

## **“Are teenagers and older generations truly different?”**

Gus Van Gant once said, “The area of teenage life is not necessarily rarefied; we've all gone through that period. It's not as rarefied as a western or a space adventure or a gangster film, but it has its own dynamic.” While teenagers are known to be more melodramatic through those trying years of deciding who they want to be known as in society, they are often illustrated inaccurately in the media. Shows like *Riverdale* and *Gossip Girl* are written by Generation Xers who use social media frequently in order to create “realistic” teenage characters that the new generation is compared to on a regular basis. This causes older generations to look at millennials and ask themselves, “Is this how they truly act?” when the question that needs to be answered is, “Where are the good qualities that millennials obtain, and why are they not displayed?”

While millennials are depicted to be on their cell phones constantly with little to no goals and plans for their futures, adolescents have become more open-minded and accepting than ever before. This has been displayed by the further development of our constitutional rights through respectful activism, the promotion of diversity, and the open arms millennials have extended to members of society who were always considered to be out of the ordinary because they didn't fit into the stereotypes created during the generation before. Teens have the ability to look back on some of the most impactful moments in history, the good and the bad, and make different decisions in the present. The current generation of teens can even be compared to the 60's; a time where advocacy of social issues was more common and people were more willing to be independent and vocal with their opinions. This is a quality which can help with the reconstruction of society, allowing future generations to become more expressive about changes that need to be made in our world.

One thing both teens of this generation and those who came before us have in common is the fact that in high school, they set goals for themselves to have nearly perfect attendance, achieve high marks, and to get into a good college or university like their parents did. While it is important for teenagers to take their high school education seriously, it is also important to further develop their morals and values as they transition into becoming adults. They are told by majority of the adults around them to go for high-paying careers that will provide a better life than the one they had, but they might not feel content when it is time to go to work. “Be a lawyer or a doctor, something with a 6-digit annual salary.” Money is important, but they will not smile with excitement as they enter the waiting room and invite their next patient in for their monthly checkup. There will be no passion or commitment when they are trying to win a court case for someone and they are thinking about how they want to go home instead. Why should they live someone else's dream to the fullest if it is not what brings them a feeling of content and fulfillment? Millennials are more willing to endure going after their dreams because of their work ethic and understanding of the world around them. This demonstrates that teenagers not only have strong work ethic, but are willing to take risks in order to make sure they are happy with who they are.

Yes; teenagers can be frustrating, social media obsessed, and melodramatic people, but should this be all that people think of them? From becoming more vocal about opinions, partaking in activism, and taking leaps of faith that are not always guaranteed to work out, these are the things older generations fail to recognize about the current generation of teens.