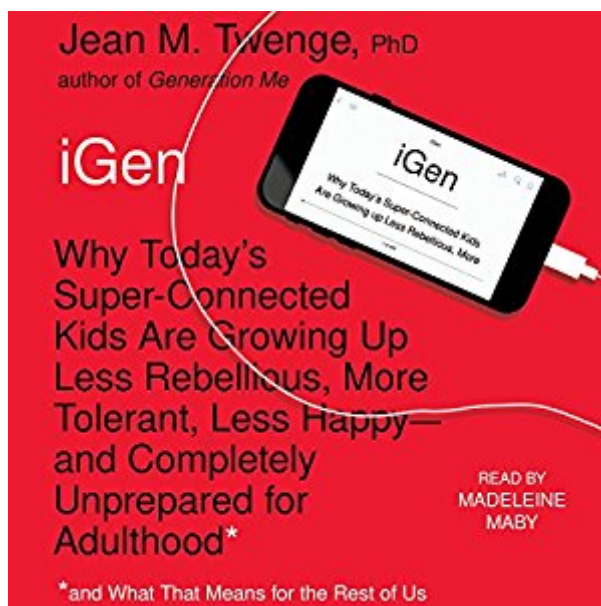


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# I Gen: The 10 Trends Shaping Today's Young People - And The Nation



## Synopsis

An entertaining first look at how today's members of iGen - the children, teens, and young adults born in the mid-1990s and later - are vastly different from their millennial predecessors and from any other generation, from the renowned psychologist and author of *Generation Me*. With generational divides wider than ever, parents, educators, and employers have an urgent need to understand today's rising generation of teens and young adults. Born in the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s and later, iGen is the first generation to spend their entire adolescence in the age of the smartphone. With social media and texting replacing other activities, iGen spends less time with their friends in person - perhaps why they are experiencing unprecedented levels of anxiety, depression, and loneliness. But technology is not the only thing that makes iGen distinct from every generation before them; they are also different in how they spend their time, in how they behave, and in their attitudes toward religion, sexuality, and politics. They socialize in completely new ways, reject once sacred social taboos, and want different things from their lives and careers. More than previous generations, they are obsessed with safety, focused on tolerance, and have no patience for inequality. iGen is also growing up more slowly than previous generations: 18-year-olds look and act like 15-year-olds used to. As this new group of young people grows into adulthood, we all need to understand them: Friends and family need to look out for them; businesses must figure out how to recruit them and sell to them; colleges and universities must know how to educate and guide them. And members of iGen also need to understand themselves as they communicate with their elders and explain their views to their older peers. Because where iGen goes, so goes our nation - and the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Interesting book detailing how the youngest generation grew up with electronics and has addiction problems to smart phones. I am glad to have grown up without monitoring devices detailing your daily activities.

Wow. This is the most comprehensive guide you will find on the culture and attitudes of iGen - those born between 1995-2012. The author, writing in a clear, engaging, and easily understandable style, identifies 10 areas in which the iGen radically differs from their generational predecessors when they were the same age. These range from attitudes toward work, religion, sex (more surprising than you might think), family, tolerance and politics. Culled from statistics gathered from 11 million people, the book tracks the changes in attitudes among young people in these areas starting from the 1970s and on. The most radical shift in attitudes has accrued with the emergence of the iGen. While the author doesn't explicitly link the advent and ubiquity of smartphones to these cultural changes - she does frequently hint at it - there is little room for doubt that this is the case. This book is an excellent addition to the growing body of literature highlighting this issue, like *Glow Kids*, by Dr. Nicholas Kardaras; *Irresistible*, by Adam Alter; *Reclaiming Conversation*, by Sherry Turkle and *The Big Disconnect* by Catherine Steiner-Adair (I highly recommend all of these books). This book should be required reading for every parent and educator who wants to understand their children and perhaps do something to reverse some of the more disturbing and frightening trends in their homes and communities.

I approached this book with both personal and academic interest. My personal interest is that my wife and I are cohorts of the "Boomer" generation. We've raised our son, born in 1995, to adulthood. Author Jean E. Twenge characterizes him as belonging to the "iGen" generation, which she defines as persons born between 1995 and 2012. We are interested in understanding the views of our son and our nieces and nephews in their early 20s. My academic interest is that I'm an amateur historian with professionally published magazine articles on American history. I am a firm believer in the Cycles of History Theory, which postulates that pivotal crisis points occur every four generations, or eighty years. For example, generation-shaping events like the Great Depression of 1929 and the Great Recession of

2008 occurred almost exactly eighty years apart. The Cycles of History theory supposes that within each eighty-year cycle there are four generations spanning birth ranges of 20 years, each with its own distinguishing characteristics. This interpretation of history is described in GENERATIONS: THE HISTORY OF AMERICA'S FUTURE, 1584 TO 2069 written by William Strauss and Neil Howe, and published in 1991. I thus sought to place the iGen Generation in its context with prior generations. If my interpretation of the theory is correct, the iGeners should align with the Silent Generation of four generations ago, which became young adults in the 1950s, sired most of the Boomer Generation, reached the peak of middle aged power in the mid 70s to mid 90s, and is now passing away in late old age. The Silent Generation, born during the Great Depression and World War II, were a generation that valued peace, conformity, compromise, and healing. They were risk-averse, preferring corporation employment to entrepreneurship, and favoring stable marriages and families. Malt shops, high school hops, subdivisions, family outings, and men in grey suits reporting to work as cogs in the wheels of corporation bureaucracies were the reassuring images of their lifepaths. Dr. Twenge characterizes the iGen generation as being cut from the same mold: a quiet, conformist, risk-averse generation very different from the dynamic and often crass materialism of their Baby Boomer, Generation X parents and the dreamy ambitions of their Millennial older brothers and sisters. Being conformist and risk-averse, they are growing up more slowly than the Millennial, Generation X, and Boomer generations. Many are still living with their parents. iGeners are practical, forward looking, and safe, a far cry from the "You can be anything" and "Follow your dreams" Millennials. With managers focusing on Millennial employees in the last decades, little time has been spent understanding what might motivate iGeners in their careers. [iGeners] agree that helping others in difficulty and making a contribution to society is important, average agreement with eight items on empathy for others and being willing to donate to nine different charities and they have no patience for inequality based on gender, race, or sexual orientation. If the Cycles of History theory is valid, then the politically divisive, economically unstable, crisis-prone period of our history may soon be over. The iGeners will shepherd us through a period of constructive prosperity, and restoration of familiar values --- perhaps socially conservative in cherishing family values, but egalitarian liberal in demanding equality and fairness for all. Their days may resemble the Happy Days of the 1950s Silent Generation. This book definitely rings true with my family, and

my circle of friends and neighbors. My generation of Boomers left our small-town homes in the Midwest when we finished school. We made our fortunes in glamour spots like California, Colorado, and Florida. We were afraid that our iGen children were being degraded by the fast (and frequently destructive) pace of life in the urban areas. We brought our families back to the small-town Midwest to raise them among the friends and neighbors we grew up with. An inner voice told us, "Bring your kids back home where they will grow up safe, and with good values of work and family." The book also seeks to explain practical matters such as why social media like Facebook has such a strong hold on the iGen™ers, and why it is important to get them involved in sports to exercise their bodies, take their mind away from the social media pages, and improve their mental health. It explains their insecurities, and why they may be more prone to depression culminating in suicide than previous generations. (Perhaps their quiet conformity tends to keep negative emotions bottled up inside them). I found this book to ring true in describing the iGen™ers I know. I felt intuitively that they are a constructive generation. The book has confirmed me in that opinion. The book paints iGen™ers with a bittersweet brush --- some bitterness in their quiet insecurities of youth, but far sweeter with their affections for themselves and their parents. After reading this book, I have gleaned some concrete reasons for believing that life will be happy and prosperous for this iGeneration now setting out to carve its destiny in the world. In the process, they will recover and restore some of the best values that have us such a successful country. I thus viewed this as an optimistic book, and I am glad I read it.

In IGEN, Professor Jean M. Twenge summarizes the research on the next generation. There are lots of alarming findings. First off, the iGen teens do many important things less often. This includes going out with friends, working, reading, even going to parties. Comparison to prior generations is alarming in many ways. For example, looking at teens who work, we see a drastic reduction: "The number of 8th graders who work for pay has been cut in half. It's not just a matter of teens making a simple substitution of one media for another; there's a lot more to it. Their development has been stunted. The doctor explains, "The entire developmental trajectory, from childhood to adolescence to adulthood, has slowed." If teens are working less, spending less time on homework, going out less, and drinking less--what are they doing? Where is their time going? The answer is not hard to find: it's screen time: "Teens are hanging out with their friends less, but they are not replacing that time with homework, extracurricular, paid work, or housework; they are replacing it with screen

time. The actual time spent on smartphones is startling: iGen high school seniors spent an average of 2 hours a day texting on their cell phones, about 2 hours a day on the Internet, 1 hour a day on electronic gaming, and about a half hour on video chat in the most recent survey. That totals to six hours a day with new media. This diversion of time has come with a steep price. For example, SAT scores are sliding, and compare poorly to their millennial predecessors: SAT scores have slid since the mid-2000s, especially in writing (a 13-point decline since 2006) and critical reading. The key to phones is moderation for both teens and adults. Even experts in technology are cautious about their kids using it too much. The last chapter has some practical suggestions: Find a place of moderation for how long that phone is in our hands. Don't sleep within ten feet of your phone. (The author notes that many teens sleep next to their phone, and are interrupted by texts.) Put down the smartphone when studying or working. The author makes one point in particular that I thought was especially astute: People cannot simultaneously do serious mental work and use a smartphone. Rather, one must concentrate on one thing at a time: The human brain cannot multitask: we can focus our attention on only one cognitive task at a time. The iGen generation has difficulty concentrating for more than a very short time. With all the gloomy statistics, the author nevertheless offers some hope but it will require a marked change in behavior: If they can shake themselves free of the constant clutch of their phones and shrug off the heavy cloak of their fear, they can still fly. And the rest of us will be there, cheering them on. So all in all, I found iGen to be a well-researched, well written book. Moreover, it is an important book. The author writes clearly, and the book is easy to read. I confess I was ignorant of much of this information. Perhaps the scariest part of the entire book concerns mental health: iGen is on the verge of the most severe mental health crisis for young people in decades. The professor cites numerous studies linking depression with extended use of social media. Advance Review Copy courtesy of the publisher.

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