



The Times They Are A Changing - Are You?

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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I am finding many things that occur on a regular basis don't make sense to me. When I ask questions or try to make sense of them with people my age they agree that they have similar thoughts about changes. On the other hand, those of the younger generation give me a strange look and wonder why I am questioning what they think is "normal".

Here are some of the things that confuse me:

1. Businesses Communications - It seems almost impossible to find the telephone number of some organizations, so we can't call to get or give information. Instead we are expected to make changes to our "profiles" through technological devices. Even if there is a call center, we need to answer multiple questions for security purposes before anyone can deal with issues. After the interrogation, we are often put on hold while our calls are transferred to the answering machine of someone who isn't available to help us.

2. Basic life skills - Many youth cannot tell time unless they have a digital clock. Concepts of money are foreign to them as they are used to using debit cards rather than handling cash. Even handwriting is becoming a thing of the past. Most children are experts with computers but wouldn't have a clue about how to sew a missing button on their clothing, plant a garden or cook something that doesn't come out of a box.

3. Laws that send mixed messages - We have researched and determined that smoking is bad for our health. Because of this, millions of dollars have gone into education as well as regulations about who, what, where and why smoking is restricted. Then we legalize the smoking of marijuana.

4. Government taxes - In 1917 the Canadian government passed a "temporary" war income tax. We have now experienced a system that has become more and more complex over the past hundred years. In fact, accountants and/or computer software have added to the costs of just doing the filing each year. And, it is interesting to note that the government adds interest onto account balances even before they have issued a Notice of Assessment to the taxpayer. Try counting how many federal, provincial, municipal, city or goods/services taxes you are paying.

5. Forms. It seems that you can't go anywhere without having to complete a form before you are served. Even scheduling a haircut or massage requires that you answer questions about how you found the establishment, whether you have any specific medical issues and what personal preferences you have.

6. Points cards and memberships. Most companies offer discounts or rewards if you sign up for a membership with them. You need your membership number at the time of each purchase in order to receive the promised benefits. Then, you decide to redeem the blessings and find out that there are hidden charges. Also, if you don't have transactions within a certain period of time, you might even receive a letter that threatens expiry of the points that you have accumulated.

7. Meal deals - Often you can get a meal with French fries that is less expensive than the exact same meal without the fries. I don't want the fries! (but I want the better price).

8. Hiring practices - Most companies do not accept resumes from individuals. They need to be uploaded onto a website rather than being delivered in person. Full-time employment is scarce as many employers tend to hire a number of casual and part-time employees instead, so they can avoid offering benefits and change schedules at will. This is likely good for the operational requirements but difficult for the person who wants and needs to work.

9. Liars - I am always amazed when someone looks me in the eye and deliberately lies, especially when the topic is of little significance. Even high-profile leaders and celebrities tell tall tales while

forgetting that there are videos, recorders and witnesses that can reveal what they had done or said on an earlier occasion.

10. Customer service - Frequently voice mail messages, texts and emails are ignored without replies. Store clerks are a rare find. Manners, respect and knowledge can be missing. The good news, of course, is that the companies who provide customer service have an edge and will grow rapidly.

Please don't get me wrong. I am not complaining. I am just noting that the world I grew up in has changed significantly. There isn't any point in being upset or worried about it. Just make sure you ask good questions when you are confused and make good choices as you move forward.