



Go Ahead, I Dare you

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Everyone confesses that exertion which brings out all the powers of body and mind is the best thing for us; but most people do all they can to get rid of it, and as a general rule nobody does much more than circumstances drive them to do.

- Harriet Beecher Stowe, abolitionist and novelist (1811-1896)

Checking the dates of birth and death of Harriet Beecher Stowe we can see that what seems to be a condition of modern times has existed for at least well over a century.

In her day, wars were common, more common than today, such that most people experienced at least one war during their lifetimes--usually one per generation--and were either conscripted or volunteered to fight in one. It may have been unhealthy, as war zones then had environments similar to the most polluted cities today. It may have been risky, but young men went to fight for "freedom" or to prevent being attacked by "the enemy," so the risks were deemed worthwhile.

Though they didn't sleep well or eat properly, they got a steady and dependable pay envelope, which was more than could be said at home for many. For young men who didn't want to use their brain much, war offered excitement they couldn't get at home. The average lifespan of men was just over 40 years in those days, so risking their lives for some pretty lively excitement seemed worth it. Even if they died in battle, they would only die a few years younger than the average man in their society.

Today we have young people who would rather die of a drug overdose than do a job that required them to expend physical energy. Even taking drugs itself shows how little they use their brains to learn that both their physical and their mental health could be affected.

Are we naturally lazy or do circumstances drive us to it? As an educator and student of human behaviour, I would have to say the latter is more correct. Only those with physical impairments--many of which go undiagnosed for years--are lackadaisical as children. Those who develop

chronic fatigue syndrome or fibromyalgia later in life were often not terribly energetic as children, though this has not been studied much.

Most kids are very active both physically and intellectually. Don't two year olds and three year olds have a reputation for asking enough questions to drive their parents to distraction? Asking questions is an indicator of an active mind. Their play tends to be fairly physical in nature at that age, perhaps because they don't have the intellectual development to engage in more mindful pursuits.

Somewhere along the way most people stop asking questions. In fact, it has become so common that it's considered a sign of incompetence in some business communities to ask for help or to ask questions that might annoy or embarrass the boss. If you don't know, at least don't let everyone know you don't know, just shut up, is the rule of thumb.

So we produce a society made up largely of intellectually stunted adults. The thinkers are considered the weirdos, the troublemakers, ones who could possibly be dangerous if given their way.

Intellectually stunted adults who just happen to have a cultural tendency towards obesity, mostly due to the fact that they embrace any activity that requires little physical effort and as little mental effort as possible.

To ensure that the adults produce children with the same preferences, we create a fear of having our children out by themselves where they might learn something other than that prescribed by school and the family. So the kids stay at home, play video games and visit porn sites or chatrooms on the internet, if they aren't participating in some sort of social networking system such as YouTube.

Yet it has become not just the social norm, but social and even legal requirement that kids should be tended by adults all day, every day, such that they can never learn anything not on their required community curriculum. The intellectually and physically lazy adults don't need to teach the kids to be lazy because the kids pick it up from their role models who are required by law and social norms to force their children into social conformity. In so doing they become mentally and physically docile themselves.

Go ahead, dear reader, get angry about this. I dare you. Use your intellect and emotional energy to give me example after example to show that I am wrong.

That would require you to think critically. Are you up for it?

I am. Do it.

Bill Allin

Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems, a guidebook for parents and teachers who want to grow children who are not bound to social norms that will make them into fat, lazy, unthinking consumers.

Learn more at <http://billallin.com>