

KuBus 55 - "Home Sweet Home"

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Today more and more young adults are deciding not to move out of the family home. Above all young men are the ones who want to stay on at "Home Sweet Home". After all it is cheaper and more convenient than a flat. The trend has been described as the 'cosy nest phenomenon'. Benjamin Heitfeld is 23 years old. He also still lives at home.

00'43" Original sound, Benjamin Heitfeld

"I've never really thought of moving out because it is really comfortable at home. So I don't think about it. Friends of mine who have an ongoing problem with their parents move out and finish up with nothing. At the moment I have no intention of moving out. It's nice here. You can live very comfortably!"

01'07" Original sound, Elke Heitfeld

"I'd never put any pressure on him to move out. As long as we all get along well together and there is no tension in the family unit, I would never apply any pressure."

01'29" Original sound, Dr. Christiane Papastefanou,

Mannheim University

"Today the ideal rearing principle is seen as this democratic 'Us and our kids are all good friends' idea. That is something that is fairly new. And its social relevance is that in crisis situations, for example a time of economic hardship, as we have had for some time, the family has more strength, gives something to hold on to, has a group solidarity, and a 'we support our kids as long as we have to' response."

02'02"

Now and then Benjamin lends a hand around the house but the chores are usually done by his mother and father.

02'24" Original sound, Harald Heitfeld

"I regard Benjamin more as a friend. We talk freely about a lot of things and if one of us has a problem we can freely discuss it. We are pretty close. That is the father and son relationship. We are also good friends, we enjoy doing things together."

02'46" Original sound, Dr. Christiane Papastefanou,
Mannheim University

"There is hardly any real generation conflict anymore, none of those bitter rows. And if there is it is never to do with fundamentals. Most likely it is over the telephone or shoes left lying about, things like that. This has a practical effect that shows itself during the late teenage years and makes it hard for youngsters to think of cutting the link. Because it is nice at home and in the evening one sits and chats with parents youngsters feel they would lose something, they would miss the folks."

03'42"

Benjamin is off to work. He is training to be an office buyer. In a year, when he has finished, he wants to train for something else, something that fits in with whatever the job market needs most. His parents have already promised to provide support.

04'15" Original sound, Benjamin Heitfeld

"One reason for moving out would be a relationship with someone. A firm relationship that you want to build on. That, I think would be a reason for moving out because the house is not so big. And I don't think my parents would go along with the idea of me living here with someone else."

04'32" Original sound, Dr. Christiane Papastefanou,
Mannheim University

"It was in the 70's that young people began to move out and for the first time began to live alone. Mainly it was young women who said they wanted their own peace of mind and were not yet ready to start looking after a child or husband. Young women were also spending a longer time studying and economically could stand on their own feet and enjoyed doing just that. It was a great life to live with other girls or different people or just be alone."

05'06"

In the 70's the youngsters questioned traditional family ties and what they saw as obsolete morals. One got out of the family home as quickly as possible and tried alternative forms of communal life.

05'44"

Violent disagreements with the authorities and massive demonstrations led to a break with traditional values. The ideas of the Generation of 68 brought about a deep reaching change of values in Germany.

06'03" Original sound, Dr. Christiane Papastefanou,
Mannheim University

"What in relation to earlier times has certainly changed is that it is now acceptable among the young to live with one's parents. Naturally the better living conditions are a factor as well. This inclination among the young to stay at home is marked predominantly among parents owning their own houses. Some can offer separate living areas or a self-contained flat, an attic or a basement. They can be quite free from disturbances. Thirty years ago that was very rare."

07'00"

In Cologne all four daughters of the Wollenstein family live at home. The two eldest, Janine and Miriam, have for some time been working and earning.

Not one of the girls has thought about moving out. The advantages of "Home Sweet Home" are clear to see; when they come in from work the table is already set and there is a meal waiting for them. The daughter's friends are also received as welcome guests.

07'41" Original sound, Eva-Maria Wollenstein

"I have often tried to tell them that they are no longer children. Naturally they will always be my children. But they are all now grown up and we are living together in a sort community. There are five adults in this community and we live by a general rule. They all have their job or their studies and none can say that everything is done just for them alone. I am always the place of refuge and I am always ready to help and I will always remain the mother but from a help and work point of view we are moving from the level of dealing with children to the level of adults."

08'23" Original sound, Miriam Wollenstein

"After my training I might move out. Perhaps moving in with another group. But I don't have any concrete plans. But there is no foundation in the idea that I will live here for ever. There is definitely going to be a change."

08'51" Original sound, Janine Wollenstein

"I think there will be a time, when it is right for both sides. But when we are all gone, they'll be in for a surprise. It'll be pretty quiet around here, for one thing."

09'12"

For the Wollenstein girls helping themselves from their mother's wardrobe has long been a matter of course. But in the meantime they have at least started to do some of the ironing – and Eva Maria, their mother, had to fight hard and long for that. Apart from that helping out around the house is a tabu subject.

09'35" Original sound, Dr. Christiane Papastefanou, Mannheim University

"Children and young people want a certain amount of authority. It gives them something to get worked up about, to fight against and to reconcile with, and it is healthy. Thus it is a sort of democracy within a framework of clear boundaries and positions. They have to be quite clear and consistently applied otherwise we shall finish up with a new generation of mini Machos and cosy nestbuilders and they are hard to put up with."

10'06"

For many of the cosy 'stay at homes' the move away from home was a social let down. Whoever finances his own four walls and daily life can hardly afford expensive hobbies, travel, mobile telephones or a car of his own.

10'25" Original sound, Miriam Wollenstein

"You can easily spend 30 to 50 Euro a month on sport."

10'28" Original sound, Janine Wollenstein

"That certainly is a luxury. Going out as well. They are all things that you can afford because you are still at home with parents."

10'42"

Up until now neither Janine nor Miriam have had to make a financial contribution to their upkeep. But it is something their parents are thinking about.

10'53" Original sound, Wilfried Wollenstein

"When you add everything together in the house, gas, water, electricity and see what it comes to it is a tidy sum. And that is without reckoning what the cost could be of individual rooms within the house."

11'06" Original sound, Eva-Maria Wollenstein

"I think that a small contribution is absolutely legitimate. They are earning their own money and because they get everything here they can keep their pay for themselves, they finish up with more than I have to spend in a month."

11'34" Original sound, Eva-Maria Wollenstein

"We have often said jokingly, when they were selling flats opposite, the best thing we could do would be to buy a small one for ourselves, move in and close the door behind us. Then we could sit and watch this house from the other side of the road to see if everything was still running properly.

And do it just like that to get a place for us alone."

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