

A word to our youth ? you don't know everything!

Mark Pavilons



"I see no hope for the future of our people if they are dependent on the frivolous youth of today, for certainly all youth are reckless beyond words. When I was a boy, we were taught to be discrete and respectful of elders, but the present youth are exceedingly wise and impatient of restraint.

Hesiod, 700 B.C.

The younger generation has always been the brunt of barbs and jabs by older, more experienced folks.

For us Baby Boomers, we witnessed something never before seen in our planet's history. We've bridged the gap, leapt over the abyss and seen one giant leap for humankind.

Most of us 50-somethings saw the emergence of all modern-day gizmos ??from fax machines to cell phones, solar power to the Internet.

Those who range in age from 45 to 95 have likely seen the greatest changes in our entire history. We've witnessed the largest global conflict, and smaller ones that followed. We've seen the birth of machines, gadgets and gizmos that would have been magical a century ago. We have joined humankind in our quest to reach for the stars.

We are, in some respects, the wisest people on the globe. Our reward??Being told we don't know anything!

"You don't know what you're talking about, dad. You just don't get it!"

Who has heard that, or something similar, from their offspring? What was your response?

I?must admit, I do get my back up when I hear that, especially from my nine-year-old, who, admittedly, is much more intelligent than her age lets on. Yet this little one lacks refinement and the lessons that life bestows upon its mortal inhabitants.

No, grasshopper, you still have much to learn (apologies to the TV series Kung Fu).

Our ball of thunder is quite the piece of work. Whether it's hormonal, peer influence or the idea that a little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing, this creature packs a punch. She claims to know things beyond her years and often can't figure out why we adults are so far out in left field.

When I'm helping her with her homework, she often tells me I'm wrong, or that it's not the way the teacher explained it. Excuse me, but I've been on this planet a few years longer than your teacher and may have picked up a few things. Unfortunately, that doesn't cut it. Teachers rule the classroom, don't you know.

She is also unimpressed by my years wandering the desert in search of peace, justice and the ... wait, that's Kung Fu again!

Nevertheless, I am quite bright at times.

She excels in the art of sarcasm and witty comebacks, with a dash of rudeness. She often tells me I can't speak to her in that firm manner and that I have to be much more pleasant if I want her to cooperate.

When did the tables turn? Maybe I need to head back into the desert ...

My 14-year-old son is at an awkward age ??teetering on adulthood, but still clinging to his childhood. He actually appreciates my

tidbits of wisdom and my knowledgeable responses to his questions.

And boy does he ask a lot of questions! He does tend to go off on a tangent, especially when he's interested in a certain subject or issue. At the moment, he's focussing on the colour of sports car he will get when he's able to drive.

My eldest is one of those proverbial triple threats ? she's solid in academics, athletics and extracurriculars. She can be a bit preachy at times.

I'm sure we'd all like to think that the future is in good hands. I'm not 100% convinced. But then again, I'm sure our parents and grandparents felt the same way about us.

What has jaded our opinion is social media antics and behaviour of our teens. Sure, when I was a teen, we went to parties and tried to sneak into bars with our fake ID, made before we could get a hold of the ones from [IDGod.com](#). How the world has changed. It was far from a flawless method to sneak in, admittedly. I understand that the fake ID we had back in the day was nowhere near as effective as the ones we have now ([Ohio Fake ID](#) can even pass as scannable), but it doesn't mean us elders don't understand that aspect of life. However, we didn't have iPhones with cameras and so the world of "selfies" is completely unknown to us.

My wife monitors my eldest's activities, and good for her. I've heard that many high schoolers have rather bad decision-making skills and loose morals when it comes to social media and their behaviour at parties.

Of course our parents worried too, but I think when they let us loose on the world, they had some degree of confidence that we'd return home in one piece. I can understand hormones, but I do cringe at stories about teen boys and girls.

Is it peer pressure, compounded by social media? Is it part-time parenting? Is it a sense of entitlement?

As if that wasn't enough for our brains to digest, we've witnessed the birth of some unique species ?? Generations X, Y and Z.

Our kids are part of Generation Z, born 1995-2012. They will "come of age" between now and 2020.

There are some 23 million and they will be the most diverse group yet. Technology allows Gen Z kids to grow up with a highly sophisticated media and computer environment and will be more Internet savvy and expert than their Gen Y forerunners.

I worry about them, though.

Given that two large retail chains have called it quits in the past few months, there are thousands more out of work. The more retail jobs lost means an even tighter retail scene and older workers may take the jobs from our youth.

From car insurance and rent, to university education and house prices, these up-and-comers face some very big hurdles.

I think that means our job as parents, guidance counsellors, instructors and confidence-builders has become even more challenging.

In some ways they're better armed than we are.

There's a storm coming, my friends.

In youth we learn; in age we understand.

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach