**KIDS TODAY- Generation Z**

**(How Kids use Social Media)**

* 20th year (1997) –“ Six Degrees.com” Today’s kids can’t imagine a world without it.
* Includes Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, You Tube

**Social Media plays a central role in:**

* How students derive their personal identity.
* How students determine their value and popularity.
* How students bully, criticize or affirm each other.
* How students discover news stories and causes to engage in.
* How students communicate with both friends and strangers.
* How students find and connect with partners, from hookup to breakup.

\*\* Some 13 year olds check social media accounts 100 times a day and spend about 9 hours a day using for enjoyment. This is more time than they spend sleeping, at school, or with parents and more than an adult spends at a full time job. Does not include the hours they spend using media at school or doing homework.

\*\* Nearly 2 in 3 say they check social media to see if their friends liked what they posted. Also, 36% say they want to see if their friends are doing things without them. More than 1 in 5 say they check to see if anyone said “mean things” about them.

* How they know who they are and where they stand with their peers. It’s where they get their identity… and it’s highly addictive.

**Five most popular Social Media Platforms**

* Facebook: For most students it’s an information hub (what are people talking about?).
* Twitter: Students use this for real time updates – to vent or to brag.
* Instagram: This is where students go to get inspired (images/videos).
* Snapchat: Students use this for raw, real and personal up to date posts (videos, images but more personal than twitter since the user gets to decide who gets it.
* You Tube: Students use this for entertainment and to gauge popularity. Gen Z kids are using to create and upload video. A way to discover how popular your work is with peers.

**Gen Z, a bit more jaded and cynical**

* They are the group following the Millennials (who were showing passion to change the world).
* Gen X’ers were grumbling about how the world was broken, Gen Y was acknowledging a broken world but were optimistic about fixing it.
* Gen Z losing faith in the world – consider the world they’ve grown up in since the turn of the 21st century.

1. Born about the same time as 9/11 attacks.
2. Dot.com era ended and families faced a difficult aftermath.
3. Most of their memory has been the economic recession.
4. The conflict in the Middle East continues as the longest war in memory.
5. Racial unrest erupted in Ferguson, Baltimore, Charleston, Chattanooga, etc.
6. Our leaders in Washington can’t seem to collaborate or make progress.
7. The world is full of complex and complicated problems.

\*\* They are more cautious and anxious, want to be change agents but know the change will be slow, pessimistic about the present direction of politics and the economy.

\*\* Additionally, they question their former obsession of good grades and college acceptance, they despise society’s moral decay, but most admit to cheating at school and on resumes’.

\*\* They are at odds with their own beliefs and values, and feel they must grow up too fast. They are dissatisfied with corporate American leadership unlike 10-15 years ago and feel less prepared for life after school and often return home after college graduation.

* **We must prepare to lead a different population of teens than we have the past 15 years. There greatest needs may just be:**

-Hope for the future, Innocence and wonder, Purpose for their career and a moral compass.

**Mental Health Issues**

* Higher levels of depression and thoughts of suicide (I have no idea of what I should do with my life).
* Decades ago about one in every one hundred teens thought about suicide. Today approximately one in five high schoolers has thought about committing suicide.
* Mental health issues are soaring and they are front and center on many university campuses.
* A quarter of our teens will struggle with an anxiety disorder and demands our attention.
* Today 85% of college students are classified above the average mental illness “score” of students in the 1930’s and 1940”s.
* Some of the descriptions of feelings are:
  + Isolation
  + Sensitivity
  + Being misunderstood
  + Narcissism, worry
  + Sadness
  + Low Self-Control and General Dissatisfaction
* **These cut across ALL Demographics**
* Only about 20% of young people with a diagnosable anxiety disorder get treatment.

**Higher Levels of Homelessness (on the rise)**

* In the U.S. over 20% of homeless individuals are under the age of 18.
* They are unaware of the abnormality of not “belonging” somewhere.
* The number of youth in the U.S. who experience homelessness is about 2 million.
* They are living in motels or campgrounds, shelters, cars and abandoned buildings.
* Many of these are however digitally connected, but they have no community. (That’s the common denominator). The lack of a community or a feeling of belonging.
* Without an authentic source of belonging, many find it through virtual means. Many suffer from PTSD. (They don’t have the emotional quotient to handle the emotional or physical abuse or abandonment they’ve experienced).
* Everywhere they turn they hear about terrorism, underemployment, demonstrations, racism, shootings and uncertainty. A more jaded perspective on life is the result.
* Our goal should be to help our children and those we coach to enter their careers realistically, but not pessimistically. This is where we must begin our work. **Our job as leaders is to never let them lose sight of hope. (Napoleon Bonaparte once said, “Leaders are dealers in hope.”).**

**Are Digital Devices the Modern Cocaine Infecting Our Kids Lives – Literally?**

* Giving kids a head start into the digital world? Apple and Samsung have been ballyhooing the benefits of educational technology for some time now.
* Are they realizing that there is a growing epidemic of children Minecrafting their lives away, metaphorically speaking. Schools even have their own Minecraft Club.
* Kids attitudes and personalities change as they get more and more involved with the tablet, losing interest in what they considered more mundane tasks like playing ball or reading a book.
* They start to rebel when asked to make their bed or do simple chores, something they hadn’t done in the past.
* The apparent hypnosis they seem to be under is dumbfounding.
* It is related to the glow screen and it’s hypnotizing power on children.
* We should also note that some of the most Tech. savvy parents are extremely low tech. in their homes especially when it comes to their kids. Steve Jobs was one who is documented to be a low tech. parent.
* Many send their kids to Waldorf or zero tech. Montessori Schools.
* Children on these devices tend to get bored, detached and apathetic to their surroundings, albeit temporarily initially, but the condition only gets worse with time as devices become the principal mode of contact amongst kids, limiting the opportunities for physical interpersonal interaction.
* Kids seem to want the constant stimulus that these devices offer them. It’s as if their brain is always turned on (or off as the case might be).
* Experts claim that tablets, smartphones and video game consoles are indeed no different from drugs like cocaine, affecting the frontal cortex of the brain in much the same way that heroin or cocaine would do. They call these devices **Electronic Cocaine.**
* Researchers also say that these devices with prolonged use are so intensely addictive that they heighten dopamine levels in the brain to the same degree a drug addict would experience when high. Researchers call it **Digital Heroin.** Even referred to as **Digital Pharmalceia.**
* Melancholy, angst and bellicosity (def.-eager to fight, aggressive, hostile, belligerent) are words common in screen-addicts psychological vocabulary.
* Average of 8 hours a day of digital screen time for grade 3-5 and 11 hours a day average for teens.
* Nearly 1 in 5 U.S. college-bound adults are tech. addicts.
* There is something called **Internet addiction** **disorders** and **online behavior.**
* Gen Z kids are connected yet isolated, savvy but anxious, indulged yet stressed.
* Grown up with social media, fully mobile internet, the rise of Islamic State and other forms of terrorism.
* 31% of young people calling child-line in 2015/16 was for mental health issues. Mental health concerns didn’t rank anywhere in the top ten in the first year. (1986).
* So what’s changed? The on-line world follows people around. They have it on 24/7.
  + Why they weren’t invited to a party?
  + Seeing pictures of their friends doing things without them!, etc.
* Schools are adopting test heavy standards and eliminating things like the creative arts, music, physical education, sports, free time causing even more pressure and stress on young kids.
* Connectivity is actually disconnecting people from real friendships and the opportunity to enjoy the world together.
* Solution might be more real-life contact and interaction.
* Many kids think they have 1,000 friends but in actual fact, who really knows them?
* Social isolation can have lifelong consequences on the brain and relationships and teenagers ability to make sense of the world.