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A Generation of Sociopaths

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Glenn Beck gets it. He understands something I've been seeing and writing about as a columnist for the last seven years. He understands that the downfall of America will not come from the outside. It will come from the inside. It will happen because we failed to pass on to our children the values that made our nation great – and to remind them to pass those values on to their children.

A couple of Glenn Beck's observations - from a recent Fox News broadcast – are worth repeating before I supply a bit of supporting evidence:

I've said this before — and I know I'll get heat for this — but I'm convinced we are raising a generation of would-be killers: the "me generation." ... A generation that was brought up by parents who wouldn't spank them because it was too barbaric and were graded in purple pen because red is too frightening. A generation who got trophies no matter what place they finished.

We promised them a land of sunshine rainbows and lollipops. So it should come as no surprise that the "me generation" enters the workforce demanding high salaries, corner offices and promotions in the first few months — all while wanting to dress down and work less than 40 hours a week.

If you believe that Glenn Beck is exaggerating you are wrong. As a college professor for the last 17 years I have seen evidence of a slow but steady movement away from an acceptance of rules and, indeed, moral absolutes altogether. And it's not too tough to see how that leads to rampant self-absorption.

When we replace belief in objective truth with moral relativism we are telling people they are the one true source of morality. And that leads them to believe they are all, in a sense, little gods and goddesses who should not be told what to do. Pretty soon we are spending all of our time dealing with little sociopaths who believe they are the center of the universe.

Take a few minutes to read some emails I have written over the last couple of days. As you read them, please note two things: First, these incidents are real. Second, they involve college students who are all adults above the age of 18.

Dear Introduction to Criminal Justice Students:

Yesterday in class, I noticed a student staring at her laptop and laughing as I spoke generally about the use of deadly force to prevent homicide. I reminded everyone – quite nicely I thought - that this was inappropriate. But, then, when we began our discussion of the shooting death of a fifteen-year old by a Memphis police officer the same student began laughing again.

The student sitting behind the giggling student confirmed that she was, in fact, surfing the net on both occasions rather than taking notes. Because I cannot have you sitting in your own little world and laughing out loud as we discuss murder I must, regrettably,

impose an immediate ban on all laptops in class.

MSA

Dear Law of Evidence Students:

In response to the most recent cell phone interruption of class I am doubling the penalty for future interruptions. It will now be eight points deducted from your final average. Note that we began the semester with no penalty and have gone up to one, then two, then four, and now eight point deductions from your average. These changes have all been in response to successive interruptions.

*I have asked you not to bring cell phones into class so I cannot imagine why the interruptions keep happening. Also, please set your ringers to something other than rap music if you plan to a) intentionally defy the rule against bringing cell phones to class and then b) forget to turn the cell phone off. I do not want to hear lyrics about b****s and whores while you dig into your back pack to shut off your phone.*

MSA

Dear Introduction to Criminal Justice Students:

I have been approached by numerous students asking for special test administrations next week. As you know, the test is set for Monday during our regular meeting time in our regular meeting place. Apparently, this is inconvenient for many of you. So, I have decided to give separate administrations for all 71 students. In other words, you may select the time and the place that is convenient for you to take this second test of the semester. Just let me know what works best for you based upon your own individual circumstances.

MSA

p.s. If you were not Swift enough to get the point of this message then you have failed this course. Otherwise, I will see you Monday at the regular class time in our regular meeting place.

To All Students in All Sections:

I wanted to drop you all a note concerning notes. We have a class policy that penalizes tardiness with a four-point deduction from your final average. We started at zero and then went to one, then two, and now four points off per tardy. You will recall that this has been in response to repeated class interruptions. Despite this, someone recently barged into our last class twenty minutes late. To make matters worse, the offending student claimed a right to do so because he had a note. Actually, he did not have a note but claimed an ability to get a note. This is just a reminder that other people cannot

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negate my rules by writing notes.

MSA

In 1988, I began to pursue degrees that would allow me to teach at the college level. I never really considered teaching at the high school level because I did not want to spend most of my time dealing with disciplinary matters. I wanted to teach those who were motivated because they were not compelled by law to attend school.

But that was before the diversity movement took over higher education. It kicked into high gear in the 1990s. We began to teach students about multi-culturalism and the lack of universal truth. Then we began to teach them that we should not judge others because different values arise from different circumstances. And, of course, different behaviors arise from different circumstances. No one really chooses to think or act a certain way because it is best. The culture determines these things for us.

And now the people who taught these ideas are perplexed. When they said "question authority" they did not mean to question their authority. When they called into question the validity of rules and laws they did not mean to include their own. And when they suggested that people were not responsible for the own bad behavior they did not mean their students should behave badly towards them.

Liberal professors complain constantly about student conduct. And it seems funny that very few of them understand that they are simply experiencing the real-world consequences of their own liberal ideas. But Glenn Beck has pointed out something that really isn't very funny. And it has something to do with the current health care debate.

Those who are promising us "universal" health care recognize that there will not be enough to go around. Rationing will be necessary. It's built into current proposals. We cannot now ask teens and 20-somethings to make sacrifices after promising them life in a bubble. They would not make the sacrifices if we asked. They are special and they have the last-place trophies and grade-free report cards to prove it.

The data now show that young people support national health care far more than older Americans. So I guess the latter will be the ones who will have to sacrifice. And, sadly, they will be the ones who ultimately will be sacrificed. Among them will be those teachers who taught that ideas are equal instead of teaching that ideas have consequences.

Ideas do have consequences. Among them are the death of cultures and people, too.

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