



iGen: Why Today's Super Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy, and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood and What That Means for the Rest of Us

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Dr. Twenge presents several positions about the iGeneration in her book, including the position that today's youth are (as seen in her title): less prepared for adulthood, super connected, less happy, and more tolerant than previous generations. For this book discussion, choose a position you want to discuss and answer the questions on the second page:

Position 1: "Completely Unprepared for Adulthood"

Chapter 1 - In No Hurry: Growing Up Slowly, p. 12-47

According to Twenge, members of the iGeneration follow a, "slow life strategy, common in times and places where families have fewer children and cultivate each child longer and more intensely" (p.24). Within this context, today's teenagers are, "less likely to go out without their parents, date, have sex, work, or drink alcohol" (p.39) and, instead, spend their time on their smartphones (p.47).

Related positions: Chapter 6 - Insulated But Not Intrinsic: More Safety and Less Community, p. 143-177

You are welcome to discuss this position if time permits

Position 2: "Super Connected"

Chapter 3 - In Person No More: I'm With You, But Only Virtually, p. 69-91

According to Twenge, members of the iGeneration, "spend less time interacting with their peers face-to-face than any previous generation" (p. 71) and more time on their electronic devices. Twenge argues that iGeners' lack of "in-person social skills" have critical implications for important life milestones, including in, "...college interviews, when making friends in high school, and when competing for a job" (p.91), as well as in their mental health.

Related positions: Chapter 2 - Internet: Online Time-Oh, and Other Media, Too, p. 49-68

You are welcome to discuss this position if time permits

Position 3: "Less Happy"

Chapter 4 - Insecure: The New Mental Health Crisis, p. 93-118

According to Twenge, a sharp rise in anxiety, loss of sleep, depression, and suicide among members of the iGeneration occurred, "almost exactly at the same time that smartphones became ubiquitous and in-person interaction plummeted" p. 104. Twenge offers the following strategy to improve mental health: "put down the phone, and do something else."

Position 4: "More Tolerant"

Chapter 9 - Inclusive: LGBT, Gender, And Race Issues In The New Age, p. 227-258

According to Twenge, members of the iGeneration value equality (including LGBT rights, trans rights and gender equality) but are also afraid of offending each other amidst a "culture of silence and recrimination" (p. 258) that they may keep quiet about other issues like those involving race. Twenge forecasts that the iGeneration will need to grapple with competing views that, "people need to be protected at all costs," (p.258), including from offensive speech, and the protection of free speech.

Related positions: Chapter 10 - Independent: Politics, p. 260-287

You are welcome to discuss this position if time permits

Small Group Discussion

- Do you agree or disagree with the author's argument?
 - What data does the author use to back up this argument?
 - What are some of the implications of this argument?
- Have you seen this issue play out in students' lives?
- What suggestions do you have to address this/these issue(s)? *Think about your professional role.*
- Are there additional take-aways from this position?

Large Group Discussion

- What did your group discuss?
 - How would your group summarize the author's argument?
 - Did your group mostly agree or mostly disagree with the author's argument? Why?
 - Are there other critical positions that we did not consider?
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- What are some particularly insightful and interesting items you found in the book?
 - What do you think are, overall, the main take-away points from the book?
 - Do you believe these points are unique to the "iGeneration"? Do you think it may extend to other generations?