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"It is more important to get it right, than to get it first."

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What Young Adults Need

by Lon Woodbury



The author of the book "The Myth of Maturity" calls them "Threshholders;" they are the young adults between the ages of about 18 and 25. The book tries to explain why "threshholders" have such struggles in trying to learn how to be adults.

Terry Apter claims it is largely because parents withdraw their guidance and support in the mistaken belief or "myth" that young adults need to make their own mistakes and learn from the consequences.

She makes the point that higher percentages of young adults are doing poorly during this transition from adolescence to adulthood when compared to past generations. It seems to come down to expectations according to the author. Parents, remembering their own generation's transition to adult independence and similar stories from their parents, expect that they should do the same "hands-off" attitude to their own "thresholders" that they had desired in their youth. Terry makes the point that while the young adults still desperately need the emotional support of their parents, at the same time many of those parents think their involvement is no longer wanted and back off, creating personal crises.

She also makes the point that society has changed. The transition to adulthood has different requirements now, independence is harder to achieve, and the challenges are greater than previous generations faced. The "Myth" she talks about is the belief that young adults want total independence. The fact she presents is that while young adults want respect and independence, they also need guidance and active support from their parents. When parents withdraw in a mistaken belief that involvement would interfere with a young adult's independence, the young adult feels abandoned and lost.

The author's recommendations are for parents to continue being actively supportive of their young adult children while working for the balance of also respecting their independence.

Although the author treats the modern struggles of "threshholders" as a fact we need to accommodate, she does not speculate why or how this has changed from previous generations.

The topic brings about many questions for further research:

Why does the modern generation of "threshholders" have such troubles? Could it be a result of what we in this network have termed an "entitled" generation?

Have modern "threshholders" grown up with a mentality of expectations, being unprepared for the responsibilities of adult independence?

Has this generation received so much orientation into their "rights" that they are unprepared for the necessary complementary aspect of the need for responsibility needed to defend their rights?

Have modern "threshholders" been taught that most or at least many problems can be traced to a psychological disorder over which they have no control, or which can only be managed by reliance on drugs like Ritalin to feel normal? If there is no chance of control over their own feelings,

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