

The world's young people need help

by Brian McAleer

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Firstly, if you're reading this article you've just watched the video "Helping Youth is Empowering Youth" on YouTube. Thank you for your interest and taking the next step here. I promise to deliver you more great content and information. Please read on.

A common viewpoint many grown ups have is that "Don't worry, they're teenagers, it's a phase and they'll get through it". And the grown ups, whether they are parents or work with youth, are hoping they'll get through it too.

Yes, certain aspects of adolescent development are just phases or momentary problems, but many aspects are not. The larger problems that affect the millions of young people around the world today include youth unemployment, youth related crime and offending behaviour, drugs and alcohol, mental health issues including anxiety and depression, and of course, youth suicide.

The teenage years are a tumultuous, confusing time full of changes and uncertainty. It can be, and should be for the most part, a fun time full of adventure, excitement and self-discovery. But this stage can be marred by the problems mentioned in the previous paragraph. And the important thing to remember is that young people are not just kids or teenagers going through a phase of life – they are adults in the making. And as adults in the making they are individuals, with their own needs, goals, desires and dreams for life.

Young people will live these out in different ways, expressing themselves in the manner which suits them best. They like to be heard and will make themselves heard in different ways. Young people have terrific ideas and this generation is seeing a large cohort of young and enterprising entrepreneurs making their mark who will be the minds and advocates behind many of the futures upcoming industries, jobs, new ideas, technologies and trends.

This is all great and exciting for young people and the world, but if those prevalent issues already mentioned are running the show, then the vast potential, ambition and opportunities young people can create and access are not being reached. How can we help them? Who can help them?

Traditionally and still for the most part today, the institution that helps young people learn, succeed and exceed in life are the schools we place them in. But high schools are struggling these days, and that is clearly evident. Classes are overcrowded, teachers are overworked and the way our educational curriculum is delivered by the schools and received by the students doesn't suit every individual young person. One size does not fit all in today's world, and this couldn't be more the case with teenagers. The majority of young people apply themselves in school and do well, but there are a small minority that don't, and struggle to learn and perform in the mainstream setting that is high school.

Due to this, students with learning difficulties or who simply aren't engaged by traditional school methods – because they are hands-on learners, or learn best by relating the material to a subject they enjoy, instead of learning multiple subjects they feel have no relevance for them – are slipping through the cracks. Going unnoticed, ignored, and not receiving the specialised attention they need, teens are dropping out of high school at an increasing rate,

in larger numbers and before they've even reached a Year 9 or 10 level in many cases. From here, they can register for support with Centrelink, and go on youth allowance payments, which fall into two categories; student payments or job seeker payments. If a young person exits school and goes straight into an alternative education or training environment, such as TAFE or an RTO, they can do well. But if they don't, and plan to find a job and work their way through life, they will be competing for the limited amount of jobs against millions of other young people with more skills and education than them. This leads to the high rate of youth unemployment and skills shortages we see in today's economic climate. And with no access to education and employment means no prospects or money, which can send young people on a downward spiral of negative thinking, anti-social behaviour and further more significant problems.

As young people fall into this system of a dependency of welfare due to a lack of employment and education prospects and possibilities, there are services in place to help them. The workers available to assist are the youth workers, social workers, counsellors, mentors and role models in different capacities. These people will work with a disadvantaged and disengaged young person on either one or all of their issues, case managing their progress to achieve the best outcomes for them now and into the future. But these professionals are in high demand but short supply, and because of that, the ones in the field are over-worked, underpaid and all too often, working at the edge of breaking point. The burnout rate for those working intensively with youth is alarming, with many only staying in roles from as little as 12 months to two or three years. What youth workers and the like require is extra support to do their job, which would be helped by less demand on their time, energy and resources and more supervision, training and time to deal with a few clients exclusively, instead of the 10-20 they need to try and work with at once. The system, and its workers, are being stretched too far.

Of course, parents come into this picture as well, as the caregivers, providers and foundation of love and support for their teenage children. And it's tough! Aside from holding down a job, managing a household, juggling multiple financial requirements and their own self care, parents are contending with teenagers who, if they are experiencing one or more of the prevalent problems mentioned earlier, are pushing their parents abilities to the limit. And today's parents are trying their best, raising their teens in the right way, hoping they will make good choices, and progress into adulthood in a positive and healthy way. This doesn't just happen however, and even for the parents of teens who feel like they're not connected to their teen or having a special impact on them and their development, well parents... you are! Everything you say or don't say, do or don't do is playing a huge part in the upbringing of your children, and forming them to be the adults they will become. How can parents be intentional and in control of this influence, when it's so challenging just to find time to spend with their teens in most cases?

Whether you are a teacher, youth work professional or parent of a teen, the challenges in educating, guiding and raising teens in today's world are hard, no doubt. And what makes it more challenging is if your actions are missing something. That one crucial ingredient which makes a world of difference in how you interact with your young person and which dictates the young person they are and the adult they will become.

It's called Youth Empowerment.

In short, Youth Empowerment is helping young people to help themselves.

We can't do everything for our teens, even if we feel we should because we can see how their own decision making skills and behaviours are affecting them. We need to stop being the rescuers and the heroes in our teen's life, and inspire them to rescue themselves and be their own hero. That's Empowerment.

Youth Empowerment is broken down into four areas, which form the core aspects of my business, Brian McAleer Coaching services. I now invite you to visit my official blog, and learn about these services and how I deliver them. You'll also learn how you can deliver them in your own way, just by taking a small amount of action. And if you want to go to the next level, then I invite you again to contact me personally and inquire about my services. All my contact details are provided on the blog.

You can straight to the blog by clicking [right here](#).

Whether you're aware of it or not, you are playing a massive part in the life of your young person. How do you want to play that part? What lessons do you want to instil in them? What changes do you want to help them create? How do you want them to remember you?

The past is gone and can't be changed. The future is uncertain and can't be controlled.

All that exists and matters is the present, here and now. And that is the best time to create the change you want for the young person in your life.

Kind Regards,



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