

## **AN OBSOLETE GENERATION OUT OF IDEAS**

I was shocked the other day to hear an intelligent chap my age publicly state on TV that young people aren't interested in what us oldies have to say anymore. Our ideologies, he said, are obsolete.

What he meant was, us oldies have run out of ideas. We can't think beyond the way we've always done things.

Look at how we do politics, for instance. We make promises to win votes. We have no intention of keeping those promises when we make them, but we've always done politics that way. It's utterly ludicrous and an insult to intelligence, but we can't think of anything better.

How we do business is another example. Our purpose in doing business is to make a profit. If, in the process of making a profit we have to poison the air, pay below poverty level wages, use the slave labour of children, make products that quickly break down or soon become obsolete, cheat the customer with false advertising and totally ignore the environment and the well-being of our employees, then so what? That's how business is done in our world, we oldies say. What better way is there, we ask?

We can't think of any better way in how we do religion, either. Our purpose in doing religion is to get followers. We've always done religion for that reason. It's not for any noble reason like freeing people up to be all they can be or illuminating the wonder of God. It's purely about getting people to follow our brand of religion by the usual weariness of threats, peer pressure, bribing people with brownie points in the afterlife if they behave, and exploiting people's deeply engrained desire for superiority and self-preservation. Using fear, guilt and appealing to selfish human nature have always been our way of getting people to follow us, give their money to us and enable our religious leaders to live like kings. To many young people this kind of religion stinks, which it does, but don't expect anything better from us, it's all we know.

Don't expect anything better in how we do sports, either. Our purpose for doing sports is to win, and we don't care what it takes. If it takes slamming into a person to knock him out of the game, faking injuries to get a slight advantage, taking illegal performance-enhancing drugs, paying outrageous salaries, making heroes out of people with a killer instinct and coaching youngsters to copy these people as though they're normal, then we'll do it because winning at all costs is all we know. We don't believe for one second that sport can be played for the sheer fun of it.

How we do education isn't much fun, either, because we've always thought the purpose for education is to force children into a mould. We believe in institutionalized learning, no matter how boring it makes school to be, how insensitive it is to a child's style of learning, how uncomfortable it is sitting in desks all day or how many children lose their inborn love of learning after 2 years of grade school and can't wait for the holidays. We scratch our heads when schools become war zones. Is it any surprise, though, when brilliantly creative, alive-minded children are bored out of their skulls, and teachers are stuck with a curriculum that allows little freedom to question or explore?

We know there's something wrong but we can't seem to change it. We seem strangely paralyzed in our thinking.

But how did it happen, when we oldies clearly had the chance to create something better? We had everything going for us, peace, freedom, education, nutrition, money, the

ability to travel anywhere we liked to explore and learn from every wise man, philosophy and religion. You'd think we, of all people, would be the most scintillating, the most brilliant and the most innovative people who ever lived. But all we come up with are the same tired old solutions. How childish, boring and stale we are. No wonder young people think us oldies are running on empty.

So, what happened to us oldies, and why can't we change? Oh, I think we could change but the powers that be in religion, business, politics, sports and education like what our oldie system gives them. It lets greedy, ambitious, aggressive, narrow-minded, self-centred people get into positions of power and authority, and sometimes get rich and famous, too. It's a system that carries huge appeal to those who can exploit it for their own ends.

For our young people, therefore, to resist such a system and come up with a better one will be quite a challenge. I hope for their sake they can because they're right, our ideologies are obsolete.