



What is happening to our kids?

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Is it just my millennials who:

Seem to lack a sense of purpose and responsibility.

Express feelings of entitlement that they need, want or expect the best of everything, yet aren't able to accept the reality of how much work is required for those acquisitions.

Feel that they should be rewarded for just showing up.

Have few socio-economic skills which will help them find a job and keep that job?

Are often unable to form lasting interpersonal relationships?

Let's start the discussion.

My sons are of the Millennial generation, and although they are great young men, they lack a sense of purpose and responsibility. Are we the parents to blame? Perhaps we are. We taught our kids that they could be and do anything they wanted. I now realize that that wasn't such a smart idea.

You don't get rewards for just showing up.



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When they played sports, they received ribbons or trophies just for showing up. I will admit I thought that was the dumbest thing I'd ever heard. How are these kids ever to learn that not everything is about participation and you don't get rewards just for showing up.

This philosophy of education is now being questioned as we see the results.

Life is about work, compromise, and responsibility.

Our two children, who are now grown men, have a great work ethic but are not employed full time and have great difficulties finding and keeping full time work. Our youngest has found his dream job, however the pay is so low it doesn't provide him enough to pay the high rents in this area, and still meet the other necessities of life.

Our oldest son has a great trade, which unfortunately is not offered full time, so it, too, doesn't always pay the bills or afford any luxuries.

So, is this inability to function, to grow, to prosper in today's society the fault of these people? If they can't function, whose fault is it: theirs, Society, or ours, as parents? Or is anyone to blame? And are we — the parents — not 'Society'?

When we moved to BC, the joke was always that BC stood for Bring Cash. I now believe that to be true. The young people that live in this community, or at least the majority of them, cannot stay here to live. They have to move away.

So what happens if these young people don't want to leave their home? Well, they live paycheque to paycheque, falling behind on their bills, all for the luxury of staying in their home-town.

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Is there blame?

Did we do something wrong? Well, I don't think that we as parents can take all the blame for this. Society changes, acceptable behavior changes and I think taking away a parents' rights to discipline children has played a large part in the formation of the Millennial attitudes. This lack of ability seems to be getting worse; parents are afraid to discipline their children in public for fear of someone chastising them or calling social services.

It's ridiculous to watch how some parents of millennials and their children interact when out in public. It's not hard to see who's ruling the roost in many of these relationships, and it isn't the parent. Our boys were taught, in school, that if they were hit or slapped by anyone they could call Child Welfare.

I believe this to be a good thing in the proper circumstance, however, my oldest son used it to try and manipulate me by saying I couldn't ever discipline him because he would call the Children's Help Line. Needless to say, we had a chat about the real purpose of the Children's Help Line and I later had a chat with the school about their responsibility in letting the kids know that discipline was different from beatings. Our sons did get the occasional spanking, but more often than not this wasn't necessary, and the punishments were more likely like no television, no playing with certain toys or grounding from using the bikes.

I do not think that we were bad parents, our sons grew up to be respectful, kind, generous and hard working, so I ask myself, "Why do they struggle so much as adults?"

They work so hard; if they have their own family, both parents have to work just to make ends meet. It's very difficult to save for a mortgage if you are paying half your salary for rent.

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What Now?

I believe that we have lost the family dynamic; both parents have to work, and their children are being placed in someone else's care. Kids are involved in so many activities that calendars are full to the brim. There is little room for family time and there is too much time spent on social media devices.

The recognition of this as an addiction and the ramifications of that addiction are now becoming evident with the inability of the millennials to form meaningful connections with others. Talking and communicating to their peers about their lives is a critical component of healthy social growth.

Children aren't allowed to partner up and walk to school anymore for fear of being abducted by strangers, they aren't allowed to play outside, do fun things like get dirty, raid gardens, ride their bikes, play hide and seek. They aren't allowed to be kids anymore. It's all about being involved in activities and devices. Their brains are so full that they have lost the fun; they don't know how to be kids anymore.

I think the school system should be teaching kids about life, mortgages, bills, savings accounts. Real life stuff

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At one of the PAC meetings when our oldest son was in high school, a discussion took place about trades and bringing more trade training into the school system. In the previous years, the kids were pushed into academics: university and college careers. Neither of my sons was academically inclined; they were, however, keen on the trades. Both liked working with their hands, being outdoors and creating. The school Principal at the time said that 87% of the kids who went on to university or college were unemployed and could not find work in their professions for which they paid tens of thousands of dollars, and were carrying large student loan debts on. These same kids had to settle for low-paying jobs — if they could find one at all.

How does that happen in a society that seemed to be so progressive and forward thinking?

Perhaps it's time to bring back common sense teaching and make the world more about community, family, and bartering because what we're doing now is not working, and the next generation is not going to be fairing any better.

I believe we did a good job raising our sons and I am very proud of them both. Would I do things differently having the knowledge I have now? Perhaps I would change some things.

I would certainly not give them a false sense of being and doing anything that they set their mind to. I would work at helping them figure out what makes their heart sing and then guide them to that. If they didn't do well at a sport, I would not encourage them and tell how wonderful they are at it.

Let's stop lying to our kids and making it ok to act any way they want, having whatever they want and doing whatever they want.

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I am an advocate of choices, however, I do not believe in letting them rule the roost and telling me what will be for dinner, what they will and won't do. And I am a huge advocate for chores. I do not expect them to do all my housework, cook meals or do dishes. I do however, expect them to learn basic cooking skills, how to do dishes, how to do laundry, and how to vacuum and clean their rooms and how to manage money, and also how to take out the garbage.

In our house, it seems that no one ever uses the trash except me, so I am not sure how the garbage keeps filling up so quickly! If they don't learn chores, how will they ever be able to function in their own homes?

Something interesting to watch: This is Simon Senek speaking about "[Millennials in the Workplace](#)". Simon delivered the third most popular TED Talk of all time "How Great Leaders Inspire Action."

