

David Cassidy is experiencing something very few people get to experience—the life of a teenage star.

It's a fast, exciting, fun kind of life, but it also has a lot of disadvantages—lack of privacy, for instance—and there are some people who wouldn't want to be a teenage star even if they could be.

The truth of the matter is that David wasn't too interested in the whole thing at first, either.

He set out to be an actor and he thought he was finally getting everything together the way he wanted it. He was getting guest shots on some of the top TV shows and getting good reviews for the things he did.

Then, bang, he got the part of Keith Partridge and his whole life changed. Suddenly he was no longer an actor, but a personality. People didn't want to know what acting teacher he went to or his philosophy of film, but instead what his favorite color and food were and what sort of girls he liked.

David took one quick look at the whole thing and just about fled in sheer fright. The things he saw happening to him and around him just didn't suit him at all.

But gradually over the show's first season he got more and more used to the idea and the title of teenage idol. And one day, after he'd finished filming the first season and had some time to think about himself and his life, he sat down and talked to FLIP about the whole matter.

"I suppose I have changed somewhat," he began. "I've become much more tolerant of the situation. At first I just didn't want to accept people saying to me 'You are a teenage idol.' And like if someone asked me what I did for a living I'd have to say, 'Oh, I'm a teenage idol.' And I didn't want to accept that, but now I guess I do.

"Now I can deal with it. It's really fun. At first I guess I was a little defensive. I mean I couldn't figure out what everyone wanted from me.

"Suddenly people were asking me what do you do, what do you eat, where do you sleep, what do you like? And I kept thinking, what do you want to know for? No one ever wanted to know before, so why all of a sudden do you want to know?"

"And it reached a point where I actually told my publicist that I didn't want to be in the teenage magazines anymore! I felt I couldn't take it—I couldn't face myself in the morning. It was all pretty hard for me to swallow, but it became easier and easier and now it's fun.

"I mean I wasn't into this whole thing at first. I wanted to be an actor, not a teenage idol. But now I've accepted the whole thing and am really enjoying it."

It's kind of hard to believe that anyone would not want to be a teenage idol, but the position does bring about a lot of changes in a person's life and each person has to deal with those changes in their own way. It's easy to become very big headed about the whole thing and think that you don't owe anything to anyone.

Fortunately, David has come out of this whole thing with the realization that a lot of people have been responsible for his success.

"Has it changed my life? It's hard to say, other than the fact that I can't go out to many places now. I can't really function outside of my home.

"But I sort of feel that I have an obligation to people. It's like there's a reason why the show is a success and there's a reason why I'm a success and it's because of these people—the fans. And if there's someone out there who wants to see me, or feels that whatever I'm doing is valid and valuable, then I have to give them whatever they want. It's a big responsibility, but a nice one to have."

Being a teenage idol can also change your relationships with the people around you—they start treat-

ing you differently than they did before you were a success—but David feels his relationships with those closest to him have not changed.

"No, my friends, my father and mother and stepmother—our relationships are still the same. My friends who were my friends before will always be my friends. But it is strange that everyone all of a sudden wants to be my friend—that's rather hard to deal with, but I can usually see right through it. People who knew me before and didn't want to get close to me, but who now want to get close to me—I know where that's at. I can see it and deal with it for what it is."

The one thing that's sure to change when a guy becomes an idol is the way girls react to him. David's fans are mostly younger than he is, but he feels the whole thing is super flattering.

"Oh, absolutely. There's no way it wouldn't be. Sure, because of all this, I can't go out much. I can't even go to the grocery store, but it's a nice inconvenience to have.

"I just wish every guy could go through what I'm going through. It's an ego trip, but it's something that is really unusual to have to deal with. I mean I never thought people would be screaming and running after me—I never saw that happening—but now when it does happen, well, it's fun.

"It would be easy for me to say, Jeez, it's really a bummer and I can't go anywhere and I can't do this and I can't do that—that's all true, it is a bummer in that way, but it's still nice that it is there and I really can't honestly say that I would trade it for anything else.

"So for as long as it continues to happen, I still deal with it and enjoy it.

"It's really an interesting experience that, unfortunately, everyone can't have. I'm sure I'll look back on this whole thing as one of the most important times of my life."