

By SANDY CLARKE
editor@leaderonomics.com

It can be tough being a young person these days.

Life, in many ways, is more convenient, sure. But there seems to be a lot of pressure to score a truckload of straight As and become a billionaire by the time you're 30.

To be fair, being young has always been a tough gig. I bet even Socrates' parents would often nag him, "Why can't you be more like your grandfather? He never stood around all day, thinking."

MISUNDERSTOOD CREATURES

The biggest issue has always been an apparent resistance to be taken seriously by the generations that have gone before you. Many older people think they know more than young people about all the important stuff, while those with wiser heads know better.

Your parents know what career is best for you and which girlfriend or boyfriend is most suitable; some teachers might insist on one-way dialogue and remain uninterested about your ideas and what you have to contribute; and no one understands that, despite your age, you have lived a life and thus experienced problems (and solved them), known heartbreak (and got over it), and faced challenges (which you overcame).

It's easy to see why young people come through early life and navigate their way through school and college, only to head out into the world with much less of an idea of their worth and potential than they should have.

A lack of respect from society, people not listening, always trying to fit in, concerns over future careers and economic stability, making sense of who you are, gaining some footing in morals and values, and dealing with expectations from every direction are just some of the issues that will combine to make your head spin as you try to figure out your place in the world.

OUR FUTURE LEADERS

As such, the idea of a young person being a leader in any shape or form is scoffed at by a lot of older people. Judging by the vortex of issues affecting young people, it could be argued that they have a point. But then again, such

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A YOUNG LEADER

HOW YOUTHS CAN BE DEVELOPED TO TAKE CHARGE

an argument fails to take into consideration the resilience of young people, their creativity, their ability to innovate, and the enormous potential that lies within them despite some grand efforts by society to limit or suppress it altogether.

Malala Yousafzai wrote political blog posts from the age of 11, and campaigned for education rights for women in Pakistan. In 2012, she survived a horrific attack after being shot by a gunman while travelling to school. Her efforts to campaign for education rights, along with her fearless spirit, won her global admiration. At age 17, she became the youngest ever Nobel Prize laureate.

Young people can make excellent leaders if they have the fortune of being encouraged and nurtured in the right way, or are strong enough to possess an unyielding determination to make a difference regardless of their circumstances.

PARTING THOUGHTS

Whatever challenges you might face as a young person, nothing can stop you from being who you want to be and achieving whatever you desire – nor should it. The only thing that can hold you back from becoming whoever you want to be is the voice inside you that tells you you're not ready, or it's too risky, or that you're not good enough.

Life's too short to listen to negative voices, whether they come from outside yourself or within. If you're able to ignite the potential within you and develop a belief that says, "I am good enough – I can do this," then all that's left to be done is for you to decide to become the best you were born to be.



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