

# Two Points on Generational Whining

“Back in my day...” it often starts out. The older generations are wont to bitch and moan about the newer generations. It’s a tale as old as time. I’ve read quotes going back to Socrates showing elders whining about the youngins.

Since it’s been on my mind, I thought I’d share two points in favor of the idea that complaining about young people is stupid.

First, we are all the same species. What I mean by this, when most people in a given generation behave in a certain way, you can bet that behaving that way is a result of their shared environment. Each of them faces a world with certain incentives, disincentives, technologies, and events. And the result is certain behaviors seen performed in general.

What this should tell you is that if you swapped the people in this generation with people from another generation, same environment, the same general behavior would likewise develop. In other words, our parents and grandparents would do the same supposed stupid things if they were in our shoes, since they’re human, too.

Second, the current environment is a result of the actions of people in previous generations. Our parents and grandparents literally created the environment in which we find ourselves. It was all in the process of becoming the current environment before we were even born. And, they gave us the participation trophies, as Morgan Aldous put it.

Ergo, if they created our environment, and our response to that environment would be their response to that environment, then what’s there to grumble about? Their bleating about the younger folks is really their bleating about themselves. The old adage is true, “I’m rubber and you’re glue. Whatever you say bounces off of me, and sticks to you!”