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Welcome to your entitlement orientation, you are all late and you shouldn't care.



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**En•ti•tle•ment** - the right to be guaranteed benefits. Under acts of government for veterans services, basic human rights, and services for those who are differently abled (among other things) entitlement can be a life saving and spirit lifting act. But what about when an entire generation feels they have a right to privileges and benefits simply because they are alive? Most of the time when the news relays stories of entitled persons it raises our collective ire because the entitled person in question has taken, demanded, or forced something with an exertion of power. Most of us have an instinctual problem with that. While every generation has struggled to understand the next, recently there has been a spotlight on the "lazy, narcissistic" Millennial generation (see *Time Magazine*, May 2013). But just a few years earlier in 2010 the *New York Post* labeled Gen Y as the "worst generation." So, are we progressively getting more entitled as a society? Maybe we're researching these types of issues more frequently, backing them up with real data instead of anecdotal story swapping to "prove" that the next generation is worse. There isn't much research about the positive things that entitled generations bring to the table, but they do bring some significant benefits: Millennials are more likely to have jobs they are passionate about than previous generations, they are more innovative and adaptive, they are more willing to listen to multiple perspectives to solve a problem, they expect higher life satisfaction than previous generations, and they give back to society frequently (*Why You Can't Ignore Millennials. Forbes Magazine*, September 2013). Tension will always exist between generations that are currently in power and the generation poised to do so behind them. As with all stereotypes it's easy to dehumanize a collective with labels, but rarely (if ever) does it actually solve problems. When I Googled (a verb coined by Millennials, by the way!) what the opposite of "entitled" is "grateful," "humble" and "thankful" were at the top of the list. I'm pretty sure none of us are born being grateful, humble, or thankful. Most of us learn those feelings through life experiences that show us we're part of a larger community that we need to be successful because we aren't capable on our own. It may be worth some time to consider just how one generation might pass that down to the next.

JV

### **An article review of *You Owe Me!: Children of entitlement***

According to Namka (2001) entitlement results from life events such as divorce, neglect, trauma, enabling and social modeling. It is helpful in protecting against feelings of depression, abandonment, high parental expectations, shame and painful memories. Entitled children tend to feel that life has not been fair and they are owed something. They may use cruelty, risky behavior or material items to try to make up for what they are owed. Entitlement is best managed when viewed as a temporary part of development that helps the child to find balance as they form their identity. Entitled children tend to have limited coping skills and fewer genuine friendships because of their demands. The more stressed the child becomes, the more entitled they behave. Remaining emotionally neutral, avoiding power struggles and addressing the child's underlying needs will reduce negative behaviors. Corrective comments work best when they are stated and the parent moves to the next subject allowing time for the child to think things through. For example, an angry child who wants his way may be encouraged to see that the negative behavior is not working and a positive approach might work better. Choices should be given whenever possible and the focus must stay on the child's underlying feelings and negative behavior. Teaching coping skills such as following directions, assessing one's own behavior, patience, establishing and respecting boundaries, positive self-talk and balancing giving and receiving are imperative in decreasing entitlement.

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