

family was great, I loved working on the show, I had pleased and gained many wonderful fans, and my life was a busy one.

I picked up the letter again and read the last sentence: "Are you going to change, David?" Once again I pictured in my mind that nervous boy trying to get through his first day on the set. I decided without question that not only did my life change since then, but that *I* changed as well. I thought I had grown up in this year, and I'd like to share with YOU the reasons why.

First of all, I think that the demands of a weekly series have made me more responsible. I know that I have to be on the set at a certain time, that I have scripts to read and lines to learn, and that I have new songs to practice. I've learned to meet these demands, and realize that it takes hard work and dedication to do it. I know I can't run out on these responsibilities. There's no time to be too carefree or lazy if you want to reach your goals.

I've grown up in that I've been helping others with their problems as well as helping myself more. I've enjoyed being a "big brother" to my TV brothers and sisters, giving advice when needed, or just lending a welcome ear. I'd like to think it's been good advice, and a comforting ear. Instead of running to someone else all the time, I try to think things out for myself now. That doesn't mean I never discuss a problem with my family or friends—I just know the final decision must be my *own*.

### MUCH MORE CONFIDENCE

I have definitely become more outgoing. I used to be afraid of the thought of singing or performing in front of thousands of people—but my fans have made me feel so good inside that I no longer have this fear. I *love* to perform for, talk to, and be with people—and the *MORE* the *MERRIER!* YOU have built my confidence and made me feel comfortable in all situations.

Just recently I took my biggest step. Through my illness I have come to know and appreciate the joy of just being alive and well. I used to take it for granted, but I now see that life must be lived to the fullest while you still have the chance. You can't put things off or wait until tomorrow to reach a dream, because there may not be a tomorrow.

Just being healthy so that you are able to do the things you want to do is a privilege, and unfortunately some people never realize this. I hated being sick, but I'm glad I had the chance to see just how wonderful life is.

The joy of being alive becomes even greater when you know there are people who care about you and are glad that you're around. When I was ill, so many of my fans were concerned about me. They cared, they hoped, and they prayed. Because of YOU I could now think about how I've changed from my dressing room, instead of from a hospital bed—or perhaps not at all. Boy—my heart starts beating wildly when I just SAY that!

I wish I could be as really great a person as you've made me out to be. Growing up a little doesn't seem to be enough. If only there could be something *more* that I could do to make me worthy of your praise and devotion.

Who knows? Maybe a year from now I'll find a lost

letter that asks: "David, what are you going to do to show your fans that you're a great a person as they think you are?" I hope I'll have the answer—but just the same, when it gets near that time, I'm going to walk mighty SLOW, and LOOK very, very CAREFULLY where I'm going. A guy can get hurt just trying to THINK!

But anyway, thanks for putting up with my growing pains. It makes me love you lots more than a little!

