

## The Hostile Society

by [Dr. Michael Absatz](#)

Children learn how to become nasty, dependent adults when they are very young. They see hundreds of unhealthy, immature adults all around them.

We live in a culture that focuses on gaining one's sense of well-being from externals – caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, sugar, marijuana, cocaine, shopping, gambling, money, possessions, winning teams. Anne Wilson Shaef's book, "When Society Becomes and Addict," discussed this four decades ago. Drugs are rampant among middle and high school kids – where sex with benefits has replaced sex with commitment, sex with love, or sex with marriage. Internally, people feel empty.

Americans are taught to seek approval, pleasure, recognition and fame. We idolize and honor those who are famous, and then we watch them fall down as they can't meet our incredibly high expectations. We live vicariously through the Hollywood and musical stars. Some song lyrics are sexist, demeaning, and death-focused. Videogames provide young children with destructive tools at their command.

We have become superficial, narcissistic addicts. We are encouraged to conform by wearing the latest fashions, and driving the newest Sports Utility Vehicles. Three-car garages are common, as the garage now equals the size of the 1950's rambler in square feet. As self-absorbed, impulsive beings, we want immediate gratification, feeling entitled to receive whatever we want. This entitlement comes out in whining and lawsuits.

Children are taught from an early age to live up to gender role stereotypes – thinness and attractiveness for girls, and macho, stoic toughness for boys. The result of this is that many males see females as objects to be had and used. The abuse rate for women is 25% in America.

Eating disorders and steroid use are rampant. The average model is 5 foot 11 inches tall, and weighs 115 pounds. The average woman in America is 5 foot 3 inches tall, and weighs 144 pounds. The discrepancy between the real and the ideal results in shame, self-loathing and resentment. Fifth grade girls go on diets to lose weight. And yet, as a culture, we have a severe obesity problem. Supersize the fries, please.

Fathers leave their children because they lack nurturing and emotional communication skills. In custody issues, courts still favor mothers, because they assume fathers are incapable of caring for their children. Men don't learn skills as boys, and are later punished for their ignore. They take "anger management" classes 40 years too late.

Americans are angry because they have lost their center and their integrity. Political and religious leaders lie. Priests abuse children. Telemarketers act as if you are their personal friend. Advertising fills the airwaves, newspapers, and internet.

People are rushed, hurried, and angry about it. They have too much to accomplish in too little time. Many adults do not have time for their children who are raised by strangers.

As a result, some children experience feelings of abandonment, loneliness, and isolation. Many children are on medication for hyperactivity or depression. We try to medicate pain rather than face the real causes of it.

David Walsh calls America a “culture of disrespect.” Kids do not respect teachers, parents and other authority figures. Some police abuse their power. We see regular doses of fighting, cursing, whining, and screaming in the media Television and video games are about destroying others physically and emotionally.

Cell phones are everywhere. They interrupt lectures, sermons, conversations. People double and triple task, and try to focus in more than one direction at a time. So, many are distracted and not really present. So people continue to not get their needs met from others. They leave one relationship for another.

The social problems relate to trust, commitment, integrity, honesty, and compassion. A culture that is driven such as ours, has little empathy for the weak, the ill, the elderly, the powerless. Road rage is ten times what it was twenty years ago.

We still segregate and marginalize people. We suffer from sexism, heterosexism, racism, and social class domination We laugh at nerds unless they turn out to be Bill Gates.

To sum up, there is not enough – time, maturity, generosity, love, commitment, decency, politeness, honesty and patience. And there is too much money to be made off people who try to “fix” their lives by consuming something outside of themselves.

What can we do about this? First, we must take a real look at where we are, and how we got here. Second, we must commit to doing something about it. And third, we need to reclaim our individual wholeness and our sense of community. We need to stop waging war on ourselves and each other, and start healing the tremendous wounds we have suffered both individually and collectively.

Wake up, America. It is not going to get better until everyone feels safe, cared about, and has an opportunity for growth.