

Young Americans Suffer From the Burden of Low Moral Expectations

In 2001, President George W. Bush gave a speech to the NAACP in which, among other items, he decried the “soft bigotry of low expectations.” While he was speaking of how minority students are treated and viewed in the classroom, such sentiments are now true of American society as a whole, especially for young people.

Unfortunately, the burden of low expectations often weighs heavier on young people than any set of responsibilities, for it brings a lack of purpose. This lack of purpose can cause restlessness, discontent, and even recklessness.

Young people like myself are told to find our “personal truth,” to “treat ourselves,” and not let anyone shame us.

But aren’t these pieces of advice just a recipe for self-indulgent misery? With today’s technology it is already far too easy to drift into distractions and kill work ethic, motivation, and social skills; as well as to ignore work, friends, and your conscience.

I may not be the guiltiest member of my generation, but I know too well how easy it is to sink an entire day on social media, playing video games, or watching drivel on YouTube. Rather than being relaxed or fulfilled after such a day, I am frustrated with myself for not having spent my time better. I could have read a book, watched a documentary, worked on the next great American novel, or taught myself any number of skills.

Such examples are far from the worst that our current culture has given a stamp of approval to. Pornography, cohabitation,

casual sex, drinking to excess, and drug use have been justified in the name of moral relativism. Things that would have been unthinkable a few years ago are now normalized in the name of an individual's self-defined identity and lifestyle choice, and woe to the one who criticizes these choices!

Yet even while they follow advice and "pursue their passion," young people find themselves struggling to rise above the lowest rung of society's ladder. Students pursue the college degree of their choice, but then find that those degrees aren't always useful. Thus, gender studies and English literature majors decry that they are not paid the same as doctors or nurses, all while accepting no responsibility for the choices which led to them being on the wrong side of this income disparity.

The low expectations for personal responsibility don't stop with college. Millennials are allowed to stay on their parents' health care plans until 26 regardless of employment status. Since 2010 [more adults age 18-24](#) are living with an unmarried partner rather than a spouse. Women in America now average 26 years of age when [having their first child](#), while men average 31. In 1972 these numbers were 21 and 27 respectively. Meanwhile schools hand out condoms and teach freshman to use [chocolate in sex](#).

People are told that it's unfair for people with different degrees to experience income inequality; that they couldn't possibly have the self-control to wait for sex until marriage; that everyone experiments with drugs or their sexuality, and many other relativist platitudes. Telling young people that nothing is expected of them will lead them to believe that they are incapable of doing anything of consequence. When people are told this often enough, they will begin to believe it. Instead of finding purpose, contentment, and a sense of identity, young people are left purposeless, restless, and without a clear vision of ourselves.

Isn't it time to expect more of Americans? Our citizenry is fully capable of living purposeful, meaningful, moral productive lives. Let's stop telling them to settle. Let's stop burdening them with low moral expectations.

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[Image Credit: U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Cohen A. Young/Released]