had to compare themselves to also smoked marijuana. The only issue that arose for two participants was the fact that their parents tried to hide their “habit” and this frustrated them. It made them feel as though

their intelligence was being doubted.

The use of marijuana was also cited as a way for many of the participants parents to deal with stress. Some other ways that the parents would relieve stress were through exercise, yoga, meditation and various other outdoor activities as well as art, crafts, and music.

Another interesting thing that I found was people's hesitation to tell me what their parents profession was. I knew that some of these peoples parents were involved in the cultivation of marijuana but when asked they said other things. There was a couple of people who mentioned that their dads grew it but it was not the primary form of income. "My father was a carpenter and a mechanic for most of my life...and he cultivated herbs" (female, age 22). Another participant her parents professions and then added, "They both supplemented their income in the way that most hippies do. Depending on the year about half of their income comes from their 'jobs'" (female, 22).

I thought that this hesitation and lack of honesty (in the cases of some) was due to being indoctrinated their whole lives to never tell anyone what their really parents did. Even though marijuana is socially "accepted" in Humboldt County, no one wants to be exposed. The children feel an alliance with their parents and want to protect them.

Only one participant grew a large amount of food while three others said that they grew a couple of things. The majority of the participants expressed a strong desire to grow their own food in the future. Most of them said that the only thing that prevented them from doing it now was housing restrictions and location (bad weather).

Seven out of ten of my participants mentioned that there parents had been activists. The majority of these people cited, participating in protests, as being the main

way that their parents were involved in activism.

**Synthesis:**

How *does* having “hippie” parents affect one’s lifestyle choices? It is clear that our parents play a major role in our primary socialization. It is the job of our primary caregiver(s) to provide us with the necessary tools to take care of ourselves and function properly within society. Through symbolic interactionism our parents give meaning to the objects and activities around us. They create the reality that we live in.

There are some who argue that it is not our parents who socialize us, it is our peers and others that we interact with outside of the home. Judith Rich Harris argues in her article “Where is the Child’s Environment? A Group Socialization Theory of Development” that it is “intra and intergroup processes, not dyadic relationships” that are responsible for “the transmission of culture”. She backed up her findings by saying that siblings within one family vary greatly in their personality. Despite this finding I think that personality is not a result of socialization.

I feel as though my participants are unique in their situation because they grew up in such a small community with all families holding such similar ideals that they weren’t exposed to many different views. The participants also said that they spent the majority of their time with their parents. “Due to the ruralness that I was raised in, I think that I probably spent a large amount of time with them. They were definitely always there every night and always around, so if I wanted to be with them I could” (female, age 22).

This abundance of time spent with their parents allowed for conversations and meaningful interactions. When you spend a lot of time with your parents it is inevitable that you will hear stories and learn interesting things. My participants expressed that they

would do lots of activities with their parents. One said that she loved to work in the outdoors with her dad. Another said that she loved to work in the veggie garden with her mother and cook. One male participant said that loved to work with his dad on construction projects and as a result learned a lot about carpentry and electricity. The time that these people spent with their parents resulted in a plethora of knowledge and skills that will help them throughout their lives.

These meaningful experiences with their parents were supplemental to their education. Education was very important to nearly all of the parents. They were always encouraging their children to embrace it. The participants said that their parents were willing to help out whenever they could. A couple of the participants had parents who were teachers so they received a lot of excellent guidance and support.

There are several other ways that having “hippie” parents affects one’s lifestyle choices. These include making one a more open minded person who is accepting of all different kinds of people and beliefs. “I think I am more understanding of different viewpoints as I have seen many in my upbringing” (female, age 22). “One thing that the “hippie” lifestyle brought was a consciousness of your surroundings and an awareness about the world that you live in and community and family and the importance of those things...not only raising a child but in the way that you live your life and how it affects the people around you” (male, age 24).

It makes people have a deep connection with the environment. “I learned to respect all the trees, plants, and different kinds of animals because we all lived in the same environment. I would always be curious and observe how nature works and how things would progress” (male, age 27). Another participant said that she loved to play in

the outdoors. She would climb trees, build fern forts, swim in the river, etc. At one point during our interview she said, “Nature was my playground” (age 26). She had free access to roam the mountains.

Living in such a rural setting it was important for the children to be aware of dangers such as wild animals and poisonous plants. From a young age my participants were taught what was and wasn’t edible and how to properly behave if they were to encounter a feral animal. Through their education of plant properties they learned a great deal about alternative medicine. “My mom was really into homeopathy” (male, age 22). “One thing that I learned as a child that I still use nowadays is how amazing plantain is for a bee sting or if you come in contact with stinging nettle. It tastes really bad but you just chew up a leaf and put the pulp on the afflicted area. The relief is almost instant. I tell all of my friends about it because the plant grows everywhere around here” (female, age 23)

These experiences with nature developed a respect for the natural world. This is evident through their awareness of environmental issues and their environmental practices such as recycling, cutting back on consumption, refraining from driving, etc. “My motto is ‘reducing my environmental footprint’. Just basically unnecessary wear on the environment. Composting, not using plastics as much as possible, minimizing uses of water...trying to save gas, supporting local companies, buying products and supporting groups that promote ‘greener’ lifestyles” (male, age 24).

Diet was also something that was deeply influenced by their parents. Everyone who had been raised vegetarian, with one exception, remained vegetarian. “I am proud of the fact that I have never eaten an animal and that I never will” (female, age 23). The

participants who did eat meat still claimed to eat a healthy, well balanced diet that included lots of fruits and vegetables.

When people are raised having to take care of them selves and not relying on the “outside” world they have to learn what grows well where and how to fend of critters that threaten your crops. Living in the wilderness allows one more freedom and opportunities to be self reliant. “For the first eight or nine years we grew, gathered, or hunted the majority of our food. We only bought staples like rice, noodles, and farina and oats. We had a full orchard with apples, pears, walnuts, chestnuts, and some exotic stuff like quince, persimmons and cherries. What we got defiantly depended on the year. We always battled with birds. We also grew lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, asparagus, strawberries, raspberries, peas, beans, broccoli, pumpkins, squash, cabbage, chard, carrots, radishes, potatoes, zucchini, cucumber, and probably a bunch of other things I don’t remember. We often had an over abundance of some things and an under abundance of others. We also ate wild things like nettles and mushrooms and hunted for meat whether or not it was in season” (female, age 22).

Having hippie parents shaped my participants political views as well. All of my participants claimed that their parents were very liberal. Their parents belonged to either the Democratic or Green Party and were always active voters. Some of my participants said that they knew that their views were so close to their parents that they could call them and ask them for advice regarding certain issues and who and what to support.

Overall my participants were encouraged to be independent. The parents felt as though they had given them a solid foundation and felt confident that their children had acquired the wisdom and skills to make decisions that would have positive effects on

their lives.

### **Conclusions:**

Upon the completion of my ten interviews and literature research I came to the conclusion that having “hippie” parents has very positive affects on the children’s lifestyle choices. I believe that being raised by authoritative parents, where their opinions and ideas were acknowledged and respected greatly contributed to their ability to articulate their thoughts and beliefs.

Coming from a large family also has effects on ones development. You have to share your time, space and possessions. I feel as though this makes for a more well rounded individual. When you have siblings you are faced with lots of situations where you have to negotiate and compromise. You learn how to get along with others as well as be exposed to varying opinions and skills.

Education was important to the parents of all of my participants. Even if “life” sometimes took precedence over school or homework, education was highly valued and parents were supportive and encouraging. It was interesting that even though for many of my participants college was not something that was pushed upon them they still chose to do it. “My parents really wanted me to go to college, of course they wanted me to stay local. They kind of pushed me to do college as a means to direction because I didn’t really know what I wanted to do with my life. They thought that it would help. It wasn’t a requirement, it was just more a way of helping me figure out what I wanted to do” (male, age 24).

Overall, having “hippie” parents helped these people develop a high

consciousness of their actions and what is happening around them. As Karl Marx said, “The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness” (Marx 1971:20). It is the unique environment from which these people came that will determine their future lifestyle choices.

Their upbringing made them have a strong relationship with the environment. They all claimed to respect the environment and do what they could to protect it. “The planet is not as big as we think. What we do in America affects others people around the world. We need to do every little thing that we can to cut back on our consumption and live a sustainable life” (female, age 23) Recycling was the most frequently cited practice that they participate in.

The majority of my participants were raised vegetarian and continue to be today. However, even those who consume meat products claimed to be very conscious of their diet. They strived to eat “healthy” meat and a well balanced diet consisting of a lot of fruits and vegetables.

Many of these families grew their own food. “We have always had a vegetable garden...with anything from broccoli, lettuce, carrots, all the basic fruits and vegetables” (female, age 22). One participant said that his family grew, “tomatoes, peppers, jalapeños, garlic” and other supplemental veggies and herbs (male, age 24). When a person has had the wonderful experience of picking their food fresh from the garden it is hard to settle for un-organic produce that has been shipped from overseas.

All of my participants expressed the desire to one day have a fruit/vegetable

garden of their own. “I would love to have my own garden someday, there is nothing quite like picking green beans right off of the vine and just munching on them as a snack...or making salad with fresh picked lettuce. It is almost as if it is still alive. Your body absorbs all of those nutrients and you feel amazing” (female, age 23)

Of course, as Herbert Blumer said, we are products of our environment. Many of us are greatly influenced by our parents. When a person becomes adapted to a certain lifestyle, even if they try to change there are certain inherent traits that will always remain the same. “I can tell that I do a lot of things like my mother even if not like my father. The things that I have surrounding me, Buddha’s, plants, and things like that I definitely got from my parents. My cooking style and my cleaning style I got from my mom.” (Female, age 22).

Due to my small sample size I cannot make any concrete generalizations. I can only share the trends that I found among my distinct population of northern Californian youths. In order to be able to make generalizations I would need to have a considerably larger sample size. It would be very beneficial to have participants from different states and counties to analyze their similarities and differences. It would also be fascinating to interview urban “hippies” and hear how their experiences differed from those in a rural setting.

I was pleased to get both male and female participants but I would have liked to have an even number of each. I also think that it would have been helpful and less bias to have an even number of participants who had gone to college, who had had minimal college, and who had had no college. While receiving a higher education you are exposed to a lot of different ideas and experiences. College in and of itself is an opportunity for

socialization and consciousness development.

In the future I think that it would be fascinating to get the perspective of the parents as well. I would like to ask them what led them to adopt the “hippie” lifestyle. It would be interesting to know why they made the distinct choice to raise their children in remote locations. I believe that the parents would be able to offer insight that the children were not able to due to the children’s young age. When a person is young they have a very unique interpretation of things. They do not yet possess the knowledge or consciousness to critically analyze certain situations and decisions.

From my study I have found that having “hippie” parents has positive affects on one’s lifestyle choices. All of my participants were well rounded individuals who had happy memories of their childhood. They praised their parents for their unique upbringing. They shared stories and were reminiscent of the past. They were thankful for the grounded lifestyle, free from materialism and excessive consumption. My participants all said that they hoped to continue their parents traditions and shared the same ideals. These people all have bright futures. Their parents provided them with countless opportunities to learn and grow as individuals, as a member of a family, and as part of a larger community.

## **Annotated Bibliography:**

### Theories:

Blumer, Herbert. "Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method". University of California Press. 1969

This book goes into deep detail regarding the topic of symbolic interactionism. It describes why we place meaning on certain objects and how we develop meaning through our interactions with the objects.

Harris, Judith R. "Where is the Child's Environment? A Group Socialization Theory of Development". American Psychological Association. 1995.

### Back ground:

Gottlieb, Annie. "Do You Believe In Magic: The Second Coming Of The Sixties Generation." Times Books. Random House, Inc. 1987.

This is a fabulous book that shares the personal accounts of nearly 100 people who considered themselves "hippies" during the 1960s. Their stories recount what factors influenced their rejection of mainstream America as well as describing where their journeys took them whether it was traveling and touring or setting up homesteads and starting families.

Lane, Philip J. "What a Long Strange Trip It's Been: The Grateful Dead, Deadheads, and the Refiguration of Counterculture." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Speech Communication Association (Sacramento, CA, February 16-20, 1990).

This paper is a follow up to the hippie movement. It correlates the traits and trends of the deadheads to that of the "original" hippies of the 1960's. The paper was written as an analysis of a questionnaire that the author administered to volunteers at a Grateful Dead show. The questionnaire was to measure how closely the Deadheads needs were met, importance of participation and what the demographic of the average Deadhead was.

Lattin, Don. "Following Our Bliss: How the Spiritual Ideals of the Sixties Shape Our Lives Today." HarperCollins, 2004.

This book discusses some of the darker sides of the hippie counterculture. It deals with some of the abuses of the Hare Krishnas, sex, drugs, and communes. It is important to look at the negatives of this time as well to get a well rounded perspective.

McCleary, John Bassett. "Hippie Dictionary: A Cultural Encyclopedia of the 1960's and 1970's." Berkeley, Ca: Ten Speed Press, 2002. An informative book that has a lot of significant, phrases, musicians, events, and people, etc. that relate to the hippie counterculture. This is an excellent reference book. Miles, Barry. "Hippie." Sterling Publishing Company, 2005. This New York Times bestseller chronicles the hippie movement through interviews, pictures, illustrations and quotes. It tells the story of the "hippie movement" by those living through it. It also discusses other events that were happening during that time period. It is easy to access and provided a plethora of information.

Partridge, William L. "The Hippie Ghetto: The Natural History of a subculture". University of Florida. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1973.

\*This was an anthropological study of a group of "hippies" in the Roskind, Robert. "Memoirs of an Ex-Hippie: Seven Years in the Counterculture." This book was supportive because it provided me with a firsthand account of some of the events of the 1960's. It is a biography of one man's experiences living as a hippie during the 1960's. It discussed the Vietnam War, communal living, psychedelics, "free-love", music, traveling, and other issues related to the hippie movement of that period.

Stone, Skip. "Hippies from A to Z." Hip, Inc. 1999.

This book is like a hippie bible it has everything from hippie philosophy to activism, names and garments to music and lifestyle. It also compares the old hippie to the young hippie. It also has a helpful bibliography.

Sunker, Heinz. Swiderek, Thomas. "Politics of Childhood, Democracy and Communal Life: Conditions of Political Socialization and Education."

#### Education:

Booth, Alan. Dunn, Judith F. "School Links: How Do They Affect Educational Outcomes?" Pennsylvania State University. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 1996.

This book describes the many factors that influence a child's education such as parent/family characteristics, neighborhood characteristics, child characteristics, teacher characteristics, and teacher characteristics. It goes on to explain how conflicts between teacher and parents beliefs and teacher and parent practices affect the child's outcome.

Lareau, Annette. "Home Advantage: Social Class and Parental Intervention in

Elementary Education”. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2000.

This book's main focus is social class and how that influences parental involvement. It also deals with teacher expectations, and gender differences regarding parental roles and involvement in their child's education. It touched on the positive and negative aspects of parental involvement.

Pantley, Elizabeth. “Hidden Messages: What Our Words and Actions are Really Telling Our Children.” McGraw-Hill Professional, 2000.

This book is an easy read because it uses everyday examples to explain how to deal with certain situations that arise while rearing a child. It gives tips on how to send the right messages to one's child. It also provides suggestions on how to make positive changes in your parenting approach. This was helpful because it made me question what kinds of messages were sent to the children of hippies. It also describes the importance of consistency of lifestyle; this wasn't always possible with traveling families and communal living.

#### Diet:

Dombrowski, Daniel A. “The Philosophy of Vegetarianism.” The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984.

This book was interesting. It referred to many different philosophers, Pythagoras, Empedocles, and Theophrastus, etc. and explained why they thought that it was wrong to eat animals. This was helpful because it correlated to why people might be vegetarian today (and during the hippie movement).

Robbins, John. “The Food Revolution: How Your Diet Can Help Save Your Life And The Planet”. Conari Press, 2001.

This book gives amazing insight into the issues surrounding diet and meat consumption. It describes the negative effects that eating meat has on the environment as well as one's health. It offers personal accounts and heart wrenching stories that will make meat eaters reconsider their decisions and vegetarians feel reassured that they are making a positive choice.

#### Back to the Land (Environmentalism):

Halfacree, Keith. “From Dropping Out to Leading On? British Counter-Cultural-Back-to-the-Land in a Changing Rurality.” Progress in Human Geography, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 309-336, June 2006.

Despite the fact that this article is based on issues in England there is some relevant information regarding the back-to-nature ideals of the hippies in America. It also relates

to the differences in lifestyle that the children of hippies are facing nowadays. Even if they want to follow their parent's footsteps and live off of the land, what land is available to them? There are more laws and regulations regarding "open" land and how it can be used.

Kennedy, Gordon. "Children of the Sun: A Pictorial Anthology from Germany to California 1883-1949." This was really fascinating and very enlightening about the origins of the back to nature movement and how far back it really began. It explained how the movement began as far back as the late 1800's in Germany. It explained how the "hippie" ideology moved to America, especially California, after World War II. This book is really intriguing.

Kinney, David A. "From "Headbangers" to "*Hippies*": Delineating Adolescents' Active Attempts to Form an Alternative Peer Culture." n84 p21-35 Sum 1999.

This was a paper that showed that despite mainstream culture forcing images and ideas of who we are supposed to be there are still people out there who strive to follow their own ideals. It described how a group of high school children formed their own club that celebrates the hippie philosophy of love and acceptance.

#### Parenting Styles/Family Dynamics:

Sclafani, Dr. Joseph D. "Educated Parent: Recent Trends in Raising Children." Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2004. This book is part of a Child Psychology and Mental Health series. It gave a very informative background on parenting in general. It explained how significant a parent's role is in their child's life. The books discussions regarding family structure, parenting styles, and discipline were the most helpful. There was also a chapter on home-schooling that I found very useful due to the fact that a lot of hippie families home-schooled their children. Shanas, Ethel. Sreib, Grodon F. "Social Structure and the Family: Generational Relations." N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963.

This is a great book and will really help with my study because it talks about generational issues. Since I am looking at how the adult children of Hippies were affected by their parents lifestyles it offers a lot of insight. It discusses extended family as well which in some ways is what communal life was like. Van Esterik, Penny. "Beyond the Breast-Bottle Controversy." Rutgers University Press, 1989.

This book discusses all the issues surrounding whether to breast or bottle feed ones child. It goes into the economic realm and topics related to developing countries. It discusses formula and its effects of the child, health wise and psychologically. It enlightened me to why so many people struggle with the issue and why hippies chose to breast feed their children.

**Websites:** The Educated Parent.com: Recent Trends in Raising Children. Dr. Sclafani.

[TheEducatedParent.com](http://TheEducatedParent.com).

The website is the companion to Dr. Sclafani's book of the same title. It is updated daily with tips and information regarding children and how to be a "successful" parent.

Hippie. Wikipedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippie>

This website (although sometimes questionable) had a helpful timeline of the hippie movement. It put the movement into the following categories: Early hippies (1960-66), Summer of Love (1967), Revolution (1968-73), and Aftershocks (1974-present). It also had a great deal of links that led me to more info.

HippyLand. <http://www.hippy.com/php/index.php>

This website has been running for the past twelve years and has everything that I could imagine regarding hippies. There is an events section with an event calendar, blogs, photo gallery and more. There are topics links and there is an article section. There are forums, reviews and journals. It is a way for hippies to stay in touch and up to date.

Socialization [http://anthro.palomar.edu/social/soc\\_1.htm](http://anthro.palomar.edu/social/soc_1.htm)

This website described the many components of the socialization process. It shared how parents are the primary socializers and that the process begins at birth. Although short it was helpful and provided some useful insight.

McClelland, Kent. Grinnell College. "Conflict Theory".  
<http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/soc/s00/soc111-01/IntroTheories/Conflict.html>

This website provided background information on the Conflict Theory and its effects on individuals within society.