

DAILY SKINNER

Empowering the Youth:



A Series on Personal Development and Success

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Female Empowerment in Youth

By: Janine Verburg

In a world full of possibilities, it is imperative to ensure that every young girl knows that she can shape her future. Female empowerment is a movement that paves the way toward a more inclusive, progressive, and equitable society. In this article, we will explore the various angles that contribute to the importance of female empowerment, what the concept entails, and how it nurtures the potential of young women.

Roughly 1.2 billion women are restricted from getting safe abortions. Why? Because despite the new age, women still do not have full ownership of their bodies because of the “patriarchy’s” slow progression. The harsh reality is that: the fight is still not over for women, and we need to continue paving the way for the youth of today as well as the youth of tomorrow to end generational gender bias.

Unfortunately, gender bias comes with misconceptions such as the menstrual cycle affects women’s capability to make critical decisions. However, the truth is...a period does not affect decision-making (besides eating one too many chocolates),

so why can women not make decisions that are beneficial for their own lives and bodies?

Why are women still fighting for equal wages and the luxury to be taken seriously in formal sectors such as employment and health care? When equal rights are brought into general conversation the word feminism is bound to follow close behind with a negative connotation and it often leaves a sour taste in people’s mouths. Lowery (2022), we are not talking about feminism, we are discussing the fact that women earn roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ for every dollar a man earns.

The reality is that women continuously get the shit end of the stick in mostly male-dominated conversations, from opportunities to wages, and finally health care.

The question remains, how do we inspire young girls to strive for equality?

129 million girls, between 6 to 17 years old, are not in school. By empowering these girls to stay in school, it can set them up for better futures.

When girls are educated, they can have better health care, earn higher salaries, and live a longer life. As Aditi Sharma said, "Most importantly an educated woman offers better nourishment, health care, and education for her family."

As adults, we should empower young girls to continue their education, demonstrate to them the kind of life they may lead, and never stop supporting their aspirations. A period just demonstrates that women may face challenges and govern entire countries at the same time; it does not imply that a woman is any less capable of hard work or leadership.

If we show them the boundless possibilities they have, we can empower them to dream bigger and reach higher than they thought possible.

Unfortunately, so many girls do not know that there are barriers that have been broken down by previous generations, therefore they do not know that they can be more than a wife or a mother. We are not condemning men or the role they have in everyday life, we simply want to be able to stand confidently without having to depend on a man and choose love over security.

Empowering young women in their formative years can be instrumental in dismantling deeply ingrained gender stereotypes. By challenging these societal norms, we can pave the way for a more inclusive future.

"If one girl with an education can change the world, what can 130 million do?" - Malala Yousafzai

The primary reasoning behind empowering youth is to drive them to take control of their lives and the future. Empowering young women instils a sense of resilience in them that also equips them to navigate challenges. When these girls are provided with equal access to resources and education, they can develop the skills to confront obstacles.

The empowerment of young women is not just a cause, it is an investment in the limitless potential of half the world's population.

"The stats show when you educate a girl, you educate a family, a community, a country." - Michelle Obama.

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Power of Representation:

Shaping Tomorrow's Leaders

By: Janine Verburg

In an era characterised by rapid globalisation, the role of representation in shaping the perspective and aspiration of the youth cannot be underestimated. This article delves into the importance of diverse representation, not only in terms of gender and race but also in abilities and experiences.

As a young girl, I did not have a Disney princess that looked like me, because very few princesses have tanned skin and dark, curly hair. Representation matters; it's a profound and fundamental truth that significantly influences how young people perceive their place in the world. The increasing recognition of diversity and inclusivity as cornerstones of a thriving society highlights the urgency of this issue.

When young individuals see themselves reflected in the media, from leadership roles to various professions, it sends them a powerful message: "You belong. You can achieve anything."

Witnessing individuals who resemble them succeed in various fields ignites a sense of self-assuredness.

It instils the belief that their aspirations are not only valid but achievable, bolstering confidence during those formative years. This validation is crucial in combating feelings of isolation and alienation that arise when people feel undervalued or invisible in the world. It creates a sense of belonging that contributes to self-image and self-worth.

Representation plays an important role in fostering inclusivity by ensuring that every young person, regardless of their background, feels valued and seen. This inclusivity extends beyond race, ethnicity and gender to abilities and sexual orientation.

Furthermore, the diverse representation of role models in leadership positions helps shatter stereotypes, leading to more informed and open-minded individuals. Prime examples of representation include Julia Gillard, who became the Prime Minister of Australia, and Barack Obama, who became the first African-American president of the United States.

These individuals broke barriers that previously seemed insurmountable and dispelled the notion that certain paths and professions are reserved for specific demographics. Seeing role models in powerful positions instils a sense of possibility and ambition in the youth.

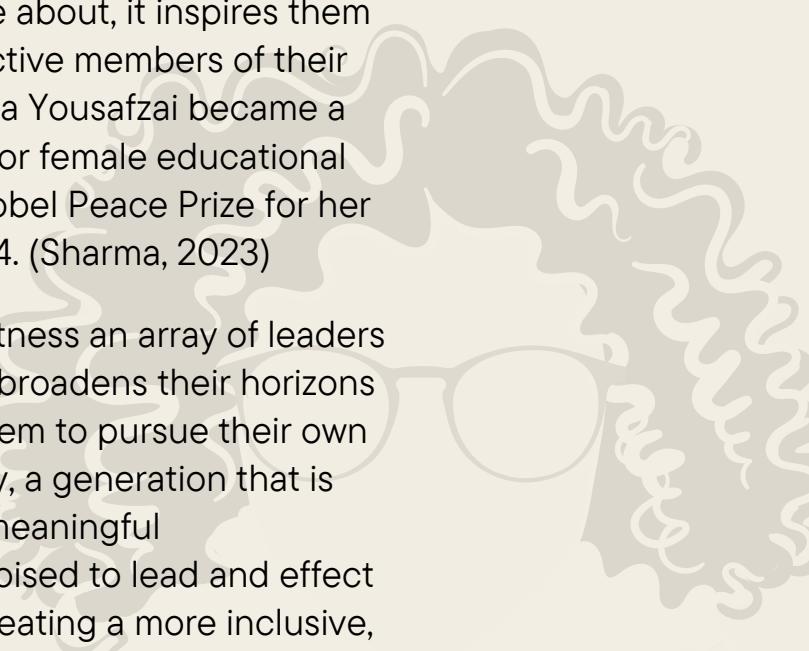
Representation serves as a catalyst for engagement and participation. When the youth witness leaders champion causes, they are passionate about, it inspires them to become more active members of their communities. Malala Yousafzai became a leader in the fight for female educational rights, winning a Nobel Peace Prize for her contribution in 2014. (Sharma, 2023)

When the youth witness an array of leaders and role models, it broadens their horizons and encourages them to pursue their own passions. Ultimately, a generation that is nurtured through meaningful representation is poised to lead and effect positive change, creating a more inclusive, confident, and harmonious society for generations to come.

In addition to fostering inclusivity and confidence, representation also plays a role in promoting empathy and understanding. When young people are exposed to a diverse array of perspectives and experiences, it cultivates a greater appreciation for the richness of human diversity. This exposure leads to a culturally literate generation that is capable of respecting the experiences of others.

It is imperative that we, as a society, continue to prioritise and celebrate

representation in all its forms, recognising the transformative potential it has in shaping tomorrow's leaders. By doing so, we pave the way for a more inclusive and harmonious society, one where every young person can truly believe, "I belong, and I can achieve anything."



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Nurturing Youth through Adversity

By: Janine Verburg

From embracing failure as a stepping stone to success to providing a safe space for expressing emotions, there is a myriad of ways to instil resilience. This article focuses on strategies to foster resilience in young individuals, equipping them with the tools to navigate challenges with grace, knowing they possess the inner strength to conquer any obstacle.

Adversity is an inevitable part of life, and for the youth, it can be a formidable force that shapes their character, aspirations, and future. Navigating challenges during formative years is not only normal but a crucial aspect of personal growth and development. By empowering youth, we create confidence that makes them feel more powerful, and self-determined, making them more willing to take risks. (Spiller, 2023)

Adversity provides a unique opportunity for the youth to develop resilience that can serve as a foundation for their future success and well-being. Resilience creates the capacity to adapt to change and thrive despite difficulty.

For example, a child experiencing academic difficulty learns the values of

persistence and self-discipline.

Someone struggling with conflict hones their communication skills to better enhance their conflict resolution. These experiences contribute to the development of a mindset that is ready to face the complexity of adulthood.

Overcoming adversity creates a sense of assurance. When young people successfully navigate challenges, they build a belief that they can overcome future obstacles. This confidence can become a powerful tool in facing future struggles, as they are now armed with the knowledge that they can effect positive change on their own.

According to Jess Baker's Empowerment Model, there are three ingredients to the perfect empowerment recipe:

1. *Self-awareness*: To feel empowered, one needs to understand their core values and be committed to self-improvement. By knowing what motivates them and recognising their strengths and weaknesses, they can achieve greater success in life.

2. *Self-confidence*: Believing in one's

skills and abilities is essential. Instead of doubting themselves or thinking about what they "should" do or think, they should trust their capabilities.

3. Intention: Setting clear goals creates a path to success. By following this path, individuals can change and improve themselves in the process. (Baker, 2023)

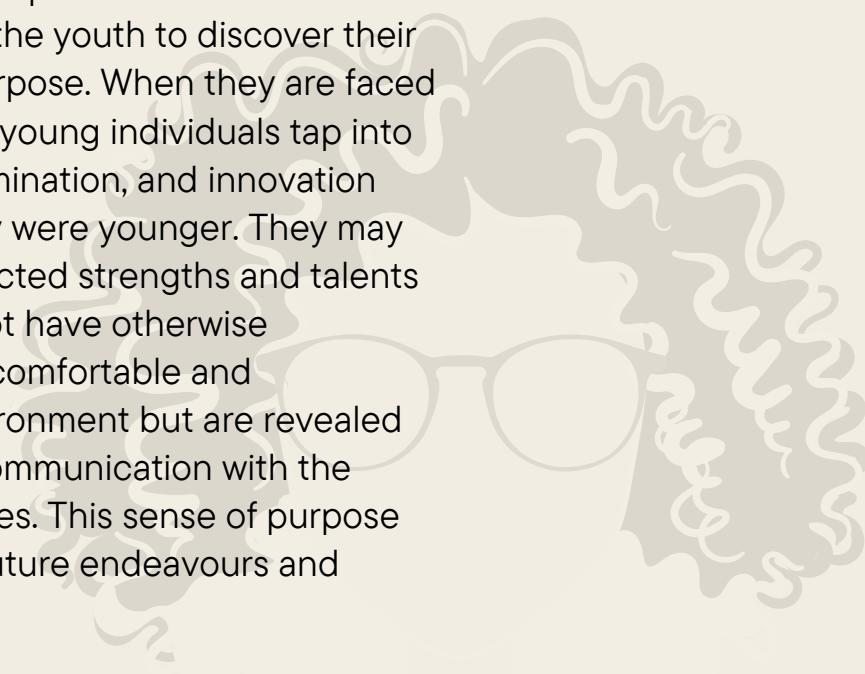
By nurturing youth, we can empower them to realise their full potential. This can serve as a catalyst for the youth to discover their passions and purpose. When they are faced with challenges, young individuals tap into creativity, determination, and innovation learnt when they were younger. They may uncover unexpected strengths and talents that they may not have otherwise discovered in a comfortable and predictable environment but are revealed through open communication with the adults in their lives. This sense of purpose can drive their future endeavours and aspirations.

Nurturing youth through adversity sharpens their adaptability, therefore enabling them to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of society. Additionally, it can foster their sense of empathy towards others who are struggling. When young people witness the power of empowerment in their own lives, they can extend their support to those facing similar challenges.

As a society, it is imperative that we create environments that support as well as challenge young people, allowing them to confront and overcome obstacles with confidence. By doing so, we equip them

with the tools to prosper and thrive in the world at large.

Nurturing youth is a strategic investment in a brighter future.



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Empowering Youth in the Digital Age

By: Janine Verburg

In an increasingly interconnected world, digital literacy and empowerment are essential skills for youth. Empowering young people in a digital landscape is crucial to their ability to navigate the complexities of a globally connected world. This article delves into the opportunities as well as challenges that come with growing up in the digital age.

The digital age is having access to knowledge and resources at one's fingertips. Technology offers a wide range of opportunities for connection, expression, and creativity. By encouraging involvement in technology, we can empower the youth to shape the future as well as ensure a more inclusive and advanced future for all. (Duberry, 2023)

Young activist, Malala Yousafzai harnessed the power of digital platforms to drive the conversation on girls' education, showcasing how technology empowers youth to become catalysts for positive societal change. (Sharma, 2023)

However, there is a downside to this digital age. The youth of today grow up around technology and are constantly seeking stimulation and instant gratification.

Excessive use of technology can have a profound impact on the youth's self-esteem, identity and body image. While technology is a way of engagement between people, the lack of face-to-face conversations can leave children with a gap in their relationship development. Technology desensitises people with studies showing that 36.5% of children feel like they have been cyber-bullied because people forget they are talking to another person, with feeling, on the other side of the screen.

According to Dr Twenge: *"All screen activities are linked to less happiness, and all off-screen activities are linked to more happiness. Eighth graders who spend 10 or more hours a week on social media are 56% more likely to say they are unhappy than those who devote less time to social media. Admittedly, 10 hours a week is a lot. But those who spend six to nine hours a week on social media are still 47% more likely to say they are unhappy than those who use social media even less. The opposite is true of in-person interactions. Those who spend an above-average amount of time with their friends in person are 20% less likely to say they're unhappy than those who hang out for a below-*

average amount of time."

Technology is a powerful resource that can change the world if used correctly. It offers a wide range of opportunities for connection, expression, and creativity. By encouraging involvement in technology, we can empower the youth to shape the future as well as ensure a more inclusive and advanced future for all. (Duberry, 2023)

The use of technology has a great impact on the youth's self-esteem, identity and body image. While technology is a way of engagement between people, the lack of face-to-face conversations can leave children with a gap in their relationship development.

So how do we keep the youth safe when using technology?

To keep young people safe when using technology, here are some key steps:

- Protect their privacy and express confidence in their ability to know right from wrong otherwise, there will not be a bond of trust if things go askew.
- Avoid age-inappropriate content with parental control for younger viewers.
- Manage their screen time when they are young.
- Teach children about predators as well as information that is not to be shared online. This includes school names, cellphone numbers or their home address.
- In the event a child is being cyber-bullied, support them, after the child understands that they are safe and you are "on their side", you should block

and report the bully's account as well as have an informed discussion about online interactions. (Kyla, 2023)

By empowering youth, we promote digital mindfulness and balance with technology. Encouraging healthy offline activity and fostering open communication about online experiences are vital components that nurture their well-being as well.

With the right guidance and support, young individuals have the potential to shape the future and become more informed, engaged and innovative leaders.

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Guiding Youth Towards Success: The Power of Mentorship

By: Janine Verburg

Mentorship is a powerful force in youth empowerment, and this article emphasises the profound impact of positive role models in a young person's life.

As a young woman, I turned to my mom for guidance. She steered me through multiple emotional breakdowns and self-doubt by steadfastly believing in my capabilities. If I aspired to be an author, she handed me a notebook and pen. If I aimed to become a professional swimmer, she drove me to swimming lessons every Thursday and patiently observed my practice. Without her mentorship and unwavering confidence, I wouldn't be the person I am today, nor would I have accomplished the feats I hold dear.

Guiding youth towards success is a collective responsibility. The formative years of adolescence and young adulthood are pivotal in shaping an individual. As a society, we must acknowledge and appreciate the profound impact mentorship has on the youth.

The invaluable role of a mentor cannot be overstated. Mentors offer support, and insights, and help navigate the intricate pathways of personal and

professional development.

Mentors play a transformative role in building confidence in youth. Through their encouragement, young individuals can gain newfound confidence, empowering them to pursue their dreams, take risks, and step outside of their comfort zones. When a mentor believes in a young person's abilities, it conveys a powerful message that their dreams are valid and attainable. This assurance can help the youth overcome doubts and unlock their full potential.

Mentors share their wealth of knowledge and experience, guiding youth toward success. They assist young individuals in setting and achieving goals by helping them identify priorities and offering strategic guidance. Mentors also encourage the youth to take ownership and pride in their achievements, no matter how small. In this way, mentors create a framework for the youth's success under their guidance.

Mentors serve as role models for the youth, embodying qualities that young

individuals aspire to emulate. By imparting their wisdom, mentors guide the youth to become leaders in their own right.

The empowerment that stems from mentorship extends far beyond immediate goals. It cultivates a mindset of continuous improvement and self-belief, laying the foundation for the youth's future success.

You might be wondering, "How can I be a good mentor?" It's as simple as:

- Helping a young individual explore their interests.
- Offering a trusting space where they can learn and explore autonomy.
- Being honest and direct when they ask questions about the world around them.
- Sharing knowledge (Spiller, 2021).

To empower a young individual once you start mentoring them, you should:

- Foster self-awareness: A person seeking empowerment must understand their core values and have a desire to improve themselves. By knowing what motivates them and recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, they can achieve greater success in life.
- Promote self-confidence: Belief in one's skills and abilities is essential. Instead of doubting oneself or thinking about what one "should" do or think, self-doubt should be set aside.
- Teach intention: Setting clear goals can create a path to success. By following this path, individuals can change and improve themselves in the process (Baker, 2023).

As guides for the youth, we should create a network of support that empowers every young person to reach for the stars and achieve their dreams. By investing in a future generation of empowered leaders, we ensure a brighter and more promising tomorrow.

