

On Social Obligations

Elders in every age complain about the rising “disrespectfulness” of the coming generations. “Kids these days” don’t show the same respect for others, including their elders, as kids used to, or so it goes. What is called “disrespect” seems to me more often than not the willful disregard for social obligation. It is “disrespectful” to help your kid through a tantrum in a restaurant rather than just taking him outside, or, to not hold doors open for others (usually for girls and elders). There are other social obligations that have disappeared, like gays staying properly in the closet, or women wearing only dresses and down to their feet, or blacks using the other bathroom. Some social obligations our elders are okay with seeing them gone, but other obligations, not so much. That social obligations are disappearing some might argue is a good thing. It means that we have become more free to be who we want to be and to do things how we want to do them and for our own intrinsic reasons, rather than for fear of punishment. It also means that people aren’t being coerced from an early age to “respect” social obligations. For elders, that might seem unfair. They were coerced to respect them and expect to be treated the same way they were coerced to treat their elders in their day. Guess what elders? “Life isn’t fair!” Amiright? What do *you* think about respecting social obligations? And that’s today’s two cents.

Skyler.