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Writing Samples

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Entitlement in College Graduates

Introduction

Today's college graduates are showing signs of extreme entitlement which is eroding workforce and culture. The difference between an entitled mind and an open mind is passivity versus activity. Entitled persons believe that they deserve to have their desires handed to them, for whatever reason, and therefore are closed to the many opportunities surrounding them to reach out and take what they desire. Or, if their desire is not readily available, entitlement will block them from the creative capacity to create the environment and conditions in which their desire is brought to fruition.

American Entitlement

One of the reasons that college graduates are more entitled than ever is due to the increased difficulty in getting a college degree. Not only the increased tuition and debt laden onto the effort, but the lack of sustainable motivation for going to college. Many go to college simply to earn the degree than will get them money, with little to no real desire or passion for the work they intend to do. Thus, every step along the way in college is degraded as a means to an end, making the process unfulfilling and unrewarding. When the motivations are corrupted the greater the time, effort, and money went into this fundamentally meaningless process the greater the sense of entitlement will be. In the deluded mind the college grad "sacrificed" for their degree, and so society must repay them with their desires.

Not only this, but since it is exceptionally difficult to do things with an improper motivation (since authentic passion creates energy) many college graduates in this position believe they should not have to do any of the work for the rewards they are entitled to, because the work was already done through the hassle of college. This belief, and their motivation for going to college is entirely backwards. College could be a place to 1) explore, and 2) learn about who one is, and what one would be most fulfilled doing in live. Most fulfilled, not most paid for. Since the motivations are corrupted all the fruit resulting from the action are corrupted. As such, current employers are finding it increasingly difficult to fulfil their positions with reliable people who will actually work.

The Corruption of Standardization

Such carrot and stick corruptions of motivations are the result of the changes in the American education system over the past few decades. Standardization cuts the heart right out of learning, reducing the process to learn facts=regurgitate facts, without the core development of the critical thinking skills which support real learning. This is an over-mechanized way to process education, disempowering students, limiting their opportunities for discovery and expression, and fundamentally builds up resentment. After all, resentment is the foundation of entitlement, and generation Y appears to be the most resentful and entitled generation yet observed. Research supports the fault of the education system, as it elucidates the student's entitled perception;

- Knowledge is a "right" that should be delivered with little effort or discomfort on the student's part: "I deserve it since I am a student on this campus."

- A high grade should come not from mastery of material, but in return for non-academic aspects of education, such as showing up to class, or the student or his or her family paying tuition or taxes which go to the teacher's salary.
- If a student didn't perform well on a test, it's a sign that the test was too difficult, not that the student did not understand the material. (Elmore)

This type of behavior is the direct result of the corruption of standardization, which punishes schools and teachers if the student's do not perform well, by pulling funding. Thus, grade inflation equals job security, as "Undergraduate Surveyor, Dr. Art Levine reports that grade inflation has skyrocketed. In 1969, only seven percent of students had a grade point average of an A- or higher. In 2009, it was 41 percent" (Elmore). The mixing of the profit motive with how education is funded and supported is a corrupting force, but the profit motivation corrupts everything in American culture today.

However, this stance is appropriate when seen from their perspective. What do kids today have to look forward to, or cultivate the desire to work for? They are bombarded by doomsday like scenarios of climate change, terrorism, mass shootings, and unemployment. Most of their parents are largely absent, forced to work full time just to put low quality food on the table with their own servings of bitterness. Generation Y sees their parents are miserable and unhealthy in their lives as wage slaves, and why should they look forward to that? Wage stagnation, inflation, and planned obsolescence continue to stranglehold efforts at living the American Dream while the news continues to flash the reality of the American Nightmare. As a result, today's youth have the largest instances of suicide, mental illness, and violence on record. Entitlement is the

status quo perspective of suppressed rage towards the failures of the elders and adults who dared to bring them into such a crap culture.

However, even those adults who do understand (even have compassion) for this perspective ultimately have no use for it. Who does have a real use for entitlement? The perspective even strangles those who have a legitimate claim to it, such as those born into wealth who literally are entitled to billions. It is a human truth that necessity is the mother of invention, and while having too much or too little are both strong inhibitors of personal growth. What is needed is a balanced perspective which understands and accepts the limitations of the age (and of oneself) without giving way to bitterness. A balanced perspective such as this is hard won in today's polarized society.

Absent Parents=Victim Mindset & Spoilage

Another key psychological and cultural aspect of college graduates sense of entitlement is the over-raising of children which is going on today largely as a guilt response for parents not being there. Due to adults attempting to live the dream (living outside their means) many people have homes they cannot afford, and are always working to pay for the life they do not have time to lead (Altucher). This means paying for people to raise their children, as a guilt response parents shower their children with possessions in order to distract them from their righteous frustration at being effectively abandoned. However, the giving of possessions has a twofold backfire, 1) children come to see their parents only as purveyors of material goods rather than emotional goods (and become emotionally stunted and materially addicted), and 2) children do not have to work to get these material goods, and learn to exploit and manipulate in order to get things. In the workplace this is seen as;

people who feel entitled to preferential treatment more often than not exhibit self-serving attributional styles – the tendency to take credit for good outcomes and blame others when things go wrong. And people with self-serving attributional styles are less happy in their jobs and more apt to cause conflict in the workplace, especially with their supervisors. (Reliable Plant)

With the added complication of the fact that today's youth are largely addicted to technology, keeping them from developing essential social skills, lack of concentration or patience, and the ability to delay pleasure they are ill equipped to be effective employees. Since generation Y has been over-tended and disempowered by guilty parents they are largely unequipped to provide for themselves in the real world, a fact they are well aware of. However, the kids are not worried about this lack because, "In 2012, 80 percent of students said they planned on moving back home after college" (Elmore). Because parents will likely carry the guilt of not really raising their children for their entire lives, their children know that as long as they are alive they will be able to manipulate that guilt into a perpetual safety net which continues disempowering and entitled beliefs (Bauerlein).

This is one of the laziest perspectives out there, all stemming from a corrupted essential motivation that also reflects their parent's mistake which reveals the core delusion of American culture-that material success is success. The ironic aspect is that many generation Y see through the trick of the American Dream due to their parents largely wasted lives, but they are still reaching for it, but using their parents as both a shield and a grabbing stick. This is incredibly cruel and manipulative, but does relate the inherent nature of the lie of the American Dream. Ultimately most Americans feel just as entitled as Generation Y, they just know they need to work for it. This was their conditioning in the 50s and 60s when the media, advertising, and

television programs focused on success stories of hard work, and “earning the dream.” Also, these generations largely had parents around, and that makes a huge difference. However today,

We are all surrounded by mass media about the rare few who live glamorous lives and, seemingly, have anything they want. This, along with other things, have led to an increasing sense that anyone is entitled to that life, without working for it.

(Savitz)

Television is a powerful force for conditioning, but when combined with absent parents (or disinterested parents who allow the TV to raise their kids) it becomes the status quo enforcer. This is a dangerous fact which has created a disinterested reality. Last year, addressing this actor Matthew McConaughey speaking at the University of Houston commencement warned, “that life is ‘not fair’ and it ‘won’t ever be,’ and urged them to not adopt the mentality that they are ‘a victim’ and entitled to things” (Chapman). Anything that is worth having is worth working for and earning. Parents would do well to remember this, and either live within their means so they can afford to spend the time with their children it takes to raise them, or accept their guilt at not doing so and not pass it onto their children through spoilage.

Conclusion

Entitlement is a sickness of the mind which perceives that something is deserved which has not been earned. Paradoxically, until a thing is earned it will not be appreciated or cared for, and will largely go to waste. At a time of extreme need, the next generation is showing themselves incapable and uninterested of rising to the challenges of the day. While culture at large plays a role the blame for this should be largely laid at the feet of parents.

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