

Why Young People Are Depressed

American youth live in the freest, most prosperous nation on earth—yet are the most anxious and depressed. Why? The answer is not hard to come by.

“Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity” (Eccl. 11:9-10).



The words of The Preacher echo the counsel of old timers to the young throughout the ages: Enjoy your youth! Be happy! Have fun! Childhood should be a time of playful enthusiasm, of preparing to take on the world with boundless energy. Make the most of these exciting years!

But for a growing number of American young people, there is nothing to be excited about. Authorities are alarmed at the growing rates of anxiety, depression, and even suicide that are taking a toll among the young. Why is this happening?

There are several factors contributing to this generational meltdown. The *educational institutions* in which our young people spend much of their early lives have abandoned a commitment to truth and integrity and are now engaged in a deliberate program to indoctrinate children in a secular worldview that leaves no room for God or

traditional morality. Convince young people that they are nothing more than an advanced species of ape, and they’ll eventually start questioning life’s purpose. If human existence has no meaning, why should their individual lives have meaning?

The news media in recent years has become obsessed with ginning up mass hysteria on issues relating to politics, gender, and apocalyptic scaremongering. Constant exposure to this kind of negativity leaves kids terrified of their adult futures. If the world is truly this awful, why should I want to live a whole lifetime in it?

These threats are magnified by the dominant role that *social media* now plays in young people’s lives. Several academic studies have noted that the rise in these mental health issues coincided with the creation of Facebook and similar apps in the late 2000s. Young people in every generation have always struggled with peer pressure; but this generation’s exposure to a vast network of instantaneous and unfiltered opinions and gossip has amplified that problem exponentially.

So, there are several influences that are converging to crush the spirits of our young people. But there is one other factor that looms larger than all others: *Poor parenting*. It is the role of parents, not just to feed, clothe, and house their kids, but to prepare them for life emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually. Regrettably, the current generation of American parents is doing a dismal job of that. Far too many children are being raised as little more than family pets, with little or no guidance from the adults in their lives.

When children grow up in the embrace of a father and mother who love God, love each other, and love their offspring, they will thrive, regardless of what the surrounding culture is doing. The propaganda of a godless education system cannot offset the influence of parents who are teaching and modeling respect for God at home. Kids can brush off the fatalism of a negative media if they see parents who take on the challenges of life with hopeful enthusiasm. And social media cannot mess with kids’ minds if parents are monitoring its use and enforcing restrictions as necessary.

Parents, be forewarned! Our culture has sinister designs on your children’s future. You are the only thing standing between your kids and Satan’s minions. You have one chance to do this job right—and precious little time. Make it count!

— David King