



IS IT

As a new study finds we are not as nice as we think we are, *Stylist Arabia* asks have millennials have lost their manners?

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ARE GEN Y ALL
PROUD AS PEACOCKS?

I like to think of myself as a fairly decent person. I've signed Facebook petitions urging first-world governments to accept refugees; shared online posts condemning global inequalities and I've Tweeted my support for the protests against Trump's Muslim ban. But I haven't donated blood, offered to nip to Spinneys for my sick neighbour or volunteered to give up my time for charity. It turns out that for all my online virtue signalling, I haven't actually done anything virtuous. And it turns out I'm not alone.

According to a new study, the majority of people are not as nice as they think they are. Psychologists from Goldsmiths, University of London found that 98% of people surveyed think they're part of the nicest 50% of the population. However, two thirds of people admitted that they rarely if ever help others

there is to be 'nice'. And in a generation obsessed with slash careers and building start-ups, driven, results-oriented, entrepreneur types finish first.

"The shift towards being authentic rather than nice promotes a more ruthless, 'stop at nothing' attitude towards success," says Zeta.

The modern obsession with being free to be yourself recently led Gen Y to be labelled as narcissists. A new Reason-Rupe poll found 71% of adults think 18 to 29-year-olds are selfish, while 65% say they're entitled. Meanwhile linguists have found there's been a boost in phrases like 'I'm special' and 'all about me' in literature, while pop songs are increasingly littered with the words 'I' and 'me'.

In our quest for self-actualisation, it seems we have lost sight of concerns that transcend our personal goals. Somewhere along the line, we've forgotten about

empathy and social awareness than men, so they naturally have a greater concern for the emotions of those around them. One thing that pseudo-feminism can get wrong is to suggest women should show fewer of their natural traits to work in a men's world; to do the opposite of people pleasing to break free of these oppressive chains. But that is not the case; rather one of the jobs of feminism should be to show that women can



to be heard is not a strategy for success, says Zeta.

However, Lucy argues that it is possible to pursue our own personal truth without sacrificing our relationships with others. "On the surface, it appears that the prized and powerful characteristics in society are all focused on our ability to 'hustle', 'take the bull by the horns' and 'crush our goals' which doesn't leave much room for niceness. But truly accomplished and powerful people all have the ability to influence and this requires a degree of likeability.

"Being authentic and being nice do not have to be separate lanes."

Dr Crookes agrees: "Being authentic isn't the opposite of being nice. Many surveys of millennial traits show them to be more aware of individual rights and to be more in favour of

COOL TO BE CRUEL?

carrying heavy shopping bags, five-sixths infrequently give money to strangers, and only a quarter of people give blood or help elderly or infirm people across the road often.

But should we really be surprised that altruism has fallen out of fashion? After all, millennials revere self-fulfilment; they are a generation defined by words like 'being true to oneself' and 'expressing your truth' regardless of the consequences.

"Millennials have a sense of self-authenticity that means they value being themselves, not necessarily conforming or compromising to what people want just to be liked goes along with this," explains Dr Annie Crookes, Associate Professor of Psychology at Heriot-Watt University in Dubai.

In fact, Dubai-based life coach Zeta Yarwood (zetayarwood.com) believes there is now more social pressure to be 'authentic' than

kindness, grace and good old-fashioned manners. What's worse, in the name of #followyourbliss, we have been conditioned to trample on those that stand in the way.

"Standing up for yourself and putting yourself first when necessary should be encouraged," says Zeta. "But I think the message about what it means to be true to yourself has been distorted and translated as 'forget about everyone else.' We now encourage an attitude of 'This is who I am - so it's your loss if you don't like me'. Just because we're being true to ourselves that doesn't mean we stop respecting others."

While the burden of niceness once weighed heavily on women, a lot has changed since feminism woke us up to the people-pleasing trap. But Dr Crookes argues it's a mistake to extinguish our natural urge to be nice just to get ahead.

"Women tend to show higher

assert themselves while maintaining positive social relations. To accept that being polite and considerate is not mutually exclusive to leading, decision making and wisdom."

Lucy Sheridan (proofcoaching.com), a life coach specialising in social media and its effect on the psyche says social media has made us all more cut-throat as a society. "The swipe culture has meant that with a simple finger action we can share our approval or lack of approval on a topic, whether that's someone's appearance, political views, life event - even their lunch. We have become more opinionated about more topics and we apply this to more people often without much pause for kindness or thought for how someone might receive it."

Of course, we all want the freedom to speak our own mind, but drowning out other people in a single-minded determination

'niceness' in general. I think they feel pressure to be both authentic and to show they are making a positive impact on their social world."

While there are many positives to not caring what others think the pendulum is swinging towards not caring about others entirely. It's a delicate balance, warns Lucy, and one that the Twitter generation is still figuring out.

"We're in the awkward toddler stage with our relationship with social media and what it is to be in full expression of ourselves," she explains. "This means we don't always make the right call and we will see the fallout from this until we get better practiced at being ourselves. The challenge is to not remove care altogether - we need to strive to be self-aware of how our thoughts and behaviour can impact others and yet not be taken off our own track."