

The Biggest Issue Facing My Generation

The biggest issue facing my generation is the lack of basic communication skills. We are living in a technology-based world and it has become a part of us and our daily needs. As teenagers, we are always eager to socialize within our peer groups, and technology has provided us with a way to easily achieve this. My generation no longer has to verbally communicate, unlike the generations before us. We have an escape when it comes to communicating face-to-face; we are now able to avoid it and hide behind screens. We never have to take problems head-on and just handle them—we have become spoiled to having an escape from them.

The lack of basic communication skills continues to develop into many other problems. When you never learn a basic skill that is needed throughout your whole life, how are you expected to thrive in positions you need it most? As a teenager who is particularly outgoing, I am privileged to have a first-hand viewpoint of the effect that lacking the basic skill can have. I have seen the unease it can cause in a simple public interaction within my social group. Many teenagers will or already have developed social anxiety because they are unable to communicate with others in public. With this dilemma they will have to rely on others to communicate for them, but that option will not always be available. You cannot avoid communicating, so it's best to start while you are young and have the skill fully developed for when it is required.

When problems arise in a friendship or any type of relationship, my generation automatically reaches for their phone to communicate. In contrast, older generations had to take the problem on face-to-face. How many times have you sent a text that was misinterpreted by the receiver? This is another problem caused by the lack of face-to-face communication. You can type something with a certain intention, but the person receiving the text may never know what you meant because they cannot read your body language and hear your tone. When communicating in-person, you are much more aware of the person's reactions, their tone, and their feelings toward the problem and subject, which not possible behind a screen. Communicating problems out loud also helps develop your life skills for the "real world"—when you will be providing for yourself. If the entire future generation is unable to communicate efficiently, no progress or change will ever be made and more problems will continue to develop.

To address this progressing issue, we need to take action as soon as possible. Parents noticing the apparent problem and taking steps to make a change will help tremendously. A good starting point would be for parents to make their kids speak for themselves while in public and when in scenarios they would not have a choice to if they were alone. Some parents might not think it is out of the normal for teenagers, especially shy ones, to be unwilling to talk at a restaurant, for example. Parents must realize being our crutch will only further progress the problem. Also, if parents know of a problem within a friendship, explaining to their child and leading by example that actual verbal communication is far more effective than communicating through technology would cause the problems to be solved much more easily.

Parents' efforts can and will only go so far. My generation must also notice the problem and work toward a solution. It all can start with less phone time and choosing to interact with others face-to-face. Also, if we learned that interacting is a lot easier when you practice it frequently, then we would not have to fret over the idea of communicating when we must. If my generation was to see it is extremely easy to struggle for a short time adjusting versus struggling all throughout life, the issue will begin resolving itself. Until then, it all starts with the parents attempting to make changes. However, my generation must accept and make the choice to change in order for the issue to improve. Change is a choice, and we must choose to make it for the betterment of ourselves, our generation, and our future.