

# Safe Spaces Or Dangerous Places? The Assault Upon Our Future (Part One)

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Freedom of speech is a major tenet of Western democracy, born of a people once steeped in the Judeo-Christian ethic. While the United States was a trailblazer for its support of free speech, the idea that mankind is better served when individuals are granted the freedom to express themselves openly dates to as early as the fifth or sixth-century BC.

In this context, educators throughout the Western world have advocated for an educational (and civic) experience free from unwarranted or unreasonable censorship to encourage the growth of the marketplace of ideas crucial for the advancement of civilization.

Unfortunately, many of these same educators have also pursued a more liberal mindset to govern and administer their hallowed halls of learning. This mindset, under the guise of free speech, has artfully overrun the educational experience in the West. Over the past century, it has slowly given rise to an elitist, progressive “group-think” among academicians that actually works in opposition to free speech.

Patiently and persistently, this group-think has promoted an anti-Western, anti-capitalist, and anti-Christian bias within the entire academic culture. In addition, academia has shown a stubborn inclination to repress conservative values and to indulge, coddle, and indoctrinate our youth rather than to educate them.

Christians and conservatives have decried this liberal agenda because it teaches sensitivity over truth, “tolerance” over discipline, feelings over facts. With the rejection of traditional values, classroom instruction—and much of the entire educational experience—becomes unbalanced and deficient. We are left with generations of troubled and ill-prepared graduates to inherit the positions of power and production in our society.

Over the past century, the contaminated mindset has grown by small degrees to the point that it now dominates the academic culture of the self-obsessed Millennial generation. Accordingly, we witness across college campuses throughout the Western world the inception of what are called the “safe space” and its close relative, the “trigger warning.” Both are coordinated efforts by students and schools to eliminate their exposure to the “harmful” or “dangerous” words, concepts, and “micro-aggressive” ideas of the right.

The “thought police” have met the self-esteem generation.

A sexual rights advocacy group, Advocates for Youth, claims the safe space movement provides an environment “where anyone can relax and be fully self-expressed, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable . . . or challenged on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, [or] cultural background.” In practice, the safe space functions by

creating overly restrictive environments around the campus that are hostile to challenges—particularly from conservative or Christian viewpoints—where only like-minded, “tolerant” persons who agree in advance to avoid disagreeable language are allowed to share their “opinions.”

The “trigger warning” is defined roughly as a notice that certain media (books, videos, movies, music), classroom discussions, lectures, exhibitions, or even live theater, might contain pictures, words, or references to ideas or concepts that might be considered damaging to the self-esteem of certain “marginalized” or previously injured or abused persons. In practice, trigger warnings actually serve the secular/progressive group-think by discouraging contact with material or ideas that might “trigger” unpleasant memories or that are contrary with their politically correct dogma.

Both of these over-protective crusades rely on the perpetuation of a narcissistic “victim mentality,” already prevalent among self-focused Millennials. But the definition of “victim” has been expanded to include all who are made to feel discomfort when exposed to ideas disagreeable to them.

With the one-sided group-think favoring coercion over free speech, vital exposure to opposing viewpoints or exercises in reconciliation is lost. Since comfort, unity, and tolerance are valued over critical thinking, morality, and conviction, any effort to prepare for real-life situations, to define “right” versus “wrong,” or to encourage initiative and leadership is severely diminished.

When our children—seeds for tomorrow—having been soaked for years in self-esteem and vanity, are planted in a secular institution devoid of the nutrients of virtue, fertilized with indulgence, and cultivated by the removal of all that may provoke, what sprouts is a feeble crop incapable of any meaningful engagement with reality. Naïve to the self-inflicted damage of their self-indulgent zeal, it is little wonder that the “Millennials” are referred to as the “Snowflake Generation.”

Having identified the problem, in the next issue we will address some of its more frightening implications upon our world today and tomorrow.