

A "Gen Alpha Manifesto" to Inherit This Earth

INTRODUCTION

The world is changing, and we must change with it, or we shall perish. Our generation is lucky to enjoy the many benefits of technology. Are we holding ourselves responsible and accountable for its negative effects? Should we be bystanders and enjoy its fruits, or should we prepare for the new world's trade-offs? Do we still believe that we need to be the agents of change? When should we start, or should we start at all? Our generation faces challenges on several fronts - digital intrusion, erosion of social fabric, and the fear of civil war. Our democracies are under duress, family structures are breaking down like 10 pins, and big tech playing God. Here is my rundown on what I think is A "Gen Alpha Manifesto" to Inherit This Earth

1. DEMOCRACY UNDER DURESS

Democracy as we know it is under stress. While the spirit of democracy is about having equal opportunity for all, it is fast transforming into a world of majoritarianism. Most current democratic systems are moving from pluralism and freedom to winner-takes-it-all. Despite increased activism in certain quarters, there is a perceptible decline in the spirit of democracy and democratic values. With disdain creeping in, we are witnessing an increasing citizen apathy towards civic duties and volunteering. Today, the candidate choices are 'pre-selected' menu options, and massive muscle and money power win elections. Unlike decades ago when the candidate's integrity and achievements mattered, today, it does not. The very democratic system designed to protect is crushing us. As citizens, are we far too involved in increasing our Instagram count and following TikTok celebrities than working towards what is essential for the community?

2. BREAKING DOWN OF FAMILY STRUCTURES

As we have known for a long, the family unit is undergoing massive change. As we continue to evolve as a society, with increasing DINKs, nuclear, and single-parent families - traditional values are put under stress. The growing number of those who choose not to get married leads to complexities of how traditions would pass through generations. Without grandma's stories or garrulous grandfathers, will our age be able to hold a thread to the past?

3. BIG TECH IS PLAYING GOD

The onslaught of Big-Tech companies like Facebook, Google, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, Snapchat and WhatsApp are increasingly shaping the narrative of public discourse and opinion. The algorithms behind these services are designed purely with an economic interest - to increase their audience reach and stickiness to drive advertising revenues. These news-feed customizations place individuals into bubbles or echo-chambers. Consequently, the users of Big Tech consume less truth and infinite scrolls that satisfy their own biases. This leads to an unnatural social structure with extreme polarisation in views, causing stress and unrest. Large

businesses and political establishments take advantage of such a tool as we continue to live in a divided and post-truth world.

4. DIGITAL INTRUSION LEADS TO THE EROSION OF THE SOCIAL FABRIC

Digital intrusion is a double-edged sword. Thanks to that tiny smartphone in our palms, we have progressed by leaps and bounds. Consequently, one of my generation's most evident trade-offs is a lack of social skills, ethics, and behaviour. Aristotle may have declared Man to be a social animal, but has social media turned us all unsocial. We are witnessing increasing social awkwardness, disrespect, and lack of empathy in real-life. The rise in cases of bullying, suicides, gun violence, hate crimes, and drug abuse are all pointers - if only we wish to pause to take notice. If only we can take our eyes off these digital devices for a moment, maybe we can see the decline in our moral compass - and our inability to notice. Are we becoming too self-absorbed for our good?

5. REAL FEAR OF CIVIL WAR

The fear of war seems a genuine concern today, with what is going on in Russia-Ukraine or Palestine-Israel. But what worries me is a huge subterranean civil unrest ready to erupt. Unemployment, inflation, food shortage, a massive increase in cross-border migrations, the influx of refugees, and growing terrorism is all causing a massive change in the world order - all right ingredients for civil unrest. While a potential nuclear conflict may grab headlines, the younger generation possibly is increasingly numb to such rhetoric. If at all we have learnt anything from the past, wars - big and small, ultimately lose thousands of lives and drive millions towards starvation and death. But what about the social unrest? Is this the proverbial Mt. Vesuvius that we have been ignoring for a long?

CONCLUSION

Recognizing these problems early is the first step. Being aware, contemplating, and discussing as transparently as possible is the best way to avoid them in the future. It is better to prepare for problems than be surprised when they arise. Remember that being initiative-taking can lead to exponential growth. Thinking ahead can save a lot of pain in the end. Stay safe!

