

Societal entitlement

Involvement in youth mentorship programs has provoked ongoing discussion with peers as to the entitlement of upcoming generations. The root observation is that young people seem to want everything on their own terms... when, how and where being subjective conditions imposed on everyone else.

Are we to look forward to a world reacting to millions of subjective demands? What societal check, if any, exists? How real is this perception? Is this a trend that reflects the attitude of youth... or society as a whole?

I have long thought the digital/remote-control age of *Pause; Mute; Save, Save* As has shaped the illusion of power that enables this *must have* unreality. The added pressure of mass marketing leads the most unworthy to believe they are capable of stardom or a shortcut to the corner office.

Similarly, the prevalence over past decades of stock market millionaires who have leaped to fortune with little else than plucky and agile brains has perhaps reinforced grandiose entitlement. Then there are the entrepreneurs who build fantastic and visionary businesses with the sole end of selling to the highest bidder in the shortest turn-around time possible.

Has the nobility of following simple dreams, the only real option for most of us, based on ability, hard work and sense of community been eroded to the loser/naive world of the few?

In a post-Enron corporate world that has trumpeted *accountability* for almost a decade, how accountable are we really? The bewilderment of exposed scam artists, who bilk millions from clients, friends and family, seems to indicate that they feel their subjective circumstance or need for money is more than adequate excuse for the wickedness they have visited on the unsuspecting. Service-providers across the board seem to think that any feeble explanation suffices for lack of performance. Customer service has come to represent a technical IT function or inadequate call-centre service designed to keep the irate and angry at bay.

Is restitution a fair deal or righting wrongs via an expensive legal process the privilege of the wealthy alone? Frighteningly, even law enforcement seems to feel that their errors can be swept away with defiant excuse... even when faced with proof of wrongdoing. The media appears complicit—only questioning or even noticing trends when they reach overtly criminal proportions.

Working within the narrowest interpretation of the law seems to be embedded in every corporate or political strategy. There seems, to me anyway, that a massive erosion of *ethical accountability* has taken place. As long as a direct law has not been broken, any bullet, accusation or even explanation can be easily dodged.

Authority figures behave in the most



jingoistic fashion with impunity... resentful and vicious to all who dare to question!

Are those in powerful positions forgetting that the primary role of democratic leadership is service?

The notion of apology so prevalent over the last decade also seems to be waning. The familiar sight of exposed politicians and corporate scoundrels publicly weeping and wringing their hands in false mortification seems to have been replaced by smug, obtuse faces, brazenly explaining their self-interest, declining to comment or manipulating the law to circumvent the need to give account of their actions.

More and more folk seem to find it okay to not show up or bale on arrangements at the last minute... without warning, excuse or apology. The expectation is that everything be kept fluid to accommodate last minute agendas or changes in plan. Pushing back or even noticing, I'm told, is decidedly *uncool!*

For me, delinquency is having one set of rules for self and another for others. Have we become a society that places self interest above all else? *Desire* and *right* to have are evidently synonymous for many. That other people might have to pay for what is wanted seems to be of no concern. On an individual, national and regional basis this has to boomerang.

By and large the majority of folk want to trust their governments, industries, service providers and each other. Betrayal of that trust, as often forgotten history has shown, leads to ultimate upheaval.

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