



ReGeneration

This documentary film argues that today's youth are cynical and apathetic, and then explores the possible causes of that apathy. Interviews with activists, scholars, artists, and media personalities are interwoven with the stories of a young family, high school students, and a group of musicians. These stories comment on the history of activism in the United States, the influences of media on the millennial generation, as well as ideas for how this generation can enact positive change.

Recommended for ages 13+

Themes: activism; building generations; cross-cultural understanding; current events; education; health; identity; science; social change; social justice; technology

Director(s): Phillip Montgomery | **81 min** | **Documentary** | **2010** | **Country:** United States | **Language:** In English

Official film website: www.regeneration-themovie.com



SET THE STAGE | THOUGHT-STARTERS

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Apathy:** Lack of interest, concern, or motivation.
- **B-roll:** Supplemental film footage that can be used to edit a scene. B-roll is the footage used to cut away from an interview to help tell the story.
- **Empathy:** The ability to understand and share another person's feelings or experiences.
- **Generation:** A group of people born and living during the same time.
 - **The Greatest Generation** is a term for the generation that grew up in the United States in the 1930s during the Great Depression and became adults during World War II.
 - **Baby Boomers** is a term for the generation born in the aftermath of World War II.
 - **Generation X** is a term for the generation born from the 1960s to the 1980s.
 - **Millennials** is a term for the generation of people born between 1984 through 2004, sometimes called the "Me Generation."

For more film terms, refer to the PCFF Film Glossary (pcfFri.org/FilmHub).



Clues and Cues

Pay attention while watching

- How does the B-roll provide additional information to tell the story?

TALK ABOUT IT | DISCUSSION

- How would you describe the characteristics of your generation? Do you think your generation has different characteristics than your parents' generation? If so, what are your theories about why those differences exist?
- Millennials are sometimes called the "Me Generation." What do you think this means? Do you agree with the nickname?
- Scholar and activist Noam Chomsky argues that media is used to "divert the public" from important issues and prevent meaningful social upheaval and change. Do you think the media is a distraction from important issues?
- In the film, Kalle Lasn, the founder of *Adbusters*, says that the millennial generation has an empathy deficit because they've grown up in an isolating electronic environment, deprived of nature and rich human contact. Other commentators argue that youth lack empathy because of media saturation: they've seen too many images of violence and suffering to care. How do you think you're affected by being surrounded by media (cell phones, television, computer games, etc.)? Does it create apathy and lack of empathy?
- Historian and activist Howard Zinn argues that school curricula are partly responsible for youth apathy today because if you don't learn what really happened in history "the population becomes a victim" and the "result is war after war." Do you think it's important to learn about history and why? Do you agree with Zinn's warnings?
- The final section of the film argues that one way to combat apathy is to teach youth how to "use freedom wisely," and to explain that freedom is not just about empty entertainment. What does freedom mean to you?
- The film encourages viewers to join local groups fighting injustice and argues that trying to create social change leads to a richer and more fulfilling life. Do you agree with this idea or do you think it's impossible to create meaningful change through grassroots movements?

GET CREATIVE | EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



For Activity Reel details, downloadable storyboard template and more, visit the the Film Hub website: www.pcffri.org/FilmHub

• Writing Prompt – Take Action!

Create two columns on the board (if in a classroom) or on a piece of paper. In the first column, make a list of some issues or injustices that concern you. In the next column, write down concrete things that can be done about them. Next, choose one issue and write a plan of action. What techniques would you use to combat the injustice or problem (for example direct action, a letter writing campaign, a protest, lobbying, etc.)? What challenges might you have to overcome? Consider including a timeline and a budget in your plan (and if necessary, a fundraising plan like a lemonade stand). When finished, share your action plan with someone else or a small group, and listen to their feedback and ideas.

• Survey Your Generation

In the film, the millennial generation is described as entitled, brand-obsessed, and indifferent to the world's problems. However, in research done by the Pew Research Center (see Resource Links), Millennials were found to be more liberal than the generation before them and more in favor of an activist government, among other things.

For this activity, make your own survey with 3 to 5 questions to ask people of your generation. Which characteristics are you hoping to assess? For instance, maybe you are wondering if your generation is empathetic. What kinds of questions could reveal something about this characteristic? (For example, you could ask people how many times they have helped someone in the last week.) Share your survey results with others and discuss what you found out.

• Make a Mini Documentary

Materials: For this activity, challenge students to make their own mini-documentary (ideally, in small groups). If they have the technology, they can use an easy video editing program. If they do not, they can create a photo documentary with captions.

Interview friends, community leaders or thinkers, teachers, and parents. Ask them to share their thoughts and opinions about your generation. What are the characteristics of your generation in their opinion, if any? What do they think has led to these characteristics in terms of economic, political, cultural factors? After making the mini documentaries, discuss with your class or group.

MAKE CONNECTIONS | ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources complement the film and inspire further discussion or programming.

BOOKS

- **A Young People's History of the United States: Columbus to the War on Terror** by Howard Zinn
- **Generation Green: The Ultimate Teen Guide to Living an Eco-Friendly Life** by Linda and Tosh Sivertsen
- **A is for Activist** by Innosanto Nagara
- **Free At Last: A History of the Civil Rights Movement and Those Who Died in the Struggle** by Sara Bullard

FILMS

- **Druid Peak** (2013)
A troubled teen is sent to live with his estranged father and develops a bond with endangered wolves.
- **What's on Your Plate?** (2009)
Two 11-year-old girls explore the origins and preparation of the food they eat.

• The Student Body (2015)

A high-school student takes a stand against state-mandated body mass index tests and finds herself thrust into the middle of a heated national controversy

• Indicates PCFF festival selection



BEYOND THE FILM | RELATED INTERNET LINKS

- **Pew Research Center Millennials survey:**
www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/03/07/millennials-in-adulthood/
<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/03/07/millennials-in-adulthood/>
- **More articles on Millennials:**
www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/09/the-cheapest-generation/309060/
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/09/the-cheapest-generation/309060/>
- www.nytimes.com/2015/07/30/business/millennials-less-likely-to-leave-the-nest-a-pew-study-finds.html
- **From the White House:**
www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/millennials_report.pdf
https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/millennials_report.pdf

