

28. Generation Gap

During a quarrel with his parents, young Michael cried, "I want excitement, adventure, money, and beautiful women. I'll never find it here at home, so I'm leaving. Don't try and stop me!"

With that he headed toward the door. His father rose and followed close behind.

"Didn't you hear what I said? I don't want you to try and stop me."

"Who's trying to stop you?" replied his father. "If you wait a minute, I'll go with you."

The term "generation gap" was coined by sociologists and anthropologists in the 1960's and is often still used today. One concept of the generation gap is that parents and offspring have different values and beliefs. As a result, many parents fear that they will lose influence with their children when peer pressure becomes too highly valued.

Parents and their children find it hard to learn from each other, so they point their fingers at each other instead. Grown children often boast a better education and more secure finances than their parents, while the older generation may be richer in experience. How can we better get the two age groups to understand and appreciate the advantages of the other? We all have a responsibility to narrow the gap and balance each set of values, because social development needs them both.

Comprehension

1. What does "generation gap" mean?
2. When was the term created?
3. Why is it important to narrow the gap?

Your opinion

1. Why is it hard to understand the other generation?
2. For each generation, what is the first step in narrowing the gap?
3. In what areas of living is the generation gap widest?
4. Do you feel a gap between you and your kids?
5. What is the best way to eliminate the generation gap?



