

**Highlights of the Kieschnick Lecture  
 Dr Tim Elmore at the Lutheran Schools Association Conference  
 New York—November 6, 2015**

Dr. Elmore began his message by asking the audience to decode text message shorthand used by many of our students—a difficult and amusing task for many. His point—the generation gap is increasing as the use of technology increases.

He then related a personal story about an incident he had while traveling with a rental car. His car was hit from behind by someone in a pick-up truck. Wisely, or not, he followed the truck and was able with the help of the police, capture the driver. It turned out the driver was a child who had been drinking. The object lesson: Kids want to grow up too fast, i.e. drinking and driving

And

Kids want to grow up too slowly, i.e. not thinking about consequences

The Big Debate: Are kids growing up too fast or too slowly? According to psychologists the age of adolescence has been lengthening—up to the age of 26 or more.

We are raising a generation of firsts.

- Children don't need adults to get information.
- Children can broadcast their every thought and emotion.
- Children enjoy external stimuli at their fingertips 24/7.
- Children are in social contact at all times, yet are often in isolation.
- Children will learn more from a portable device than from a class.
- Adolescents have actually enabled children to be narcissistic.
- Children use a phone instead of a watch, camera, wall calendar, alarm clock, road map or board game.

I Chronicles 12:32: "Understand the times and know what to do."

Artificial Maturity:

- Children are over exposed to information far earlier than they are ready.
- Children are under exposed to real life experiences far later than they are ready.
- We, as adults, have been guilty of the soft bigotry of low expectations.

What has hindered maturity? Two types of wisdom:

- Ginosko—simply getting information
- Oida—fully perceiving and understanding information through experience

We as adults have a fear of risk—we prevent children from falling or getting hurt, we protect children from mistakes or consequences, we structure their childhood days so they can't experience risk or failure for themselves, i.e. over scheduling play, everyone gets a trophy

**Early Childhood:**

Too Little

Too Much

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Freedom and space | Structure   |
| Innocence         | Information |

|             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| Exploration | Responsibility |
|-------------|----------------|

**Adolescence:**

|                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Too Little     | Too Much          |
| Responsibility | Freedom and space |
| Structure      | Independence      |

**Generation iY:**

Their world is full of:

- Speed
- Convenience
- Entertainment
- Nurture
- Entitlement

Consequently, they tend to assume:

- slow is bad
- hard is bad
- boring is bad
- risk is bad
- labor is bad

Three kinds of students:

- Drivers— with these children adults need to be strong, clear and direct
- Diplomats—with these children adults need to collaborate
- Dreamers—with these children adults need to give them options

Dr. Elmore gave several examples of Habitudes:

- Playing chess rather than checkers—manage relationships and connect with individuals by understanding their unique personality and strengths
- Velvet covered brick—balance of law and Gospel; kids need adults who are responsive and demanding
- Compass or GPS—children need equal doses of autonomy and responsibility
- Rivers and floods—focused vision

Childhood Messages:

- You are loved
- You are unique
- You have gifts
- You are safe
- You are valuable

Adolescent Messages:

- Life is difficult
- You are not in control
- You are not that important
- You are going to die
- Life is not about you

Marks of Maturity:

- Able to keep long term commitments
- Unshaken by flattery or criticism
- Possesses a spirit of humility
- Decides bases on character, not feelings

- Expresses gratitude consistently
- Prioritizes others before themselves
- Can see different angles in a disagreement
- Seeks wisdom before acting

Adults need to set a balance between providing support and letting go.

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