

Leaving our future in the hands of babes

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It's easy for adults to criticize the current generation of 20-somethings.

I may have been overheard as saying I'm a little reticent leaving our future in hands of these youngsters.

I found it odd the last time I renewed my mortgage and line of credit, dealing with a 'youngster' who likely still lives at home with his parents.

While there may be a tiny bit of snow on the roof, I am by no means an old dog.

In my line of work I deal with 20-somethings all the time, and I'm surprised, often shocked, that so many of them hold high positions in communications and government. Flipping through my LinkedIn contacts, I see young faces, attached to very long titles. I came across one the other day, a young woman in her 20s, who is the senior policy advisor at a certain provincial ministry. How can anyone in their 20s be a senior anything?

I have no doubt these young adults have book smarts in PR, communications and marketing, but when I see a slew of youngins in high civil service posts, it makes me wonder.

Perhaps I'm too hard on them. I imagine every generation has said that about their youth.

In my day, parents were all about long hair, manners, laziness and a good solid work ethic. Sound familiar?

But times were simpler and so were our lifestyles and expectations.

The other day I asked my youngest Kyleigh (9) about some weighty things.

What's the meaning of life, I asked her, not expecting much of a serious response.

'The meaning of life (kids like to answer questions by starting with the question)' is to marry well and have babies. It's making your life special and important. It's about family.'

Out of the mouths of babes.

I'm not easily impressed or rendered speechless.

Now, the icky boy stuff.

'What's important to you in finding your future husband?' I asked foolishly.

'It's all about the personality, dad,' this little adult spouted.

Happiness is the key. The man must have a sense of humour, too.

And how does this all come together, I questioned.

'Well, you meet a guy, go for coffee and talk. You can get to know their personality and sense of humour right away.'

What's this about first impressions? Are they real? Are a person's eyes really the windows to the soul?

'On a date, you're not yourself. To have to be honest, open-minded, open-hearted. Honesty is the best quality.'

'It's not about looks. It's what's inside, not outside.'

Wow.

Suffice it to say that I was pleasantly surprised by my littlest princess.

Sure, I knew she was bright and quite observant. She catches on quickly and often understands mature themes in TV shows or movies.

But was this simply movie-speak, or are these genuine feelings and beliefs.

Judging from her honest response, I'd say she has a handle on this whole male/female thing.

I can't really pinpoint whether it's the water or the mortadella, or even the soft serve ice cream. But whatever is causing my youngest to grow up so quickly needs to be identified. Otherwise, she will throw the entire family dynamic into a horrible tailspin. In other words, she'll leave dear, old dad scratching his head.

I will admit that dealing with my girl children has been a bit of a challenge.

My wife is calling me up on my parenting skills. I'm too easy-going, a veritable push-over.

Just the other night, my wife mentioned that when our eldest was about 6 or 7 I'd always get her a chocolate bar when we went out together. She would come home, stick them in the freezer, and they would pile up. My wife caught on quickly, as moms do, and asked her about this behaviour. 'I just wanted to see if dad would buy them for me,' she told her mom.

Women, am I right?

No wonder we males are constantly kept on our toes.

So, I am told I need to be calm, explain the situation and be firm, but not lose it.

Fair enough.

In the case of our youngest bundle of joy, we need to constantly remind her she is not the parent, nor the adult in this relationship.

She quickly gets on the defensive, arguing how she was not in the wrong, and begins to pick apart our rationale and approach to the situation.

What the heck!

My offspring better get into the legal profession with skills like that.

As we all know, respect has to be earned. In my day, my respect for my dad was born out of fear. Thanks to my cat-like reflexes back in the day, boy did I avoid some great smacks to the noggin!

In this day and age, physical contact is frowned upon, so we must use our words. But the kids today are wise, and I'm sure they conspire in the playground at lunch hour. They have an uncanny ability to disseminate subversive material and strategies, plotting the demise of the parental dictatorship!

And yet they can't sign out a library book on their own!

Oh, the humanity!

How things have changed in a generation.

We Baby Boomers seem quite tame compared to our offspring, who've cultivated their evil powers at a young age to test us. Forget about their use of four-letter words, we've got bigger things to worry about.

As our kids grow and evolve I wonder who is really in charge. Maybe I am wishy-washy.

Okay kids, the gloves are off, and I've removed that 'kick me' sign from my back. Be very afraid and sleep with one eye open.

Oh, and I'll always be there for you!