



HBSU

Dr.Homi Bhabha State University

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VISION

“To be a premier institution of higher learning, committed to academic excellence, research, innovation, and social transformation, that prepares future leaders for a sustainable and equitable world.”

MISSION

Our mission is to provide high-quality education, foster critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity and encourage innovative research that leads to social transformation.

We aim to empower our students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and values to contribute to the betterment of humankind.

We strive to create an inclusive, diverse and welcoming environment that promotes personal growth, teamwork, ethics and leadership development.



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Foreword

Can an entire generation born across 15 years in six habitable continents be clubbed under one generalized term? Toeing a narrative set by a country that has no culture but a few hundred years of history?



Prof. Vilas Padhye
Head, Department of Psychology

The answer is both yes and no. While psychology has long discarded grouping people under “types” that collectively represent a group of traits, the increasing spread of technology and social media makes it inevitable for compartmentalizing people. Then there are common threads that weave the fabric of the connected world, including but not limited to climate change, job insecurity, relationships, entertainment, apps, emojis, viral trends, wars, health, and pandemics. However, the most perilous exertion is by capitalist conglomerates doggedly crafting uniform markets for their products, creating a common consumer class across the globe. Hence the concerted effort to erase local cultures – language, cuisine, clothing, ethics, morals, values – and instilling a set of uniform codes. It is not a coincidence that all the Big Four (GAFA) are American, and China has banned direct access to all. Liberal democracy versus totalitarianism, really?

The more people get alienated from their culture, friends, and families, the more susceptible they become to brainwashing. Every generation has had its challenges. So, it is not amusing that a certain GenZ would have its own. But the generalization of each problem is alarming. A girl posts a video on social media about the ‘toxic’ culture in her office and resigns, only to get a million views and affirmations. Does she represent the jobless, underpaid, or hardworking youth of her age who are struggling hard to make ends meet? More grotesque is the use of therapeutic lingo in everyday conversations – boundaries, consent, where its coming from, safe space – in an ostensible effort to appear solicitous when reality could be otherwise.

It is not without reason that there are rebellions from within. Youngsters are going back to analogue, shunning fast fashion, abandoning social media, and seeking a life and identity of their own. My son is a borderline GenZ and a school prefect. One day he came back from school, completely exasperated, and said to me, “Dad, these Gen Alpha kids are impossible!” “No labels,” I said. But the show goes on.

Concept Note



It's not all that bad, or is it? Well, for starters, this question of "What's up with Gen z?" can be answered in so many ways and we chose to answer it in our own way, through our own words highlighting some myths, a whole lot of facts, few hard truths and pure reality.

This magazine aims to explore the complex relationship between the Generation Z and the world around them. It does not necessarily alienate the generation from the rest of the world, rather, it tries to defy the compartmentalization of humans on the basis of the era they were born in.

The focus is entirely on Gen Z's perspective of the world and how the world, as a whole, views Gen z. Our vision is to show a holistic and an unbiased perspective on all the good, bad and everything in the middle, aspects of this generation; highlighting their achievements, struggles as well as their debacles. Additionally, it calls attention to society's expectations from them and their (Gen Z's) bandwidth to cater to society's expectations. You might also discover the intent behind their actions, choices, expressions particularly in the context of identity, social change, digital culture, and mental health discourse. Another key focus is to understand Gen Z's perceived as well as actual contribution to Mental Health Awareness and Advocacy.

In this edition, the purpose is to bridge the gap between perception and reality, revealing the cluttered and "chalant" minds of the Generation Z, neither sugarcoating nor exaggerating any of it. Through articles, narratives, interviews, creative pieces and psychological insights, this edition aims to understand Generation Z in real time, above and beyond what is heard, said and understood about them.

Beyond the trends, reels, labels, and stereotypes, generation Z has not all been a disaster, there's more to them than the eyes meet, and it's time to finally reveal what exactly is up with Generation Z.

Scroll IRL

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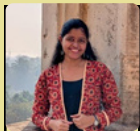
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TOO COOL FOR JUST CLASSROOMS

Department happenings from Oct–Dec

Psychoeducation Workshop

Conducted by Ms. Megha Tiwari, the session introduced Psychology students to psychoeducation in therapeutic settings, covering its role, models, and communication through case discussions and role-play activities.

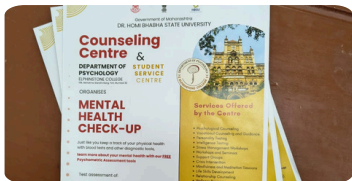


Mental Health Day

On World Mental Health Day, the Department conducted a campus-wide outreach initiative involving mental health awareness talks, DASS-based screenings, and sharing counselling support resources, which was later extended to the Psychology Department of the Institute of Science.

Applied Counseling Workshop

A six-day Counselling Workshop under PM-Usha GSU was conducted for Master's students by Dr. Amruta Punjabi (DESPU), Dr. Ravikant Pinjarkar (NIMHANS), and Mr. Budhadeep Gondane (TISS), covering, counselling skills, ethics, assessment, and intervention through role-plays and experiential learning.



On the occasion of Mental Health Day, MA-I students conducted workshop on 'Understanding thoughts and emotions' for IT students. Through interactive activities, discussions and gratitude-based grounding exercise, students gained practical strategies for emotional regulation.



A mental health awareness initiative was organized at Mantralaya, Mumbai on November 21, 2025. Hon. Additional Chief Secretary of Maharashtra Shri. B. Venugopal Reddy (centre) visited the exposition along with Deputy Secretary Shri. Pratap Lubal (to his right) and Vice Chancellor Prof. Rajanish Kamat (left). During the drive, around 3,000 visitors sought psychoeducation, while 300 individuals were assessed for stress, anxiety, and depression.



'Imposter', an exciting social-deduction game, was organised by 'Readiculous' library club. In this game, participants had to catch the 'imposter' i.e. a single person who had been assigned a different psychological topic or book, while everyone divulged one line about their given topic.



The FUN-Da Mentals Cultural Club organised a Jamming Session and a Diwali Party, creating a lively space for students through music, performances, festive activities, and a shared potluck celebration.

Diwali Party



Jamming Session



ON BOTH SIDES OF THE COUCH:



... THE GEN Z THERAPY EXPERIENCE



*Ms Shubhangi Pingulkar in conversation
with Dikshaa S. & Hiral M.*



Ms Shubhangi Pingulkar
HBSU Counselor

What do you think most people say when they are asked: How are you really doing? Why do you think they don't say the truth about how they feel?

I think the phrase "How are you?" has been so overused in our day-to-day conversations that, at this point, it has almost lost its meaning. Most of the time, it's asked out of formality rather than genuine curiosity. And interestingly, that experience often transfers into the counselling room as well, which is why many therapists actually try to avoid opening with that question altogether.

As a therapist, I can imagine that your experiences over the last week cannot really

Ms Shubhangi is a therapist with a Master's in Clinical Psychology and a Post Graduate Diploma in Counseling. As a Gen Z therapist, she hopes to make mental health conversations feel more honest, relatable, and less intimidating. Outside of work, she enjoys slow mornings, spending time in nature, and exploring all things art and craft.

be summarised into a two-word sentence like "I'm fine." A person's inner world and day-to-day experiences are far more colourful and layered for that sentence to truly do them justice.

But I think the counselling room is where that question regains its true meaning, because for the first time, people are sitting in a space where someone genuinely wants to hear the real answer.



Being a Gen Z therapist, what are the advantages and challenges as a professional?

I think age bias is definitely something that can come up, especially with clients who are older than I am, and honestly, I can understand why. It might feel difficult to imagine that someone younger than you could fully understand the depth of your experiences or the stages of life you've gone through.

But at the same time, being a young therapist also comes with its own advantages. One major advantage is that I'm often able to build rapport more easily with teenagers and young adults. I understand the culture, the language, the online spaces they occupy, and some of the pressures they're navigating in real time.

And since rapport-building is often one of the most challenging and important parts of therapy, I think that becomes a real strength in my work. So, there's definitely a silver lining there, I guess.

As a university counsellor, what are the common concerns/ patterns among 14-29 year olds that you encounter, which are different from other generations?

I think loneliness is a theme that comes up again and again in sessions. A lot of conversations with clients revolve around questions like, "Am I a good enough friend?" or, on the other extreme, "Am I trying too hard?"

With social media creating entirely new spaces for interaction, I think there's also a lot of confusion around what friendship and connection are supposed to look like in real life.

And coming back into social spaces after extended periods of isolation during COVID has only made that harder for many young people.

There seems to be a growing lack of belongingness and community, and I imagine that's something previous generations may have experienced more naturally. Earlier, there wasn't this constant mirage of other people living more exciting lives than you, achieving more than you, or doing life "better" than you.

People simply existed around each other more organically. And when they were alone, they didn't always have a gadget constantly pulling their attention toward everyone else's lives. There was more space to just sit with themselves, focus inward, and experience life without constant comparison.

Have you noticed a shift in most issues lately, over the years of your career?

Definitely. Even in the relatively short span of my career, I think there has been a noticeable shift in the way distress presents itself. Earlier, concerns were often spoken about more situationally, academics, relationships, career choices, family conflict. But now, many clients come in already feeling emotionally exhausted before they've even fully entered adulthood.

I also think people today are far more self-aware and informed about mental health, which is a positive shift. Clients are able to identify emotions, patterns, and even articulate their struggles much better than before. But at the same time, constant exposure to information, comparison, and pressure has also increased anxiety, self-doubt, and emotional overwhelm.

Another thing I've noticed is that issues today feel much less compartmentalised. Academic stress is connected to self-worth, self-worth is connected to social media, social media is connected to relationships and identity, everything feels deeply intertwined. So, therapy now often involves helping people slow down and untangle all of that.

What do you think are the prevalent stereotypes about Gen Z? Do you think they are accurate?

Oh, there are so many stereotypes about Gen Z, I think that could honestly be an entire questionnaire on its own. Some of the common ones are that Gen Z is entitled, overly sensitive, constantly on their phones, or that they "have too many mental health issues."

But I think what these conversations actually reveal is that this is a generation that isn't afraid to call a spade a spade. While they do understand respect, they also value their peace and are much more willing to communicate boundaries and advocate for themselves emotionally.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

And honestly, the conversation around "phone addiction" is not new at all. Every generation has had its version of this concern. For earlier generations, it may have been video games or Nintendo; before that, television; and even earlier, radio. So I don't think this is a uniquely Gen Z issue, it's an age-old conversation that simply changes form with technology.

One thing I will say, though, is that Gen Z often makes great therapy clients. The stigma around mental health is something they are much less afraid of compared to previous generations. They're generally more open to introspection, emotional conversations, and seeking help when they need it, and I think that's a very healthy shift.

What are the genuine struggles of Gen Z that are generally dismissed/ not taken seriously?

I think every generation comes with its own unique set of challenges, and for Gen Z, a lot of that is tied to growing up during the internet boom of the 2000s. This generation has constantly been exposed to messages telling them that they need to be exceptional and achieve something extraordinary. And these expectations often come from everywhere, parents, relatives, institutions, and even very well-meaning teachers.

Because of this, many young people struggle with two major things. First, understanding what they genuinely want to do while making career choices, and second, sustaining themselves within an extremely demanding and uncertain job market.

Almost every undergraduate student I speak to already feels like they're running a race toward their next five-year plan. There's very little room to simply experience where they currently are in life. It's almost like they're watching their life pass by while constantly preparing for the next milestone.

And I think this level of pressure to succeed, combined with the current economic realities and uncertainty about the future, is something uniquely intense for this generation.

There's an increased use of psychological jargon in daily conversations and social media. Does that make it easier or complicated in the counselling room?

Like always, this coin has two sides. On one hand, having conversations about mental health in public spaces has definitely helped reduce stigma. People are less afraid to talk about their experiences now, and mental health information, which was inaccessible to many people earlier, has become much more available. That increased access has led to more conversations, more awareness, and in many ways, made support feel more approachable.

But on the other hand, therapy language is sometimes used without fully understanding the nuance behind it. Terms from psychology can become an easy way to sound informed or "woke" without actually engaging with the depth or seriousness of those concepts.

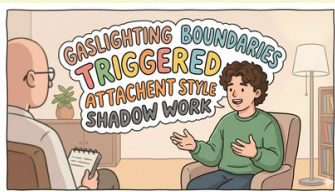
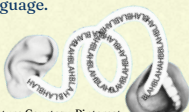


Image: AI

And at times, certain therapeutic terms may even be used to avoid accountability rather than encourage reflection. So, while awareness has definitely increased, I think there's also a need for more responsibility and deeper understanding in how we use mental health language.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

What's the need of the hour/ your advice for Gen Z who are reading this?

We've often heard the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child," but I think we sometimes forget that even when you grow into a young adult, you still need a village. And in equal parts, you also need to be a villager for other people.

I think a lot of us are stuck in our own little cocoons right now, emotionally, digitally, socially, and because of that, genuine connection can start feeling difficult or even unnecessary. But I think the need of the hour is exactly the opposite: reaching out, asking for help when needed, showing up for others, and slowly rebuilding a sense of community.

Because at the end of the day, people heal and grow best when they don't feel like they have to do life entirely on their own.

Now that we have come to the end of the interview, we want to genuinely ask you: Are you okay? :)

Honestly? Hanging in there. I think that's the most emotionally accurate answer most of us can give these days.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Sometimes, all you can do is hang in there and that is enough :)

MADE BY YOURS TRULY, GENZ: THE INDIAN EDITION

By Shreya Chaturvedi, MA I, Dept. of Psychology

Have you ever thought about the smoke released when local street iron vendors use charcoal iron, and how it contributes to global warming? Even I didn't, until I came across this video featuring Vinisha Umashankar. You might wonder, "Well, who is she?" Let me tell you.



Vinisha Umashankar with her solar powered cart, IRON-MAX.

Picture Courtesy: Earthshot Prize 2021

Vinisha Umashankar is a teenager who lives in Tamil Nadu. When she was just 14, she came across charcoal waste dumped by iron vendors, making her think about the impact of charcoal on our environment. Soon she realized its connection to deforestation, as trees are cut to make charcoal whose smoke damages our atmosphere, while also severely affecting the vendors' health and causing lung diseases.

As stated in *The Earthshot Prize*, Vinisha's solar powered cart, named IRON-MAX, replaces dirty charcoal with clean energy from the sun. Five hours of sunshine powers the iron for six hours, proving that a win for the environment is also a win for the vendors.

Her future plans include, "manufacturing the solar ironing cart in India and selling it at an affordable price. Also exporting it to Asia, Africa, and wherever the sun shines throughout the year."

Having won many awards, the Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam IGNITE Award in 2019, being one of them, she said, "I want to inspire students around the world to take a keen interest in science to innovate products and solutions for protecting our air, water and land for people, animals and plants. Our Earth needs best 'shots' to become cleaner and greener - you're never too young to make a difference!"

On 14th May, 2026, Sixteen year-olds, Vivaan Chhawchharia, Ariana Agarwal, and Avyana Mehta won Asia's top honour at The Earth Foundation's Earth Prize 2026, for helping in removing microplastics from drinking water.



(L-R) Avyana Mehta, Vivaan Chhawchharia, Ariana Agarwal.

Picture Courtesy: *The Brighter World 2026*

On their visit to a rural village for their environmental science course, they saw a child drinking water from a shared storage container. That moment sparked a question ‘How do you remove something you cannot even see and make it more accessible to vulnerable communities across the globe?’

They themselves created the solution by developing Plas-Stick, a biodegradable powder extract from discarded tamarind seeds. When added to water, it attracts floating microplastic particles and binds them together into visible clumps. These clumps can then be removed using a simple handheld magnet. No use of electricity. No buying of costly machinery. No complex filtration units.

According to *The Brighter World*, in their statement following the victory, the team emphasized their vision for accessibility and impact. “Plas-Stick was designed to be simple, affordable, and accessible, and this support allows us to take it beyond pilot schools and scale it to many more communities that need it the most.”

Have you ever visited an Atta Chakki Mill? If yes, then you must already know that a few grains surround the entire area like dust, people can barely hear each other forcing them to either shout or wait till the timer goes off and the machine stops, it's harmful, isn't it? Well not anymore, 17 year old Gurugram based Aayan Chopra found its solution!



(L-R) Santosh Kumar, Aayan Chopra.
Picture Courtesy: *The Better India 2025*

Aayan says to *The Better India*, “I have always been interested in renewable energy, but the real problems became clear when I was doing my fieldwork in villages during my internship in solar energy. The diesel generators were so noisy that when I asked a chakki worker a question, he couldn't hear me. That's when I realised this wasn't just an energy problem, it was affecting health, education, the environment, and more.”



Hi,
I'm
the
future

As per the report, He has authored a research paper titled ‘The Role of Solar Panel Implementation in the Lives of MSMEs’ in 2023, further validating what he had seen in the field. The initiative has already made a tangible difference on the ground and as of May, 2025, over 13,000 litres of diesel had been saved, leading to a prevention of around 35,000 kilograms of CO₂ emissions.

“Women,” he adds in his interview, “have been at the heart of this transformation. Out of the 15 solar chakkis installed so far, eight are run by women. We didn't plan it that way, but it's incredibly inspiring. Many of these women are now encouraging others in their villages to make the switch. They are leaders in every sense.”

Today, 15 such mills are running across Uttar Pradesh. “The more people we can reach, the more lives we can improve,” he says. “Apart from providing clean energy, I want to make sure that the rural workers enjoy an improved and dignified life.”

Ever thought about how a mixture of salt and water could help humankind? Let's go through the checklist together- it helps in hydration and electrolyte balance. Check. It also helps in therapeutic and health use. Check. It's good for general wellness and beauty. Check. It helps bring vaccines and medical supplies to rural areas... Wait What?



(L-R) Dhruv Chaudhary, Mithran Ladhania, and Mridul Jain.

Picture Courtesy: *The Business Insider 2025*

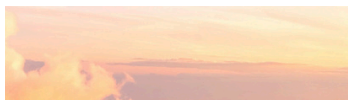
Yes, you read it correct, Dhruv Chaudhary, Mithran Ladhania, and Mridul Jain from Indore, decided to develop a salt-based refrigeration technique after hearing from their parents, who work in the medical field, how challenging it was to bring COVID-19 vaccines to rural areas without electricity, back in the 2020s. The invention uses salts that pull heat from their environments when they dissolve in water.

“While we did scour through the entire internet to find the best salt possible, we kind of just ended up back at our ninth-grade science textbook” the trio told the *Business Insider*, “we found that ammonium chloride maintained temperatures of around 2 to 6 degrees Celsius (about 35 to 43 degrees Fahrenheit), which is ideal for many vaccines and adding barium hydroxide octahydrate to the mix produced subzero Celsius temperatures, which is ideal for some other vaccines and sometimes for transplant organs.”

The report states that, one advantage of the ammonium chloride solution, the trio of teens said, is that it's reusable in the field without electricity and you don't need a freezer to pull ice from. Rather, you can remove the saltwater from the box, boil away the water, and collect the salt in its solid form, ready to dissolve in new water and produce its cooling effect all over again.

As for the future plans, they're planning to use the prize money, which they won in the 2025 *Earth Prize*, to test 200 units in 120 hospitals. And to pursue a Performance, Quality and Safety certification through the World Health Organization (WHO), so they can pitch it to Gavi, an international alliance that distributes vaccines.

While these are only eight young innovators' remarkable stories I could include in this article, there are many more individuals across India quietly working towards solving real-world problems with creativity, science, and compassion. In a generation often reduced to internet stereotypes and trends, these young minds prove that Gen Z is much more than what they are commonly perceived to be.



From clean energy and safe drinking water to healthcare accessibility and sustainable living, their ideas show how innovation doesn't always begin inside giant laboratories. Sometimes, it begins simply by noticing the problems everyone else ignores around us. Their work reminds us that age is never a barrier to creating meaningful changes. And on that hopeful note, here's to many more such inventions and young innovators shaping a better future for all of us!



BRAINROT TO BREAKTHROUGHS



In 2023, Pooja Pal's, 13 years old, dust-free thresher won the INSPIRE Award, with the help of her science teacher Rajeev Srivastava.

UP Teen Pooja Pal Builds Dust-Free Thresher, Wins INSPIRE Award



Inside picture: Both
Courtesy: The Better India



inside Picture: Jui Kesar, 14 years old, with her JTremor-3D invention
Courtesy: The Better India

Class 9 Student Fixes Aerators in Societies & Hotels; Saves 70,00,000 Litres of Water. Started in 2019, due to COVID-19 lockdown. Couldn't continue with the project. Though restarted in 2021.



Inside Picture: Rishabh Prashobh, 14 years old
Courtesy: The Better India



Inside Picture: Sulochana Kakodiya, 13 years old, at Inspire Awards
Courtesy: X (formerly known as Twitter)

Mother's struggle inspires Class 8 student to design a paddy filling machine that won accolades at national competition



Inside Picture: Abhishek demonstrates his invention to IPS officer Akun Sabharwal (left), and posing with officials and his machine for a photograph
Courtesy: Your Story

ONCE UPON A TIME IN PSYCHOLOGY, STILL SOMEHOW RELEVANT..



Freud thought that your dreams show what you want while our dreams are showing things we've put off or due to be done.

Since **Jung** created the idea of introverts and extroverts, extroverts have continued to adapt behaviours of introverts.

When **Pavlov** trained dogs to respond to bells it's easy to understand how those same bells affect people through notification sounds.

With amounts of free things influencing behaviour, **Skinner** showed that rewards influence behaviours, but nobody has yet to beat free pizza in an experiment.

Phineas Gage experienced personality changes after a brain injury and somehow burnout now achieves similar results.

Abraham Maslow created the hierarchy of need meanwhile Gen Z quietly added "Wi-Fi" to the list.

Alfred Adler discussed inferiority complex thus elder siblings immediately felt understood.

Wilhelm Wundt opened the first psychology laboratory which explains why students have been writing reports ever since.

Mary Ainsworth studied attachment styles meanwhile "seen at 2:14 am" created a new category.

Hermann Ebbinghaus discovered the forgetting curve and students still demonstrate it before exams.

VALIDATED OR VIOLATED? “GEN Z ON THE INTERNET”

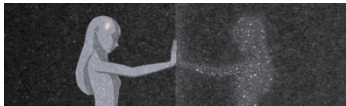
By Suhani Gedam. MA Part I, Dept. of Psychology

Have you ever felt that people act differently in online spaces?

A 16-year old queer, Pranshu Yadav, a self-taught passionate makeup artist was driven to commit suicide in the year 2023.

Misha Agarwal, known for her comedic humor, took her life 2 days before her 25th birthday. Her sister reported that she became distraught and felt worthless when her follower counts started dropping.

Is it really that easy to say anything we want on social media? Free from accountability, with personal identity concealed, can't we be our true selves in the online spaces; a space that can hold our meltdowns, vent outs, and releases of pent-up emotions? Another user, in a similar position, going through similar circumstances can help us feel that maybe we are not so alone after all.



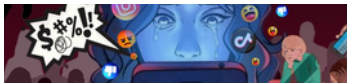
Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

On the other side of the user's screen, the one that's comforting us, one may wonder, is this how the user truly acts in the outside world as well? Or is it just a persona created for the “reel” life, that is, digital reality?

Perhaps, it is safe to assume that expressing ourselves behind a screen is comparatively easier than in real-life expression. The digital world offers distinct forms of self-expression, from emojis and GIFS to stickers, which efficiently convey all that is needed to be said, and even things that are left unsaid. However, over-reliance on such digital features, rather than direct verbal communication, may strain interpersonal relations.

Additionally, the comment section has become a second home for those who feel isolated and find it difficult to express themselves. For the ones who find it difficult to relate with others feel reassured when they stumble upon the comments such as, “I thought I was the only one”.

While this space may feel safe to express ourselves, it has its own pitfalls. The anonymity it provides can make someone feel validated, but can also enable impunity, where users may post malicious content and get away unscathed. The online space is, therefore, undoubtedly a double-edged sword.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Maurya et al. (2022) reports that the rate of cyberbullying among boys nearly tripled, increasing from 1.9% to 5.6%. While, the rate of cyberbullying among girls nearly doubled, increasing from 3.8% to 6.4%. The digital audience is capable of both: one user may receive immense comfort and a non-judgemental space, whereas another user is being held hostage in a courtroom of unconstructive critique and scrutiny.

Both of the scenarios described above are easily evident from comment sections.

The comment section is in a league of its own. At times, it can be humorous than the post itself, and it can also be purely horrifying and inhumane, forcing a total existential reckoning. It makes one ponder how a post may trigger a user into giving death threats and rape threats

Regardless of the horrors of the internet, Gen Z has completely inhabited the digital space, where the generation, in large numbers, feels more comfortable on the internet world than in the real world. The space holds different meanings for different users. For some, it is a space to express their fashion sense, to document the little things in life, to express their art and a myriad of other things. Generation Z grew up in the trenches of the tech world, and as a consequence, the internet feels close to home.

Also, in the real world, it is fairly difficult to find people with shared niche interests and compatibility. Fortunately, the internet has bridged this gap, allowing people to join circles with common interests, securing emotional validation that is harder to find in the outside world.

Users don't necessarily have distinct online vs. offline personas, but the digital space often serves as a leeway for expressing suppressed or unconscious emotions. However, the tech world also carries risks of alienation when self-expression is met with criticism, mockery or ridicule, turning into a potent source of distress.

When the boundary between the digital ecosystem and offline reality blurs, it may create a dangerous dependency. The internet may serve as a life-saving support, or may drive one to utter despair.

NOW YOU TELL US !!!



Validated or Violated?

8 internet scenarios. No wrong answers. Just your gut.

1. Your friend posts a photo of you without asking first.
2. A stranger DMs you saying your post helped them through a rough week.
3. Your crush watches your story within 10 seconds of you posting it.
4. An AI generates a realistic image of you from your public photos.
5. A brand DMs you 'love your vibe!' but offers zero payment for a collab.
6. A friend reveals a secret of yours on their story because you had a friendship breakup.
7. Your friend hypes you up in the comments before you even ask.
8. A company uses your public tweet in their ad campaign without asking.

SHEESH! THE TRUTH ABOUT US, FROM US

By Shreya N. Mayekar, Guest Writer



Sheesh! Finally, I got the opportunity to write about this topic.

For those unfamiliar, “sheesh” is a Gen Z slang term that conveys amazement and disbelief. And honestly, amazement and disbelief are exactly the emotions that surround conversations about my generation. We are everywhere, on social media, in workplaces, in classrooms and yet, we are often misunderstood.

As a Gen Z individual, I want to share a perspective that is both personal and analytical, highlighting how we see the world, how the world sees us, and the role we play in shaping conversations around mental health, inclusivity, and change.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Breaking the Stereotypes

Too often, Gen Z is dismissed as shallow, spoiled, or glued to screens. Adults assume we lack seriousness or the ability to understand complex issues. But this is a narrow view. We question, we critique, and we create. Behind the memes and TikToks are individuals with sharp perspectives, empathy, and creativity. To underestimate us is to miss the depth of our engagement with the world.

Strengths That Define Us

One of the defining features of Gen Z is our directness. We are vocal, straightforward, and value authenticity. We adapt quickly to change, and our openness to experimentation is essential in today’s fast-moving environment.

Mental Health Advocacy: We took therapy out of shadows and into reels. We have normalized conversations around anxiety, depression, and stress. For us, mental health is not a taboo but a priority. This openness has reshaped workplaces and communities, making them healthier and more compassionate.

Inclusivity and Diversity: We embrace differences across race, caste, class, and gender identities. Our insistence on equality fosters workplaces that are free of bias and discrimination. This inclusiveness is not just moral, it is practical too, ensuring collaboration and innovation in diverse settings.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Corporate Influence: Companies like Nike and Apple thrive because they align with our values-innovation, creativity, and ethical responsibility. Within organizations, we bring entrepreneurial energy, fresh ideas, and a willingness to challenge outdated norms. Our entrepreneurial, freelance, and influencer mindsets reflect independence and aspiration. We focus on growth and success, not just stability, and this independence is reshaping industries.

Work-Life Balance: New ideas like hybrid, remote work models and new generation tools have redefined productivity and work efficiency. By prioritizing balance, we have demonstrated that healthier employees lead to stronger organizations.



The Criticisms We Face

Of course, the picture is not entirely positive. We are often perceived as arrogant, disrespectful, or unprofessional. Our bluntness is mistaken for rudeness, and our independence is sometimes interpreted as a desire for shortcuts. Emotional impulsiveness and vulnerability are part of our reality, and while we embrace these openly, they are frequently judged harshly.

There is also the perception that we lack discipline or seriousness. Some argue that our dependency on technology makes us impatient. These criticisms, while exaggerated, reflect genuine challenges. We do sometimes struggle with impulsiveness, and our openness can be misinterpreted as lack of restraint. Yet, these qualities are not unique to us; they are part of the human experience across generations.

A Personal Reflection

Being Gen Z is not easy. I recall reading an article that pointed out how we are studying curriculum designed decades ago by individuals who lived in a different social and cultural context. How can we be evaluated by standards that fail to reflect modern realities? Evolution requires change at every step, and we are simply one step ahead.

Darwin's theory of "survival of the fittest" resonates here, not in the physical sense, but in terms of adaptability, empathy, and resilience. We are no longer puppets tied to outdated strings; our minds are independent, innovative, and prepared to redefine the future. There is tremendous scope for us in many fields, and our independence is a strength, not a weakness.

Reel vs. Real

It is also important to distinguish between the reel and real lives of Gen Z. Social media often presents a curated version of us, but behind the filters are individuals who respect others, strive for professionalism, and wrestle with vulnerability. We might put our life updates on stories and posts, for us, it is a way of appreciating the little things that make up everyday existence.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Sharing moments online is not about seeking validation alone, it is about seizing the day, capturing fragments of joy, and reminding ourselves that life is fleeting. After all, we live every day, but we die only once. In that sense, documenting our lives is less about performance and more about gratitude, a conscious effort to notice the ordinary and turn it into something extraordinary.

Mental Health: A Global Shift

Perhaps, the most profound impact of Gen Z has been in the realm of mental health. By speaking openly about emotions, we have broken stereotypes and encouraged even older generations to confront their struggles with greater acceptance. Adults, too, have benefited from this openness, learning to cope with problems in healthier ways. This cultural shift has made workplaces and communities healthier, more compassionate, and more resilient.

Mental health awareness has changed the world. Anxiety, depression, and stress are no longer hidden topics. We have made this place a better place to live in, healthier and happier. This is one of our greatest contributions.

A Balanced Perspective

So, what is truly “up” with Gen Z? We are vocal, ethical, inclusive, and creative. We are also impulsive, sometimes misunderstood, and often underestimated. Society expects us to conform, while we expect society to evolve. The reality lies in negotiation between these expectations.

To be seen is to be heard, and to be heard, it is essential to be vocal and accepting. Gen Z has demonstrated that change and balance are not optional, they are necessary. No cap but our contributions to inclusivity, mental health, and workplace innovation, are undeniable. At the same time, our challenges remind us that growth is continuous, not absolute.

Gen Z minds have stopped being puppets whose strings are no longer tied to prevalent trends. We are not perfect, but neither is any generation. What distinguishes us is our courage to question, our openness to change, and our insistence on mental well-being. If society listens with empathy, and if we continue to balance passion with professionalism, the collaboration will lead to healthier workplaces, stronger communities, and a better world, for real.

Call us sensitive, call us smart, call us saviours or slackers, but we low key are the trendsetters.

Gen Z Multitasking Competition.

Mention the tasks that you juggle on a daily basis



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

SELF-CARE BINGO!

How many of these do you practice in a month?

Meditate 10 min	Read a book	Watch a movie with friends	Eat no junk food	Spend time in nature
No binge watch	Take time out for self	Mindful eating, without screens	Journaling thoughts	Buy yourself flowers
Call a loved one	7 hrs sleep	No doomscrolling	Take time out for workout	Spend time with family
Go for a walk	Do something creative	No excessive shopping	Enjoy sunset/sunrise	Appreciate your good qualities
Dancing or singing	Take time out for hobbies	Practice deep breathing	Write a letter to self	No gossip day

Instructions: Tick a box each time you practice a self-care activity. If you complete a row or column, it means you are taking good care of yourself :)

KEEP IT UP!

IN THE REALM OF GEN Z EMOTIONS

By Anushree Naik, MA I, Dept. of Psychology



We often hear these stereotypical sentences in our everyday life. But, I would like you to pause and reflect. Are these only the characteristics by which we can define Generation Z? Are we simplifying the emotional complexities of this generation? When we label Gen Z, do we consider the social, cultural and psychological factors? Sometimes, on the basis of limited evidence, we form generalized opinions. Therefore, it is important to understand the complexities first.

However, I would like to clear up one thing in the beginning, that the objective of this article is not to label any generation as good or bad, rather, it is to show how socio-cultural factors shape the 'emotional' experiences of Gen Z.

If we think about Generation Z in a broader sense, they are standing at the border. They are both learners and emerging leaders, as they are a young population while also engaging with potential global breakthroughs. They are a bridge between older generations and new generations, carrying the knowledge of past generations and at the same time adopting new values and lifestyles. One of the most defining characteristics of the GenZ is their relationship with technology.

They are the first generation that is truly 'digital native' and has a unique connection with technology. Having grown up in the era of smartphones, social media and the internet, this constant digital connectivity has reshaped how they experience their feelings. They effortlessly navigate various devices and platforms to communicate, learn, and engage with the world. They are using digital applications and different apps for mental health. This unique relationship with technology and global connectivity has a significant impact on their emotional well-being.

This rapid shift in technology and connectivity changed the cultural willingness to acknowledge feelings. Baby boomers and generation X often suppressed their emotions, as emotional restraint was socially rewarded and open emotional disclosure was frequently discouraged. The Millennials were the first generation to vocalize the emotional stress and break the stigma around seeking therapy.

They processed their emotions through self-reflection and they became better at emotional regulation. They focused on emotional resilience and prioritizing stability. Generation Z, in many ways, represents a further shift. They are more straightforward, transparent and open to emotional expression and vulnerabilities. Rather than hiding feelings under the rug, they are more likely to openly talk about them.

They are also generally more willing to seek support when needed. Many are able to articulate complex emotions such as grief and guilt and work on them by seeking therapy, engaging in mindfulness activities, and being in peer support groups.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Gen Z has contributed significantly to dismantle the shame around mental health and therapy. They are more likely to normalize the conversation about emotions and mental health. And are also more aware of what they are feeling. They avoid unhealthy relationships and set boundaries rather than suffering through the lack of them. For previous generations, setting boundaries felt awkward, confrontational and sometimes selfish. However, for Gen Z it is a choice marked by self-protection and done for the preservation of one's self-respect.

They are not afraid to end relationships that feel draining and cost them their self-worth. For Gen Z, boundaries are not just rules, but necessary principles for their emotional well-being. They find unique emotional expressions through abbreviations and combinations of words to simplify complex emotions. Another revolutionary shift is that young men, in increasing numbers, are expressing their emotions and seeking therapy. Earlier, this was often considered as a sign of weakness, and maladaptive coping methods were commonly adopted. Now, this scenario is gradually changing in a more promising direction.

However, despite all these characteristics, Gen Z is facing a particular set of challenges. They are wrestling with the increasing competition, pressure for social media validation, information overload, uncertainty and rapid societal changes. All these factors are leading to emotional volatility.

At the same time, intensified interactions with the digital world is changing their outlook and behaviour, thereby affecting their lifestyle choices as well. They are spending most of the time indoors, as basic necessities are available at a single click. This has shaped their expectations in different areas of life. Gen z increasingly seeks instant gratification, often struggling with patience and delayed outcomes.

Picture Courtesy: Pinterest



As a result, many individuals become more sensitive to rejection and discomfort because they expect immediate responses, success, and emotional satisfaction.

Additionally, the number of choices is increasing, thereby requiring more effort even for simple tasks. Consequently, GenZ is becoming emotionally overwhelmed by these choices, while also fearing that they might make the wrong decisions.

Generation Z has so many virtual connections, yet at times appears to experience a weakening of connection with themselves and those physically around them, contributing to feelings of loneliness. In order to find a sense of belongingness they constantly chase external validation, to the extent that sometimes they forget about self-validation and become overly dependent on likes and criticisms. Everyone wants to show what they are doing and where they are going, but no one has the time to really reflect on why they are doing it.

This digital culture has also introduced new terms to articulate emotions, such as 'traumatise', 'gaslighting', 'burnout', 'trigger', 'toxic relationship' etc. and these are becoming increasingly normalized. However, these terms often oversimplify the clinical jargon and reshape how interpretation of emotional experiences take place.

Thus, we have talked explored the socio-cultural and technological aspects that reshape the emotional landscape of Gen Z. This is a generation marked by rapid changes, adaptations and resilience. This generation copes with humour, heals with intention and communicates with clarity. Amid all their complexities and contradictions, Gen Z continues to find its own sense of meaning.



Scan, plug in, and let the focus flow



- 1hr study playlist by Altheaa



IS CAPITALISM WORKING FOR GEN Z?

By Huda Momin, MA I, Dept. of Psychology

"It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest."

Adam Smith argued that rational self-interest, when left to its own devices, would feed society. Two centuries later, a generation raised under the system questions whether society is truly being fed.

Capitalism is an economic system in which profit is the primary motive, competition is the driving force, ownership is private, government intervention is minimal, and self-interest dominates. This is what Adam Smith described as the "invisible hand," where the personal interests of business owners benefit society as a whole. This essentially describes a capitalist economy, the most dominant economic system in the world, with its own advocates and passionate critics.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Before diving into its praises and criticisms, let us understand how capitalism works with a simple example. A small coffee shop opens, where the owner has purchased their own coffee machine, leased a space, and hired two baristas. One cup of coffee costs around 30 and is sold for 100. The profit is what remains after subtracting rent, wages, and taxes.

If the shop fails to attract customers, baristas can walk away, and the owner suffers the financial loss. If it succeeds, the profit is reinvested, and more branches are opened at different locations. The owner's net worth increases several times over with each investment, while the first two baristas are still earning roughly the same wage. Regardless of whether the owner chooses to still work at the coffee shop or not, they continue to profit, not because they worked harder, but because they own the brand and the system itself. This is the architecture of capitalism; it rewards ownership and compensates labour, neither more nor less.

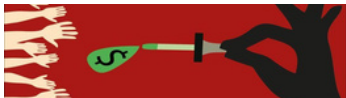
Private ownership looked different in Medieval Europe, where land was held within a hierarchical feudal system, with the Monarch at the top, followed by lords, knights and peasants at the bottom. Peasants possessed customary rights to common lands shared across communities and farmed on them in exchange for protection and rent paid to landowners.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

The balance between the peasants and the landowners shifted when the Black Death plague wiped out roughly a third of Europe's population in 1346 and 1353, leading to labour shortages, more land to farm, and fewer farmers left alive. With this new leverage, peasants began demanding wages and better working conditions. Landowners responded by enclosing common lands through the passing of the Enclosure Acts, converting them into private property and displacing peasants who had farmed the communal lands for generations.

In a sense, the peasants were liberated from the feudal system, becoming free to enter any market and sell their labour power instead of being tied to a master in feudal bondage. On the other side of the coin, these same peasants were also freed from owning any means of production to make a living. They owned no land, no raw materials, nothing but their labour to sell. Karl Marx called this "the double freedom".



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Peasants could choose which factory to work for, but critics of capitalism argued that this was an illusion of choice, akin to being held at gunpoint by several assailants, where the only question was to whom one would surrender.

Peasants had to work in the rising factories under the Industrial Revolution, as factories offered commodities at lower prices, leaving them with no choice but to work in the factories. Though peasants could choose any firm to work for, advocates of capitalism countered this argument by claiming that 'slavery and serfdom' was brought to an end, and wage labour was still an improvement as compared to the previous working conditions.

Regardless of the moral weight of its historical origins, capitalism's statistical records over the centuries are undeniable. Since 1820, Global real GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita has risen about thirteenfold to thirty-fivefold, specifically in the U.S and other capitalist economies. During the same period, Max Roser (2024) reported that the percentage of the global population living in extreme poverty fell from 79 percent to 9 percent.

Competition, decentralised decision-making, and profit motive have collectively proven to be the engines of innovation and efficiency. In short, capitalism has proven to be the most adaptable system in history, despite increasing concerns regarding climate change. And yet critics argue that the system does work; the question is whether it works well enough for enough people. Or whether it serves only a handful of people? This question sits at the core of Generation Z's dissatisfaction.

A 2021 Gallup Poll reported that 41% of the young Americans aged 18 to 34 viewed capitalism positively. The numbers have been interpreted in two broadly opposing ways: either Gen Z's disillusionment reflects genuine flaws within Capitalism or, as some economists suggest, the generation is simply confused about the ideology of capitalism.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Robert Whaples, an economist, reports a strange contradiction in Gen Z's position. Generational survey data reveal that the same cohort expressing anti-capitalist attitudes also believes, in large numbers, that competition is necessary and beneficial in an economy, despite competition being a capitalist feature. This suggests that Gen Z is not wholly socialist by any meaningful definition, but rather expresses the need for a more regulated form of capitalism, one equipped with a stronger safety net.

The concerns raised by Gen Z are not merely rhetorical. Rent prices in the U.S have increased by nearly 29% in the years between 2020 and 2024. The median home price reached \$412,500 in 2024, which is a 60% increase from 2019, providing tangible evidence of Gen Z's concerns about inadequate housing.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

However, advocates of capitalism contest the diagnosis that capitalism itself is the cause. Instead, they argue that policy failures and restrictive zoning laws contribute more significantly to the inadequate housing crisis than the system itself. Housing security is, however, far from Gen Z's only grievance; they are equally vocal about inaccessible healthcare services and the precariousness of the labour market.

Research by Elson and King (2022, 2023) found that approximately 3 quarters of Gen Z and Millennials identify healthcare costs as a major concern. The college diploma, with its promises for upward mobility, is losing its guaranteed returns. Data show that men with a college degree now face roughly the same unemployment rate as men who never attended college.

Gen Z in India appears comparatively optimistic about the economy when compared to its global counterparts. Deloitte reports that 58% of Indian Gen Z respondents expect the country's economic situation to improve within the next 12 months. Deloitte's 2025 Gen Z and Millennial Survey further reports that 48% of Gen Z individuals in India describe themselves as financially secure, a spike from 30% in 2024.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

According to the International Labour Organisation, more than 80% of the unemployed individuals in India fall between the ages of 15 and 29. Indian Gen Z may not be explicitly anti-capitalist, yet many remain distressed by the alarming unemployment rates and rising costs, which again point toward the structural mechanisms of a capitalist economy that Western Generations critique more explicitly.

Upon Gen Z's scrutiny, one of the most frequently cited statistics in capitalism's defence is the claim that global extreme poverty has substantially declined under capitalism. The World Bank's figure of 9% is measured against a threshold of \$2.15 per day, which captures the absolute floor of survival. Critics, including economists and members of the UN, argue that this figure falls below what constitutes genuine poverty. When measured against a better, meaningful standard, a threshold of \$6.85 per day, the picture shifts considerably: 44% of the global population remains poor.

The wealth gap that Gen Z speaks of is not merely an echo chamber but a reality well-documented by statistics. In 2025, the richest 1% of the population captured 20.3% of global income, a 3.4 percentage point increase since 1980. Billionaire wealth reached 18.3 trillion in 2025, marking the highest record in history. (Oxfam, 2025). Since 2020, billionaire wealth has expanded by 81%, whereas the poorest half of the global population captured 1% of the total increase in global wealth.

What makes Generation Z's relationship with capitalism distinct from previous generations is not merely the economic conditions, but the degree to which the system has infiltrated nearly every aspect of their lives.

"Surveillance Capitalism," coined by Shoshana Zuboff, describes the commodification of personal data by private corporations for the accumulation of profit. It is an economic structure in which digital platforms mediate personal lives. Human attention and behaviour are treated as raw materials. They are tracked, processed, used to predict and influence future behaviour, and sold to advertising agencies. This arrangement comes at the cost of shortened attention spans, circadian rhythm disruptions, and anxiety linked to compulsive platform use.



14cm x 12 cm Poster

₹ 12,999/-

4.9 ★ (319)

On the other hand, online platforms have also been constructive in connecting people across the globe, granting unprecedented access to information, and allowing small-scale businesses to bloom and reach more audiences. Both truths coexist.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

However, the picture gets complicated as professional and social life seamlessly transitions into the digital world, where withdrawing from social platforms carries real costs to career prospects, job opportunities, relationships and social life. A young person attempting to build a career has to navigate the online space for the hiring process, professional networking and a public identity online

The peasants once faced a forced choice regarding which factory to work for, and Gen Z is facing a choice between which platform's feed to inhabit. In both cases, a third party profits from the engagement and compulsion is framed as choice. The Enclosure Acts in Europe seized the common lands to convert them into private property, whereas surveillance capitalism is now converting private experiences, i.e. behaviour, attention, desire, and emotion, into a commodity to profit from.

Between the macro statistics that show unprecedented global success and the lived experiences of a generation struggling to pay rent, afford medical services and a kind of stability which was ordinary for the previous generations, the relationship between Capitalism and Gen Z sheds light on the widening gap: the gap between what capitalism has achieved in aggregate and what it has been delivering to the generation that has grown up within it.

Capitalism as an economic system, will continue to dominate the economy and survive its critics. The more pressing question falls on those at the top of the ladder: whether they are paying close attention to the questions being raised.

There exists an asymmetry between those who monopolise the means of production, whether tangible infrastructure or social platforms, and those compelled to sell their labour.

This imbalance demonstrates that the system does not democratize wealth, but rather reinforces its core economic logic: **capitalism cannot exist in a classless society.**



Let's do a tiny rebellion against capitalism and create a recipe instead of collecting receipts?

Macros- healthy & nutritious (approx per serving) •Calories: 220 kcal •Protein: 10g •Carbs: 28g •Fats: 8g



Step 1: Soak 8-10 dried red chillies in hot water for 15-20 minutes (or boil them).

Step 2: Dry roast 1 cup makhana until crispy. Let it cool.

Step 3: Blend soaked red chillies with 5-6 garlic cloves and a little water to make a smooth paste.

Step 4: Heat a pan, lightly brush with oil, add the chilli garlic paste, salt, kashmiri red chilli powder for color (optional), and a pinch of sugar. Cook until thick. Let it cool.

Step 5: In a bowl, add roasted makhana, 1 cup green moong sprouts, 1 chopped onion, and roasted peanuts.

Step 6: Add 2 tbsp prepared chilli garlic paste, chopped coriander, salt, and chaat masala.



Step 7: Mix well and serve fresh.

BURNOUT VS PRODUCTIVITY: GEN Z EDITION

By **Suhani Sameet Aras**, Guest Writer

8th Std, Rustomjee Cambridge International School, Dahisar



For Gen Z, productivity is no longer just a habit; it has slowly become a lifestyle. Young people are constantly encouraged to achieve more, improve themselves, and stay ahead in academics, careers, and personal growth. From maintaining good grades to learning new skills and managing social lives, many individuals feel the need to always remain productive. Social media has further increased this pressure by constantly displaying achievements, routines, and success stories.

One must
imagine
Sisyphus
productive



While this culture can motivate individuals to become disciplined and ambitious, it can also create stress, burnout, and unrealistic expectations. Therefore, the pressure to be productive has become both a motivating force and a growing challenge for Gen Z. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z has grown up in an environment heavily influenced by rapidly changing trends, evolving lifestyles, and unrealistic portrayals on social media.

This constant exposure has created uncertainty and increased pressure among young individuals to constantly keep up and remain productive. For Gen Z, success is often seen as a continuous race with no clear finish line.

Perhaps, it is safe to assume that expressing ourselves behind a screen is comparatively easier than in real-life expression. The digital world offers distinct forms of self-expression, from emojis and GIFS to stickers, which efficiently convey all that is needed to be said, and even things that are left unsaid. However, over-reliance on such digital features, rather than direct verbal communication, may strain interpersonal relations.

Many young people no longer fear failure alone; they fear being left behind. A better term to represent this change would be FOMO, also known as the Fear of Missing Out. Many individuals, especially students, experience that fear where they feel that they need to achieve multiple things to be validated and don't want to be left behind. The need to do everything all at once has increased drastically, therefore increasing the pressure among youngsters.

This change can either act as encouragement or become a source of pressure depending on the situation, though it is more commonly experienced as the latter. In a generation that constantly fears falling behind, slowing down often feels more uncomfortable than exhaustion itself.

Social media plays one of the biggest roles in increasing productivity pressure among Gen Z. Platforms such as Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok constantly expose young people to achievements, success stories, and highly

As a result, many individuals begin comparing their progress to others online. The endless display of achievements online often creates the illusion that success must be constant and immediate. Over time, this comparison can turn motivation into pressure, making productivity feel less like self-improvement and more like a constant competition. Even struggle itself has become aestheticized online, where burnout is often romanticized as dedication and overworking is mistaken for success. Rest is now considered laziness. Being busy has become a measure of self-worth. Slowing down often feels like falling behind.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Perhaps, it is safe to assume that expressing ourselves behind a screen is comparatively easier than in real-life expression. The digital world offers distinct forms of self-expression, from emojis and GIFS to stickers, which efficiently convey all that is needed to be said, and even things that are left unsaid. However, over-reliance on such digital features, rather than direct verbal communication, may strain interpersonal relations.

However, the productivity culture in Gen Z isn't entirely harmful either. In many ways, it has encouraged Gen Z to become disciplined, ambitious and independent. Young individuals today are learning new skills, exploring various creative opportunities, and becoming career-conscious at an earlier age. Many students are balancing their academics along with their extra-curricular activities, hobbies and personal interests, proving that productivity can effectively lead to growth and self-development among young peers.

This generation has transformed ambition into innovation by learning and adapting at an early age. Young people today have access to opportunities for learning and growth at their fingertips.

Nowadays, this desire to improve themselves has fuelled numerous individuals to work harder and discover their potential. Furthermore, many individuals have been motivated by this productivity culture to innovate, create and learn life-skills at an early age. This has encouraged many young people to stay goal-oriented and disciplined therefore increasing the number of successful results. Many teens and adults alike have begun learning valuable skills like coding, editing and designing through increased online opportunities.

Nevertheless, the constant pressure to always remain productive can become overwhelming when rest is viewed as laziness rather than necessity. Social media often highlights achievements more than struggles. "Perfect routines" can create unrealistic standards and success stories spread faster than ordinary experiences.

While ambition and hard work remain important values, maintaining balance is equally necessary. Productivity should inspire growth and self-improvement rather than exhaustion and constant pressure. Although Gen Z has benefited greatly from motivation and innovation, it is equally important to recognize the value of rest and personal wellbeing.

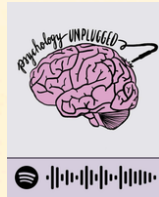
In the end, true productivity should not be measured by how busy an individual appears, but by how healthy, balanced, and fulfilled they feel while achieving their goals, and Gen Z has shown that productivity is not limited to academics alone, but also includes creativity, skill-building, and personal growth.

UNPAID YAPPING BY PROFESSIONALS

(PODCASTS)



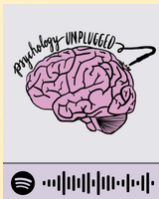
IS IT LAZINESS, Or a sign that you need to slow down?



The Negative Voices In Our Head by Psychology Unplugged



The Weight You Can't See: Shame, Identity and the Hidden Architecture of Mental Illness



Social Media is Rewiring The Brain (And No One is Stopping It)



How Mindsets Shape Reality w/ Dr. Alia Crum

THE RELATIONSHIP CONUNDRUM OF GEN Z

By Khushi Garg, MA I, Dept. of Psychology

Humans evolved to love and be in relationships as a pure survival instinct. There was a need to populate and seek security. Mates were chosen based on qualities that were the markers of health and ability to ensure the successful survival of offspring. However, across generations, the needs for mates have changed, fueled by human inventions and revolutions.

A partnership has always been of the most desirable kind when both the male and the female contribute equally to the relationship in their own domains of expertise.



Across historical changes, relationship roles have also evolved. What was once born out of the sheer necessity of care for the child and the mother, gradually became constrained within rigid social structures often tying them up in this ruthless system of patriarchy that extended across generations, and completely changed how women viewed relationships. Arranged marriages were more common than love marriages.

Caste systems were put in place to ensure that people of the same caste form relationships with each other. However, these structures continued to shift over time, from the global wars to the economic reforms. The generations before Generation Z have mostly viewed relationships as a necessity, but that does not discount the great sacrifices that people have made to be with the ones that they love.

However, the relationship conundrum of Gen Z stems from this exact pretext of having witnessed the relationships borne of two previous generations, which differed drastically in socio-economic and political circumstances. Not all relationships have been the kind you hear about in fairytales. The divorce rates have been alarming. All of these contributed not just to the mental health of Gen Z, but also to the way they view relationships.

Relationships are not solely formed on the basis of need amongst Gen Z. They are formed as a result of mutual care and love. They no longer consider it derogatory to have more than one partner at different points in time in order to ensure finding the one who is the best fit for them. However, this freedom for search and choice has led them to believe that there are constantly better people out there that are yet to be met. This, combined with the advancement of technology, has created a global problem that contributes to the approach that people take to the approach people take in seeking relationships.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

The joint family structure has disintegrated to form nuclear families, and women are working in advanced roles for an equal amount of time as men. Industrialisation is at its peak, and technology-driven changes expect humans to work like robots, with efficiency without any care for their well-being. Gen Z often migrates to different cities to earn degrees. Their friends move to other cities as well. It impacts their mental health greatly, especially when clubbed with the demands of an independent life and pressure from college or work.

Everything makes them believe that a relationship is merely an addition to their existing life, which has led to the deprioritization of love. Love then becomes an unreachable goal that makes its way to their dream world instead of reality.



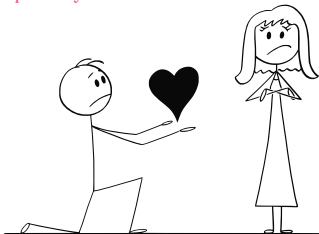
Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Relationships among the Gen Z are truly perplexing because of the different behaviours exhibited by people who have had attachment issues with their primary caregivers, the ones who barely have time to afford, and the experienced people who are wanted by everyone. Since relationships have evolved from being simply need-based, they now contribute to the individual's self-worth, as it is implicitly agreed upon that you can "pull" a person depending on your perceived worth.

People who witnessed the peak of divorce rates in the 90s are afraid to commit to people that they are getting to know, and many stages of relationships have evolved to explain these dynamics linguistically. People who talk to each other exclusively, or while simultaneously talking to others, are said to be in a 'talking stage' where they are getting to know one another.

If the vibes match, then the relationship may progress to the "situationship", which is a stage before commitment and may or may not involve physical intimacy. This is the stage where people test the waters to see if the relationship can be in the picture. Exclusivity in a relationship often comes with making the relationship known to others, which may happen through "soft-launching," wherein individuals reveal to others that they are in a relationship but hide the identity of the person, or 'hard-launching,' where they disclose the identity of the person.

The long-term commitment among the Gen Z is not necessarily dependent upon marriage, as this generation delays marriage until other aspects of their life are settled. The different lifestyles and mental states may also cause a huge lack of communication among Gen Z, wherein relationships are based on one person's convenience or caused by inconsistent display of love by one partner after the initial stages, which has its own terms like "breadcrumbing" and "love-bombing," respectively.

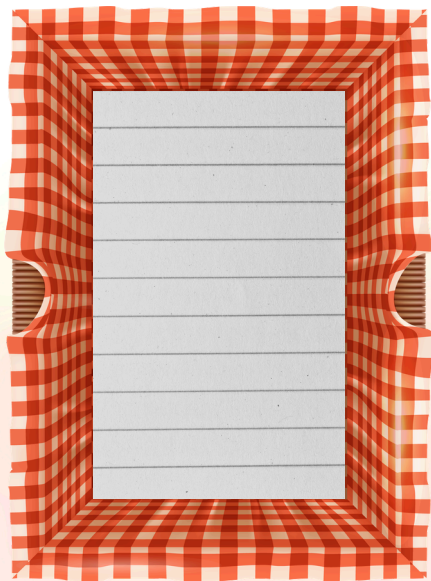


Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

The dating market is plagued by apps that increase insecurity by selecting partners based on physical appearance and with the ultimate goal of physical intimacy. This generation is the one with the most choices in every sphere of life, including relationships, which can make it difficult to decide which partner is the best, especially when relationship dynamics are constantly evolving. The recurring cycle of trust and mistrust reflects the plight of the relationship conundrum for Gen Z.

Overall, the relationships formed by Gen Z are value-based decisions, and making the right choice is of utmost importance. Gen Z believes in looking for love, autonomy, partnership, equality, and compatibility when searching for relationships. The pressures of the productivity era and the advancement of technology have become hurdles in the path leading to "true love." However, Generation Z is making significant efforts to navigate the relationship conundrum of the modern world.

CREATE YOUR OWN
Comfort Kit



Reflect and make a note of all the things that bring comfort to you

Be it people, places, ideas, your strengths, plans, music, food, fragrances, books, movies, activities, the list goes on...

UNDERSTANDING PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AS THE BYPRODUCT OF GEN Z'S INTERNET CONSUMPTION

By Mitali Agle, MA I, Dept. of Psychology

As a Gen Z myself (*not a representative, just a fellow cohort*), I look back at my initial experiences of using digital media platforms, as a new consumer of the online content, I'm reminded of the first time I got my own phone when I was in ninth standard. I recall it was 2018.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Since then, I've had my own space on the digital *'balcony'*, overlooking the rest of the world from my subjective perspective, powered by the internet and a social media platform. Since then, the digital space has very much been a part of my life. These apps and sites, which primarily seek, at least in theory, to bring together the world, to allow us better communication with each other, expression of our views and beliefs and to *'close the gaps'* that exist, so to speak, between people.

It does so through jpegs and gigabytes, through artistic content and livestreams. And it also has a special carrier, in-built, which we call the *'algorithm'*, a blueprint of our patterns of consumption, that decides what we see on our feeds, based on what we interacted with prior or *voila*, even liked.

For the most part then, the spaces we as consumers occupy on these platforms (*our very own, private and respective balconies*) we have not only been 'connected' to the people we know but to the people *'we think we know'*. But the story does not end here, not even barely.

Gen Zs are clustered as all those who were born roughly between the years, 1997 and 2012. Evidently, our timeline spans from early childhood web exposure to reshaping modern, global digital culture. We have been constantly exposed to and continue to consume the world wide web, as it is literally not possible to imagine Gen Zs without their *wacky* online trends spanning from clothing to coffee, books to films, music, comedy and even dissent. It won't be entirely wrong to call us the first generation of *true "digital natives"*.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Through constant and easy exposure to influencers, lifestyle gurus, content creators, video game streamers, celebrities, and online personalities, the Gen Z has grown readily accustomed to an environment where intimacy, relatability and even perception exists through all but a simulation window of our personal and proximal screens, in which reside these online figures whose content we consume.

The more time we spend interacting with someone's content, the more familiar they begin to feel, holding a silent grip on our lives more than we take into conscious account. Their GRWM (*Get Ready With Me! Where an influencer shows you how they get ready for the day*) routines, opinions, relationships, vulnerabilities, and personalities become intricately woven into our daily lives through our algorithm, even though our presence, however, is non-existent in their lives.

Over time, this prolonged exposure creates an illusion of emotional proximity, a sense that we *know* these individuals personally simply because we see so much of them all the time online and because we literally 'like' them. What emerges from this dynamic is what psychologists refer to as a parasocial relationship: a one-sided emotional attachment between an audience and a media figure.

There are some creators whose content is not just modeled around entertainment but also shape one's perceptions, either consciously or unconsciously. People who can even tell you what to feel or think about major global events including politics, pop culture, climate change, capitalism, and moral crises on what to eat, what to wear and where to go for your next vacation. What to be amplified, listened to; and what else to be "cancelled".

Other times, there are A-list celebrities such as famous singers, actors, sportspeople, world leaders, for whom we feel an extreme sense of affiliation and adoration. Some choose to connect to the existence of one's favorite media personality so much so that their wins feel personal and how these privileged, famous icons coming from their respective fields must be defended at all costs from rival fanclubs or 'fandoms' whichever way possible, either through threats or acts of actual violence.

The consequences are even more adverse when these figures who are held in such high regard, worshipped even, do something that is not liked by their fans. The most notable example that comes to mind is from a few years ago, when a widely revered and an extremely famous cricketer's bad performance was met with a flood of derogatory comments against not just him but his toddler as well.



A 2025 research paper from the California State University defines these parasocial relationships as 'an absence of mutual interaction and immediate interrelationship with the media personality'. However, it is well noted that all media personalities, at least to some extent, adapt a well curated persona to garner and maintain their fan following, or in the case of an influencer or content creator, an actual 'follower'.

Another research from the year 2022 found that 'people's ties to media characters might fulfil currently unsatisfied needs for social companionship, significantly improving moods'. Building onto that, a research article dated back to 2008 in the Journal of the International Association for Relationship Research says that 'people can use parasocial relationships to experience movement toward the ideal self, a benefit they may miss in real relationships'.

Parasocial relationships, hence, offer the Gen Z digital media consumer a sense of belonging, not only when it comes to their favourite media figure but also within their fandoms or fan communities, which is unbound to any geographical limit. The cornerstone of all parasocial relationships are clearly unhealthy attachments that breed on the grounds of young minds fueled by subjective personal insecurities, unsaid innate needs and unstable attachment styles. Although providing casual, momentary solace, they create unrealistic social expectations, are dysfunctional to their very core and create a distorted sense of reality.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

But why? Why specifically has Gen Z's mode of internet consumption uniquely intensified parasocial relationships in the digital age?

The ease of constant access and visibility of these digital media pieces can be held accountable for that. Gen Z's pattern of digital media and internet accessibility is a highly personalized digital experience that is starkly different to what their predecessors had: a passive, prerogative like, broadcast-style media, blurring the line between audience interaction and genuine emotional reciprocity (*that in truth, is non-existent in parasocial relationships*), causing the consumer's brain into mistakenly viewing content creators as close friends or sometimes, even romantic partner figures rather than distant public figures.

There's also the illusion of a two way interaction where the audience feels included via comments, likes, direct messages, a kind of a pseudo-engagement. Truthfully, it is just a one sided relationship. Liking a post, made to feel included by a creator by having a question answered on a livestream, engagement posts like polls and giveaways, fansigns et cetera, which give audiences a powerful rush of dopamine. All of this raises a pertinent question surrounding the understanding of how Gen Z's way of processing relationships has changed with the rise of digital media.

It is important in analysing whether our scrolling habits truly align with our innermost desires and does it really acknowledge the belonging and recognizability that we seek.



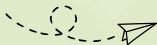
Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

In the end, parasocial relationships are not merely an accidental consequence of our generation's internet consumption patterns but rather a systemic outcome of the digital world we inhabit, considering the way our media is designed and processed. To understand this phenomenon, it is imperative not just to explore our dynamic internet culture but to know how it shapes modern, human relationships and our psyche.

THIS

OR

THAT



DURING BREAKS WOULD YOU PREFER - TEA OR COFFEE

STUDYING WHEN
SEMESTER STARTS

OR

STUDYING A NIGHT
BEFORE EXAM



SAVING MONEY

OR

USING IT FOR FOOD &
TRAVEL



HANDWRITTEN NOTES

OR

MAKING NOTES ON TAB

FOR PPT - CANVA OR GOOGLE SLIDES



SPOTIFY

OR

APPLE MUSIC



STUDYING AFTER LEC - IN CLG OR AT HOME



SUBMITTING
ASSIGNMENT AT 11:59

OR

FINISHED EARLY



FIRST BENCHER

OR

LAST BENCHER



PRINTED NOTES

OR

PDF NOTES



EARLY MORNING LECTURES - DRESSING UP OR THROWING A
HOODIE



PICKING UP FROM WHERE WE LEFT OFF..

By Anushka Dasgupta, MA I, Dept. of Psychology

Two old friends, Sweta and Siya, have had a strong bond since class 9. Now 22, they are finally meeting at a café after months apart. You are probably familiar with the emotion that arises when Siya asks, "Hey, your sister's college entrance, did it all work out?", while sipping her American Iced Latte.

A conversation from months ago when they last met, picked up as if it never had ended. An hour filled with old school memories, how the PT periods were taken by their English teachers, discussions about school crushes, farewell parties, and the kind of laughter that only makes sense between people who've known each other for years.



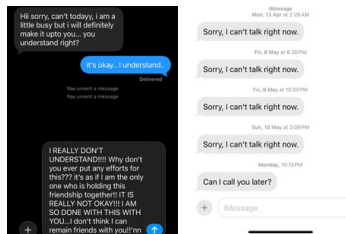
Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

There's a word for this feeling, like a nostalgic rush, the quiet warmth that spreads through the conversation, a realization that some bonds don't need the constant reassurance to survive.

I am referring to something very familiar to Gen Z in this generation: **low-maintenance friendships**. Low-maintenance friendships are those kinds of friendships where there is no stress over a delayed response. No guilt over weeks or months of not meeting. These are the friendships that don't demand constant communication; instead, they pick up naturally where they were left off. The reason being something more about how with ease the dynamics among low-maintenance friendships work. It runs on

It's Gen Z that is leaning into this, more than any other generation. The Covid-19 pandemic arrived at a particularly critical time for Gen Z, it hit them during their prime years of forming friendships, building social relationships and exploring the world. Their prime period of figuring out who they are in relation to other people around them were taken away from them. According to Cigna's Vitality in America report, Gen Z reports the highest loneliness levels of any generation, surpassing the elderly, who are typically more at risk.

Research published across multiple longitudinal studies tracked by the American Psychological Association and JAMA Pediatrics between 2021 and 2024 indicate that Gen Z is actively moving towards smaller, deeper social networks and stepping away from obligatory socialising. Not out of apathy, but out of burnout and exhaustion. Thus, 'low-maintenance friendship' isn't just a Gen Z terminology coined for aesthetic purposes, but rather a cognizance that not all relationships are worth the effort and energy they cost.



However, when I talk about the silence in today's friendships, there's something quietly beautiful about what survives this silence. As you grow older, you realise that the friendships that last for years are actually the ones that never keep a score. These are the friends who do not interpret a delayed reply or an unanswered call as a sign of indifference.

These are the friends that make friendships feel effortless. Not exhaustive. Not draining. The ones who truly understand each other, without needing to say it, that we're all navigating busy lives and fighting our own personal battles. No grudges. No quiet resentment of "why don't they make time for me?". There is a quiet assurance that whenever they arrive, it will seem as if nothing has changed and everything is still the same, exactly the way it was.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Indeed, these friendships don't require constant maintenance, but they also don't always alert us when they are fading away. The effortless friendships can quietly become "taken for granted". This happens gradually. The "goodbye, next time for sure" replaces the monthly meetup, the "short birthday text" replaces the heartfelt call, and eventually the "quick check-in" that never comes at all.

It is the dangerous comfort in assuming that "they will understand". Little do we know that understanding is not the same as feeling seen.

Silence can only sustain a relationship in the short term. In no time, it transforms into an excuse for neglect. People misuse the term by not showing up for others when they genuinely need them or completely sidelining them by prioritizing high-energy romantic relationships and other acquaintances at the same time.









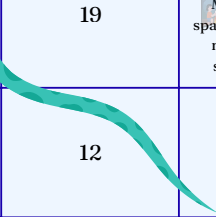


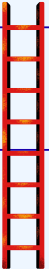


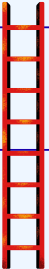
Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

Ultimately, true friendship is not measured in real-time frequency. It is built on trust, and the bond remains intact through genuine efforts by each other. When life gets overwhelming, it is still crucial to communicate. Sending a quick text over to that friend, letting them know that you're dealing with your life's challenges, can prevent misunderstandings and maintain trust. Life gets difficult, schedules tighten, and physical spaces tend to grow distant from each other.

What sticks out is when you eventually pick up the call, see them in a room full of people, re-engage with the conversation that was half-finished months ago, feel the familiar warmth, quiet moments of laughter, and the relatability. That's real magic. It serves as a quiet reminder that not all friendships demand physical presence; they simply need to be treasured, not ignored. True low maintenance isn't a free pass for apathy; it requires a significant underlying investment.

SNAKES AND LADDERS

Ready to begin? Start from the starting point and use your finger to move across the board. Follow the prompts along the way, or move one space ahead if no prompt is provided.

	<p>I promise, I will always prioritize my physical and mental health! Move one space and you Gotcha!</p>	<p>Your Bad luck!</p>	<p>When I am under stress, I binge-eat or oversleep. Move one space, otherwise move 2 spaces</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>I enjoy reading books Move 4 spaces</p>	<p>22</p> 	<p>I have at least one friend with whom I can share anything. Move 6 spaces</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>I love taking care of myself. Move 2 spaces</p>
<p>Oh no!!</p> 	<p>19</p>	<p>Binge-watch!! Move 2 spaces, if not move 3 spaces</p> 	<p>Set healthy boundaries and that worked out. Move 2 spaces</p> 	<p>Oops!!</p> 
<p>If you take time out for yourself, then move 6 spaces</p>	<p>12</p> 	<p>13</p>	<p>Doomscrolled for 2 hour last night! Move 2 spaces if not move 3 spaces</p> 	<p>15</p> 
<p>10</p>	<p>I always complete my assignment on time. Move 2 spaces</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>7</p> 	<p>6</p>
<p>Hurray! Let's start! Be aware of snakes!!</p> 	<p>Got 7 hrs sleep. Move two spaces.</p> 	<p>No absent mark in past one week. Move two spaces.</p>	<p>4</p> 	<p>No procrastination! Move 3 spaces,</p>

“YES, NO, MAYBE’S” TO GENERATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

By Tanisha Das, MA I, Dept. of Psychology

Once upon a time, there lived an English mathematician, astronomer, physicist, and key figure of the Scientific Revolution. Naturally, whoever has contributed so much to our understanding of the world will receive the importance of being quoted perpetually. So, here I am, quoting Sir Isaac Newton yet again!

He said, “If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of the giant”, where giants refer to not just famous people but other scientists, philosophers, teachers and even unnamed contributors whose work has shaped our knowledge. And “standing on the shoulders” means learning from them, expanding their discoveries and sometimes, even correcting them. Basically, indicating that if we are “higher up” in understanding something, it’s because we have started from where they left off.

Similarly, Ronald Reagan, the 40th President of the United States, perhaps paraphrased what Sir Isaac Newton had quoted before, when he said, “Each generation goes further than the generation preceding it because it stands on the shoulders of that generation. You will have opportunities beyond anything we’ve ever known.” The statement highlights how every generation creates a foundation for the next generation to build their knowledge upon and continue the work for the future generation.

That’s how it goes: we live today to be able to survive tomorrow; we invent or discover today so that nepotism works its charm tomorrow, and we learn today to be able to provide our shoulders to the next generation tomorrow. I mean, how else will we preserve our culture, our people, and most of all, humanity?

The original idea of “each generation building on the previous one” is meant to be inspirational, but in real life, it sometimes gets turned into expectations or impositions. When these foundational bases, created by earlier generations, transform into something that tries to impose the same work to be done by the current generation, healthy expectations begin to feel more like pressures or duties to be performed.



What exactly is a healthy expectation, you might wonder? Healthy expectations arise from a place of encouragement and support; it literally opens up the doors of choice for the future generation to choose from and excel in it. When these opportunities become conditional and are either imposed or forced upon them, is when people start feeling suffocated with resources instead of feeling grateful for them.

How does this create pressure when it literally provides you with all the resources you need? It is a genuine question that the current generation themselves ask, and feel bad about not performing better. The sheer oblivious nature of Generation Z makes the majority of them inherit a belief, often subtly brainwashed by older generations, that achievement is only compared across generations, success is defined only in terms of “more than before,” and failure is seen as “wasting” what earlier generations built upon.



When the mindset shifts from “opportunity” to “obligation,” that is when the problem arises. The question of whether the current generation should meet, defy, or find a middle ground, by accommodating the expectations while preserving their freedom of choice, is of utmost importance when it comes to acting on those expectations.

Research on intergenerational transmission suggests that expectations regarding achievement, success, and productivity are often passed down from older generations to younger ones through family systems, education, and broader social norms.

Studies by researchers such as Zhang et al. and Yamamoto and Holloway demonstrate that parental and societal expectations significantly influence how younger individuals define success, competence, and self-worth. While these expectations are often rooted in care and sacrifice, they can also create implicit pressure to constantly perform, excel, and justify the opportunities one has been given.

For Gen Z, these inherited expectations exist alongside a modern environment shaped by social media, economic uncertainty, hyperconnectivity, and hustle culture. Hustle culture promotes the idea that productivity must be constant and that personal value is tied to achievement, career success, and continuous self-improvement. Research on burnout and workplace psychology has shown that such pressure can lead to emotional exhaustion, anxiety, chronic stress, and reduced wellbeing.

Many Gen Z individuals experience this pressure not only from family expectations but also from online comparison culture, where success is continuously visible and publicly measured. As a result, many young people report feeling overwhelmed by the need to “keep up” academically, professionally, and socially.

However, Gen Z does not uniformly respond to these expectations. One section of the youth might attempt to fully meet these expectations and the other might resist these inherited norms by establishing stronger personal boundaries and rejecting unhealthy productivity culture.

This includes prioritizing mental health by saying “no”, refusing excessive work demands, valuing work-life balance, and disengaging from environments perceived as emotionally exploitative.

Behaviors often labeled in popular culture as “quiet quitting” can be understood psychologically as attempts to restore autonomy and protect emotional wellbeing. Rather than viewing constant overwork as admirable, many Gen Z individuals challenge the belief that suffering and exhaustion are necessary markers of success. In short, they choose to live for themselves, might not even stand on giants’ shoulders and pave their own path.

Yet another section, between these extremities, negotiates a middle ground. They don’t necessarily reject ambition and achievement defined by previous generations, but they do find a sustainable and balanced definition of success. For them, the definition is created by themselves, and inspiration is taken from the shoulders they are standing on. For them, success is usually corroborated by fulfillment, balance, and well-being.

The act of standing on the previous generations’ shoulders works only when these shoulders don’t stiffen the legs of the current generation from forming their own bases. Crippling the current generation with imposed expectations only brings dependency, regrets, guilt, and inadequacy within their mindsets. They start quantifying their worth according to the standards set by their earlier generations. It is unfair not to be able to achieve one’s fullest potential just because they had someone else pave the way for them, and now success only means walking on that path and achieving more than the bygone generation.



The other day, I came across an interview of Gary Vaynerchuk (Gary Vee), an entrepreneur, a digital media executive and venture capitalist, wherein he said, “The only stress you get in your 20s is ideology or delusion. Almost everybody on earth wants financial success in their 20s to prove it to others, not themselves. The 20 year olds that want to be successful fast are on these ‘foundational bricks’. They are doing it for everyone else.” I couldn’t help but wonder, are these ideologies created by us ourselves?

Have we only been imposing it on ourselves? Because delusions clearly are a play of our silly minds, but what about our beliefs and ideologies? But also, what about being a product of our environment and upbringing? And most importantly, even if we do everything by the book of expectations, is “success” guaranteed? Is the feeling of fulfillment guaranteed? How do we even distinguish if we are doing it for ourselves and not for others?

Having said that, I still believe we have the freedom to choose our own paths and decide what to do with the expectations either imposed on or inherited by us. It’s on us how we decide to acknowledge the “foundational bricks” created for us and how we choose to build the shoulders for the coming generation.

I don’t think this generation, Gen Z, wants to upset the previous generation by rejecting their ideas and refusing to meet their expectations. I feel what we really want is to write our own stories and at the same time have the opportunity to go back to the roots to find inspiration, whenever we want. And last but not least, I feel what we really want is to have the **freedom** and **choice** to say: “yes, no, maybe” to generational expectations.

THE GENZ

Word Search

Find the hidden words in the puzzle.

AURA

VIBES

ICK

NON CHALANT

TEA

NO CAP

RAGEBAIT

RIZZ

BRUH

SLAY

LOWKEY

HARD LAUNCH

V S S A Y A L S U T H S
A L A U H F I N E C L A
U Y E K W O L O N D U N
R A B L O S S U S R O T
A N O C A P A E R N E I
I A L R S L B I C I D A
R C A I D I A H N N V B
F H K R V R A G S E O E
L B A E V L U U E S Z G
A H B L A O M I N Z R A
E O U N T G L T I O T R
T L T H U R B R W E R G

THE BUBBLE-DWELLER FLOATS UPON A ROSE BUSH

By Vaidehi Patil, MA I, Dept. of Psychology

A bubble floats in the air; it sometimes floats up, it sometimes floats down. It is seen floating around in its own serene innocence in a delicate suspension. If you peer closely at the bubble, you see a tiny dweller in it. They seem to be aloof from the vast surroundings they are floating in. The bubble floats on and on and approaches a rose bush. The bush looks beautiful with all its strikingly red and pretty roses. The petals look soft and velvety. But what are those scary, pointy things? Are those thorns?

The bubble floats towards it and...POP! The tiny dweller falls into the abyss of roses and thorns, uncertain where they might land.

The phase of emerging adulthood is just like that. We are all but a colony of bubble-dwellers floating around in a huge and uncertain void. According to our pre-destined fate, when our time calls, our bubble approaches a certain rose bush. People call it the "real world". We have been hearing a lot about this rose bush in our bubble. Wonderful but also terrifying stories. The grown-ups call them "experiences".

Through constant and easy exposure to influencers, lifestyle gurus, content creators, video game streamers, celebrities, and online personalities, the Gen Z has grown readily accustomed to an environment where intimacy, reliability and even perception exists through all but a simulation window of our personal and proximal screens, in which reside these online figures whose content we consume.

The bubble-dwellers feed on these borrowed experiences, as well as on the fears they learn about the rose bush. The surface-level understanding derived is that they are to use what they can from these teachings in order to prepare their defenses to survive the rose bush. But have you ever wondered how these bubble-dwellers actually feel about all this? Do we really pay attention to that? Or do we just accept this situation as the norm and label it as a routine? "We too have faced it, and now so shall you. You have to be strong, or else you will perish before you even know it."

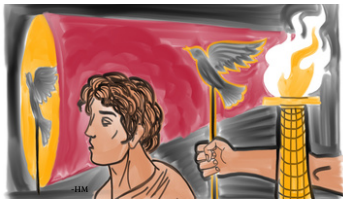


To the outside world, the bubble seems like a comfortable and carefree shield. A place where you are allowed to make mistakes and still get a cushion to land on safely. You have a soft backing everywhere, be it affection, covered expenses and readily available resources. Some call it a safety net laid by the invisible sacrifices of our elders, whose daily struggles are incomprehensible and even unknown to these new kids.

You can choose to say, "I don't want to do this today," and the bubble will protect you nevertheless. You get the option of having unlimited lives, just like in a video game, whereas the ones outside may just get a few, limited ones. What more does the bubble-dweller need?

No matter how peaceful and comfortable the life inside a bubble may seem, only the one living inside it knows so. The bubble, as light as it looks, isn't devoid of weight. The bubble-dweller faces a storm of emotions everyday. Completely new situations arise that have never been faced before. They might have heard of such situations through the stories they were told. They might have been given multiple warnings about them.

But if a dragon, a ferocious creature of its own will, appears before an unseasoned, inexperienced adventurer, they will be found in grave danger. In theory (or say, video games), defeating a high-level beast is easy. You don't get physically hurt. But when it actually happens in real life, the pain and hurt felt in that moment is quite unbearable. Some may get out of it without much damage, some may suffer a lot of damage. But they survive nonetheless. These victories are then adorned as "experience badges". Mind you, we haven't even left the bubble yet.



The bubble-dweller may whine, get overwhelmed, and frustrated with what they are going through. They perceive the task at a high difficulty level. Yet, they are reminded that this is just a mild taste of what lies beyond the bubble. The dwellers are now conflicted. Some may accept the advice, some may spiral into anxiety. Some start questioning their skills, "It took me this long to defeat the dragon, along with that much damage. The battle, which I thought was of the hardest level yet, turns out to be incomparable to what's out there.

Am I really doing it right? Am I even capable? It took me multiple trials. What will I do out there with limited chances?"

All this while, when the dwellers are still processing their last battle, they are again made to face another one. The frequency of such battles keeps on increasing as they near the much-anticipated rose bush. This transitional phase just hyper-accelerates things. Now the dwellers have to fight their battles alongside additional challenges. Demanding schedules, frequently popping up deadlines, weekends and holidays being sacrificed, the ever-growing academic work, managing the new but fluctuating social life, and a lot more. The overwhelm intensifies.

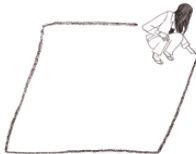


We are told to adapt to the pace, no matter how rigorous it is. Traditional wisdom echoes around, reminding us that if we can't handle the pressure now, how will we survive later? The bubble-dweller fights on.

This eventually comes to a point where all this just ends up taking a toll on the dweller's mind. When your mental capacity becomes oversaturated, yet you are still advised to push through, isn't it natural to experience major mental/creative blocks and turn to procrastination? Why wouldn't it be? If you keep on fighting and fighting, you reach a point where you start questioning if all this is worth it. You start questioning the traditional teachings. You question all those "experience badges" you have been receiving. You wonder about their relevance and usefulness in the real world.

You keep recalling the teachings you have been receiving and start noticing the paradoxes. You worked hard for something, but then you are told it won't be useful later. You are told to value social connections, but you can't trust anyone. You are told to be yourself, but also cater to others' needs so they don't hate you. When the map you have been given is full of contradictions, your brain simply gets full. Now you don't want to do anything. Why would you? It just feels like nothing you did ever mattered at all.

The truth is that our generation, especially the emerging adults, is navigating through this transitional phase with just borrowed experiences and learned fears. We are yet to land on the rose bush, the one we have been learning of or seeing mere vicarious glimpses of. We see a hyper-competitive world, an unpredictable economic climate and a society that prioritizes output over basic humanity. We start questioning the boundaries of what we thought of as the "real world". We also see a scary new sight of the ex-dwellers. How humanity and moral values just start meaning less in front of wealth and power.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

It is a fact that the bubble-dwellers have acknowledged the terrifying aspects of the real world. But it is also true that it is quite heavy to process and difficult to accept the potential changes we might have to adapt to survive the rose bush. We now need methods to cope. We stay in close-knit circles with the people who understand us. We lean into whimsical, self-aware humor because if we don't laugh, we WILL scream.

We find joy in temporary, materialistic things. We are aware of the reality; the long term milestones our parents and their parents had achieved at our age are ridiculously out of reach. We start valuing the small things in life. We turn out to value the present more rather than reach out to the far future.



Picture Courtesy: Pinterest

We know the bubble will eventually pop. It is funny how we also know that in the future we will be saying things like "It's laughable how we stressed out over the college stuff back then. Those overthinking spirals, those thoughts about dealing with things being larger than life, battling situations one after another with increasing difficulty. We did manage to survive through it. It all worked out in the end." As true as it might be, this perspective is still hard to accept when you are currently going through it.

The anxiety of what's coming next, the worry of making the right decisions, fighting the frustration and procrastination, dealing with the fluctuating social tensions and hierarchy. It becomes quite exhausting. What's more funny is that when we try to express this exhaustion, we are met with advice such as "Stay strong! The real world is worse by double-fold. You can at least make mistakes now. You have to bear with it."

We do understand that. Really, we do. But isn't this just suppressing our feelings and putting up a strong front? Is being vulnerable that much of a taboo in the real world? Is it really that bad out there? Who are we even supposed to address these questions to, if we know we would get the same answers? Is there really no other answer?

How can we be sure that the person we are now venting these questions out to isn't engulfed by the very system we dread?

When the bubble pops, everyone's landing would be different. Some might land in the thorns. They might work hard and climb up to a rose. Some might give up and stay among the thorns. Some might perish. Some might be lucky and land on a rose petal, some might be gently guided to a rose through inherited privilege. They will have to face the thorns anyway. If not the thorns, then they would have to face the previous inhabitants, other dwellers or "insects". The struggle continues. Some may decide to cohabit. Some might leave the rose bush itself to venture out into the vast, unknown world.

But until that "pop" happens, maybe can we stop treating emotional exhaustion as a taboo or vulnerable topic? The realistic aspect of the future does not have to be minimized or covered up at all. We, the bubble-dwellers, just want our efforts to be appreciated. Surely what we perceive as struggles might not mean much to you, as you, the ex-dwellers, have gone through it already.

But it does mean a lot to us. All we need is a little morale boost and a "You have worked hard. You did well. I'm proud of you" from the people whom we shall always look up to.



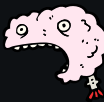
Picture Courtesy: Pinterest



The Last 2 Braincells




HA
HA
HA






**2 FACTS A DAY KEEPS THE BRAIN
ROT AWAY, BULLY YOUR ALGORITHM,
BECOME SMART & CULTURED**



Wait... Newspapers Are Big Because of Tax Avoidance? Newspapers weren't made huge for style, they were made huge to save money. Back in the 1700s, Britain taxed newspapers by the number of pages printed, so publishers simply made the pages enormous. Fewer pages meant lower taxes and easier printing. Over time, these giant "broadsheets" became symbols of serious journalism. Even today, their oversized look survives as a 300-year-old tax hack.

(COURTESY: IG - INSPIRE.A.JORUNEY)



You've heard of the placebo effect: believe something will help, and somehow, it does. But its darker twin, the nocebo effect, works the opposite way. Believe something will harm you, and your brain may start creating the symptoms itself. A harmless pill, a side-effect warning, or even a single fearful thought can trigger headaches, nausea, dizziness, and pain — all completely real, despite no actual danger. It's the brain's way of trying to protect you, only overshooting the mark. The nocebo effect is a strange reminder that belief doesn't just shape the mind; it can shape the body too.

(COURTESY: IG - INSPIRE.A.JORUNEY)

Phantom Vibration Syndrome- A lot of people can feel their phones vibrating when in reality, there is no message.

Notification Stress- Research found notifications increase distraction and stress, while turning them off can create fear of missing important information.

Voice Notes Create Stronger Emotional Connection - Research found voice-only communication improves emotional understanding and empathic accuracy better than text-based communication.



Changing Shopping Decisions by Using Background Music- Background music has the potential to shift the moods of consumers, increase their spending, and influence the type of product that they will purchase.

Nostalgia can Improve Mood - Research suggests nostalgia enhances psychological wellbeing, emotional comfort, and mental health.

Loneliness and Their Effect on Your Brain- Feeling lonely on a long-term basis may drastically impact your ability to process emotions, how stressed you are, and the health of your brain.

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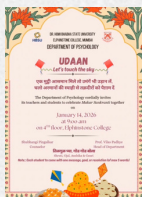
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LOADING... THE FINAL CHAPTER

for this academic year

Festivals, farewells, field trip, and a brainy new beginning is coming uppp!

The coming months are packed with bittersweet endings and unforgettable moments. Farewell season is almost here, bringing nostalgia, tears, and way too many group pictures.



The department is gearing up for festive celebrations filled with colours, sweets, chaos, and fun from Holi and Makar Sankranti to Valentine's Day festivities.

There's also a Masters trip in the works, promising equal parts learning, bonding, fun, and questionable photos :)



AND
AND
AND

In exciting news, the Cog Lab is finally coming alive, opening doors to hands-on exploration of the mind in action.

Ready to rizz up the last few months of the year?

