

Young Adult Issues and Transitions By Julie O'Neal

Some young adults go through these transitions one at time while others do many of them simultaneously. Below are some of the issues and transitions young adults encounter:

- Community College/University/Trade school/Graduate school
 - o The choice to attend higher education brings along new faces, new experiences, new environments, and new decisions. Sometimes this choice can bring anxiety, stress, loneliness, and depression.
 - o 50% of African American men without college are jobless*
 - o School loans – 7 million 18-24 year olds attend college full time
 - o Average \$30K/year for private institutions, \$13K/year for public institutions

- Volunteering/Philanthropy/Mission
 - o Young adults want to make a difference, make their mark on the world. Often times this is propelled by a need to give back to the world and connect with other cultures and classes.
 - o Many times though, this is on their own terms, at their own time – sometimes these things become more of a priority than work or school
 - o 80% of 16-25 year olds volunteers –required by parents or schools

- Living with Parents to Living on One's Own or with Roommates
 - o Issues of claiming independence and adulthood while still living under parents' rules. New roommates force young people to learn to get along with new people, learn to set rules and boundaries. It also can cause a delayed adulthood when parents are called in to help deal with their young adult's issues.
 - o They need help learning about basic living needs, how to balance finances, how to deal with conflict
 - o ½ of GenNexters talk to their parents every day

- College to Working World/Career
 - o Career vs. calling – will they end up working in the field of their degree? What about their job gives meaning to their lives, to the lives of others?
 - o Jobs don't always define who young people are
 - o Help in finding mentoring programs and job networks

- Finances
 - o Balancing finances – when young adults are working very hard at a job that barely allows them to survive let alone chip away at the mound of debt they have incurred
 - Generation Debt Book by Anya Kamenetz, 25 years old
 - Average amount owed in Credit Card debt: \$2,800
 - o Hourly to Salary

- In 1980, college grads earned \$40K, in 2004 they earned \$43K
 - How can young people even begin to think about saving for Retirement?
 - What are the steps to buying a home? Should one commit in light of the current economy?
- Single to Dating/Coupled/Married to Divorced/Widowed
 - identity, balance (time with friends and other couples vs. time alone as a couple), incomes, life goals, when the honeymoon ends, in-laws, commitment levels
 - 1 in 10 dates someone online
- Diversity
 - Interracial dating, religious tolerance, ageism in workplace/church/life
 - 1 out of 8 GenNexters is an immigrant
 - This generation is the most diverse in history
 - Gay Rights is the next equal rights issue
- Sexuality
 - Expression, claiming, protecting, monogamy vs. casual sex
 - Learn about sex from the internet, need for comprehensive sex education
 - AIDS/STDs aren't as intimidating
 - Pre-marital sex and "hooking up" are "no big deal"
 - Homosexuality – 60% think it should be accepted by society
- Technology
 - 1/3 of GenNexters played video games last year
 - News/communication
 - 30% get news from the internet
 - 33% from TV shows like the Daily Show
 - 25% read newspapers
 - 50% use a social networking site like MySpace or Facebook
 - Cell phones/Texting is the new way to communicate
- Parenthood
 - New priorities, proper care of child, parenting techniques
 - Unplanned pregnancy - abortion, adoption are options
- Armed services
 - Provide support networks for those who remain behind, support for those who are away, support for returning soldiers, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, re-integration into society, end of life issues, theological issues
 - 900K 16-25 are in military (including the National Guard and Reserves)
- Faith
 - Searching, creating, adopting a faith that is their own and not their parents'

- Forming a patchwork faith – one that has components from more than one faith tradition (Christianity, Islam, Jewish, Buddhist, etc).
 - Religious vs. Spiritual
 - Moral code = No harm, no foul
- Politics
- Traditional labels don't apply- liberal republican, conservative democrat
 - This generation will be the one most likely to have an Independent Party
 - 47% of voters were GenNexters

Questions to consider:

- What are young adults thinking, feeling, experiencing, struggling with, deciding during these stages?
- What are key points or stages during each transition?
- How does one know if or when they've fully transitioned?
- How can the church help with this transition?

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