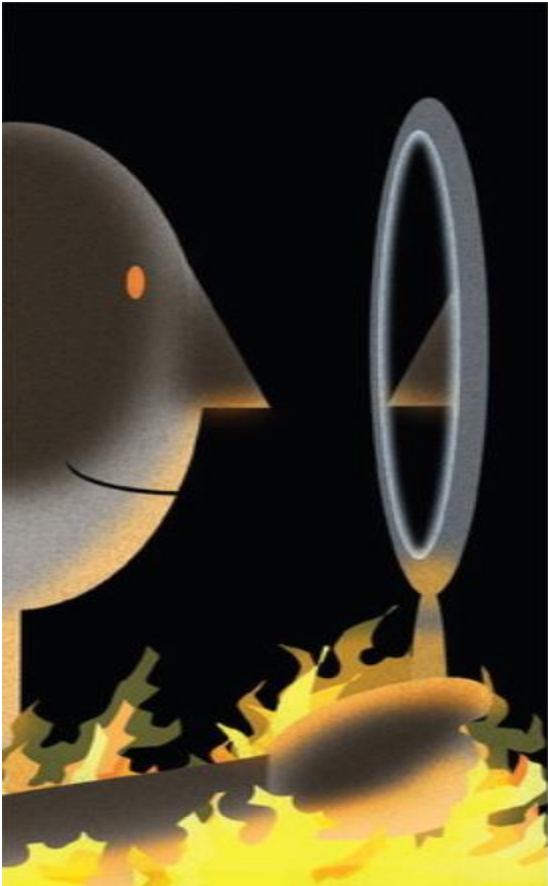


Another week, another shooting

The devastating consequences of abandoning truth



Washington Times, By Everett Piper, Sept. 1, 2025

As a university president, I had a front-row seat as I watched hundreds of students descend onto my campus every year. Each fall, I watched with growing discomfort as the increase in self-centeredness became more apparent.

From the athlete who was upset because his coach was too harsh, to the student who failed a test because the professor was “unfair,” to the coed who was incredulous because a faculty member dared to penalize her for skipping class, over and over again, I watched as one generation after another strutted into the classroom with the confidence that they were God’s gift to the ivory tower, regardless of their academic performance (or lack thereof).

After all, how could they possibly be wrong? Each of them had a shelf full of participation trophies to prove it.

The narcissism was nearly pathological. Day after day, they stared into the shimmering light of their iPhones. Night after night, they gazed at their own images on Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok. They seemed to be like Narcissus, with no sense that what they were doing would result in them drowning in their own selfishness.

As in the Greek myth, these young people were too drunk on self-adulation to acknowledge what their hearts should have told them: It was all an illusion. The god they saw in the mirror was not real.

Now, although I think we are always right to criticize this kind of self-absorption, maybe we should, at the same time, ask what role previous generations have played in creating these little demigods. Why are today’s youths so self-consumed? Why has this happened? Does at least part of the responsibility fall upon those preceding them? How did we get, after all, from the Greatest Generation — meeting the challenges of an economic depression, World War II, the Korean War and the Cold War — to the present generation so fixated on safe spaces that someone like Robert (aka “Robin”) Westman

would actually pick up a rifle and start shooting people simply because their worldview offends his transgender sensibilities?

Much of the fault lies with education. It is indisputable that the American academy was initially a Christian invention; however, over the centuries, and especially in recent years, it has undergone liberal deconstruction. The focus of today's schools is no longer on knowledge, character-building or truth; it is now on "diversity, equity and inclusion." Today, it's all about "tolerance." The mission has shifted from teaching what's true to affirming everyone's feelings. The classics have been replaced by cultural Marxism, Critical Race Theory and social and emotional learning. Relativism has replaced reality.

However, the lie of elevating tolerance under the banner of "I can't tolerate your intolerance" and dismissing truth while teaching "it's true that nothing is true" has given us a country of moral and intellectual nihilists. If there is no objective truth and it doesn't matter what you believe as long as it works for you, if, at the end of the day, my truth is my truth and your truth is yours, it is inevitable that our opinions become the ultimate arbiter and the idea that truth exists at all is all but lost.

For decades, American schools have been churning out students with degrees in little more than opinions. We have raised a generation to be so assured of themselves that they have little confidence in much else. They claim there is no truth, but then they presume their views are true. They demand justice while declaring themselves to be the only judge. They ridicule conservatives for their guns while shooting Christians while they pray. Completely oblivious to their self-refuting duplicity, the list goes on and on.

When any civilization's children are taught that the "older books" have little to offer and the Bible has nothing good to say about their morality, that civilization ceases to be civilized.

I warned of this eight years ago in my book "Not a Day Care: The Devastating Consequences of Abandoning Truth." A good education — a classical liberal education — is not about yourself, your safety or your feelings. It's about learning that there is something bigger and better, more trustworthy and enduring, than all that.

The only education that truly liberates us from the consequences of our own sins and the consequences of the sins of others is one that recognizes we all need a Savior. The lessons of human history are clear. All the way back to the story of Cain and Abel, we read time and again that the inevitable result of abandoning truth is that we always start picking up stones and killing one another.

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