



5 Teen Trends That Aren't Going Away Anytime Soon

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Parents often ask me, what's the newest trend with teenagers today?

My answer: Five minutes ago... or right now?

One of the amazing elements about teen attitudes and trends today is how fast they change. In a world where 92% of teens go online daily, 91% from a mobile device (1), there's a nonstop stream of new thoughts, images and ideas flowing past our kids eyes and ears almost hourly. Frankly, "old" people (anyone over 30-years-old in their young minds) have trouble keeping up.

But in this world where the only constant seems to be change, some behaviors and tendencies hang on long enough to be deemed worthy of being called

a trend. Here are five current trends that have stuck around for more than a year, and don't seem to be going anywhere soon.

1. Netflix bingeing

The days of perusing the aisles of Blockbuster in search of that fun Friday night rental are long gone, because now movies and TV shows are only a click away... and free. Young people love their Netflix, and binge-watching is becoming a trend in itself.

"What season of Friends are you on?"

"About halfway through Season 4. I got distracted with Sons of Anarchy."

Parents should become aware what their kids are watching on Netflix. Watch shows with your kids. Learn how to check the history of a Netflix account, and how to set parental controls. Netflix has plenty of wholesome viewing... and plenty of racy stuff too.

2. Pictures communicate better than words

If a picture is worth 1,000 words, how many is a selfie worth?

Remember when texting was the primary mode of communication? Well texting just got upgraded to emojis, Snapchat and Insta. Don't get me wrong, sexting still rules. It's quick, easy and provides a great platform for groupchats. But text-speak (lol, omg, and wtf) is slowly being replaced by little pictures of a smiling face or a thumbs up. Better yet, an actual picture of my face with a few words captioned across in a Snapchat, or a picture of my cat laying on my lap, instantly sent out to all my Insta followers. Why use words to describe something when all of us have become amateur photographers with a group of friends attached to every photo we take?

5 Current Trends:

3. Music is king

Music has always been big, but technology has made it simpler for everyone to carry around their entire music libraries with them everywhere they go.

For those of us who were teens in the 80's, think Sony Walkman and the mix tape... on steroids! Mix tapes have been replaced by playlists (and Spotify is the newest way to share those playlist with others), and listening to these lists is even easier now that every gadget and vehicle we buy is "phone-ready" so we can hook up our device and play our lists wherever we are.

And music taste has become a little more diversified. Don't be surprised to hear a kid listening to Nicki Minaj one minute, and Elvis Presley the next. Depends on their mood. Do you know what your kids are listening to?

4. Google is where answers lie

Where is Belfast? Google it. How old is Emma Stone? Google it. Is oral sex actually sex? Google it. Why go to Mom or Dad for the answers of any tough questions when you can just Google it. In my recent book to parents, *More Than Just the Talk: Becoming Your Kids Go-to Person about SEX*, I noted a study where most teens admitted they would actually like to go to their parents with tough questions... if they were sure Mom and Dad wouldn't freak out. That's the problem for most teens—if they ask Mom a question about oral sex, the answer will be, "Why, are you thinking about that? It's that boy Chris, isn't it!!!"

So Google remains the number one place where kids go for answers, and Google images remains as the number one place young people encounter pornography. The average age today's kids encounter porn is age 11.

5. Ephemeral and Anonymous Apps

The pictures vanish... so no one will know.

If only.

Parents should beware of any app or website promoting a lack of accountability. Anonymity only breeds irresponsibility. (Think of the way kids act out when they have a substitute teacher who doesn't know their name.) Want even less responsibility? Promise that all content will all vanish in 24 hours. The ephemeral nature of apps like Snapchat convince young people there are no consequences for their actions. They'll just "disappear." Who cares if you say something mean? It will disappear. Who cares if you post a revealing or inappropriate pic? It will "disappear." Of course, with Snapchat, we've learned that is not the case. Do young people think no one will ever click a screenshot?

Parents need to teach their kids social media responsibility, and rule number one should be, never post anything you don't want grandma, your pastor and your boss to see.

Are you teaching your kids e-responsibility?

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