A new analysis of the American Freshman Survey, which has accumulated data for the past 47 years from 9 million young adults, reveals that college students are more likely than ever to call themselves gifted and driven to succeed, even though their test scores and time spent studying are decreasing.

Psychologist Jean Twenge, the lead author of the analysis, is also the author of a study showing that the tendency toward narcissism in students is up 30 percent in the last thirty-odd years. This data is not unexpected. I have been writing a great deal over the past few years about the toxic psychological impact of media and technology on children, adolescents and young adults, particularly as it regards turning them into faux celebrities—"the equivalent lead actors in their own fictionalized life stories."

On Facebook, young people can fool themselves into thinking they have hundreds or thousands of "friends." They can delete unflattering comments. They can block anyone who disagrees with them or pokes holes in their inflated self-esteem. They can choose to show the world only flattering, sexy or funny photographs of themselves (dozens of albums full, by the way), "speak into pithy short posts and publicly connect to movie stars and professional athletes and musicians they "like."

Using Twitter, young people can pretend they are worth "following," as though they have real-life fans, when all that is really happening is the mutual fanning of false love and false fame.

Using computer games, our sons and daughters can pretend they are Olympians, Formula 1 drivers, rock stars or sharp shooters. And while they can turn off their Wii and Xbox machines and remember they are really in dens and playrooms on side streets and in triple deckers around America, that is after their hearts have raced and heads have swelled with false pride for "being" something they are not.

On MTV and other networks, young people can see lives just like theirs portrayed on reality TV shows fueled by such insidious self-involvement and self-love that any of the "real-life" characters should really be in psychotherapy to have a ny chance at anything like a normal life.

These are the psychological drugs of the 21st Century and they are getting our sons and daughters very sick, indeed.

As if to keep up with the unreality of media and technology, in a dizzying paroxysm of self-aggrandizing hype, town sports leagues across the country hand out ribbons and trophies to losing teams, schools inflate grades, energy drinks in giant, colorful cans take over the soft drink market, and psychiatrists hand out Adderall like candy.

All the while, these adolescents, teens and young adults are watching a Congress that can't control its manic, euphoric, narcissistic spending, a president that can't see his way through to applauding genuine and extraordinary achievements in business, a society that blames mass killings on guns, not the psychotic people who wield them, and—here no surprise—a stock market that keeps rising and falling like a roller coaster as bubbles inflate and then, inevitably, burst.

That's really the unavoidable end, by the way. False pride can never be sustained. The bubble of narcissism is always at risk of bursting. That's why young people are higher on drugs than ever, drunker than ever, smoking more, tattooed more, pierced more and having more and more and more sex, earlier and earlier and earlier, raising babies before they can do it well, because it makes them feel special, for a while. They're doing anything to distract themselves from the fact that they feel empty inside and unworthy.

Distractions, however, are temporary, and the truth is eternal. Watch for an epidemic of depression and suicidality, not to mention homicidal, as the real self-loathing and hatred of others that lies beneath all this narcissism rises to the surface. I see it happening and, no doubt, many of you do, too.

We had better get a plan together to combat this greatest epidemic as it takes shape. Because it will dwarf the toll of any epidemic we have ever known. And it will be the hardest to defeat. Because, by the time we see the scope and destructiveness of this enemy clearly, we will also realize, as the saying goes, that it is us.
Read more: http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2013/01/08/are-raising-generation-deluded-narcissists/

Re: We are raising a generation of deluded narcissists - Dr Keith Ablow - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2013/1/13 5:21
Are people listening? Doubt it.

People that agree are not into this. Those that use technology to babysit their young are totally blind to it. Until people find themselves at their wits end, there will be no motivation to ask serious questions - and gov social workers are sure to be there with a cushion to prevent these questions.

Too bad children are no longer growing up on the farm where they get real dirty and have to look out for the welfare of a nimals; or have to till the ground for their own food; or climb trees and kill snakes or...

ginnyrose

Re: We are raising a generation of deluded narcissists - Dr Keith Ablow, on: 2013/1/13 9:39
its all too true. and very sad, because the only outcome IN GOD, will be the crushing.

THAT IN ITSELF, is what should cause us to weep between the porch and the altar.

or maybe we should ponder this, as i try to, "Why did Jesus weep?".....meaning the shortest verse in the Bible, in John, outside the tomb of His friend Lazarus, what broke His Heart there?....or why did Jesus weep when overlooked Jerusalem m?....what broke His Heart there?

all like "helpless and harrassed sheep"....NO sheperd...OH YES, There IS a Sheperd! His Name is Jesus....but their eyes are blind, and their ears closed....its tragedy as we march towards 7 billion souls on this earth wandering thru a landsc ape with what?.....10 to 20 thousand nuclear weapons?

time is short, is it not?

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2013/1/13 11:20
If there is a tiny upside to this trend for young people, it is that their generation makes it easier to stand out in your employment track. Just don't be of this world and you'll be noticed.

You will be noticed, because every organization that is successful has a small group of generous and dedicated leaders holding it together for everyone else...and they are looking for help.

"But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." John 17:13-16

MC

Re: Some practical thoughts - posted by Compton (), on: 2013/1/13 19:15
It might seem a bit earthly to follow up on this thread with some practical and even economic thoughts, but I really do believe this article represents a professional opportunity for Christians who have learned to recieve the discipline of the Lord even in their professional work.

For some reason, evangelicals used to understand the spiritual value of work...as embodied in the famous Protestant Work ethic. Today, they see it as an inhibitor to their spirituality, a curse handed down from Adam that is only useful for paying our bills. (We often forget that Adam was creative and industrious before the fall!)

It's not entirely a young persons fault for being narcissistic. In our churches there is almost no discipleship or mentorship to speak of. Additionally there are various mutating strains of faith prosperity and class-warfare narratives floating around today, all of which can infect a young person with the crippling desease of envy and entitlement, just when they are starting out in life.
Let's look at the symptoms of this disease from two perspectives.

The Biblical Heart Symptoms of Narcissism

"The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool."

"The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice."

The Cognitive Symptoms of Narcissism: Dunning–Kruger effect

The Dunning–Kruger effect is a cognitive bias in which unskilled individuals suffer from superiority, mistakenly rating their ability much higher than average. This bias is attributed to an inability of the unskilled to recognize their mistakes.

Ironically, actual competence weakens self-confidence, as competent individuals may falsely assume that others have an equivalent understanding.

Kruger and Dunning proposed that, for a given skill, incompetent people will:
1) tend to overestimate their own level of skill;
2) fail to recognize genuine skill in others;
3) fail to recognize the extremity of their inadequacy;
4) recognize and acknowledge their own previous lack of skill, if they are exposed to training for that skill.

The Dunning–Kruger effect is everywhere in our society...from employees who believe they know how to run things better than their employers, to Christians who don't believe they need to study the bible to know the Lord.

The opportunity here for new job seekers is to shift the emphasis of your professional reputation away from your past expertise and technical skills, and towards your adaptability and thinking skills. Focusing solely on your expertise implies an entitled unteachable character, while adding adaptability to the mix implies a generous teachable character, which is more valuable and pragmatic in the present economy in which technology and markets are constantly morphing.

In other words, focus on their needs, rather than your own! You will become indispensable, rather than expensive.

"Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men;"

Blessings,

MC

(info on Dunning-Kruger effect from Wikipedia)