

Opinion: Are teenagers smarter and better than we think?

By Tara Parker-Pope, New York Times

Today's teenagers have been raised on cellphones and social media. Should we worry about them or just get out of their way?

A recent wave of student protests around the country has provided a close-up view of Generation Z in action, and many adults have been surprised. While there has been much hand-wringing about this cohort, also called iGen or the Post-Millennials, the stereotype of a disengaged, entitled and social-media-addicted generation doesn't match the poised, media-savvy and inclusive young people leading the protests and gracing magazine covers.

There's 18-year-old Emma González, whose shaved head, impassioned speeches and torn jeans have made her the iconic face of the #NeverAgain movement, which developed after the 17 shooting deaths in February at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. Naomi Wadler, just 11, became an overnight sensation after confidently telling a national television audience she represented "African-American girls whose stories don't make the front page of every national newspaper." David Hogg, a high school senior at Stoneman Douglas, has weathered numerous personal attacks with the disciplined calm of a seasoned politician.

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