

A Culture of Crybabies



The 21st Century World of
Wimps, Whiners, and Victims



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Introduction

Y2K

As the new millennium approached in the final months of 1999, the modern world was consumed with the upcoming computer phenomenon known as Y2K. Not a day went by without a news story about another potential Y2K threat that would wreak havoc on New Year's Day 2000.

Was Y2K some invincible computer virus conceived by terrorists that could destroy worldwide computer networks? Had artificial intelligence become so advanced that computers like HAL in the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* could take over the technical systems that served their human creators? No, Y2K—the acronym for the Year 2000 computer bug—was just a well-known oversight on the part of computer designers that coded calendar years using only the last two digits. Older computers couldn't differentiate between 1999, 1899, or 2099; they interpreted only 99. The fear was that at midnight on December 31, 1999, as computer clocks rolled over to 2000, these machines and all the systems that depended on them would fall into chaos as a result of this calendar year confusion.

Even if this were to occur, it's hard to believe that the civilized world would be so seriously affected. However, as Y2K neared, the television news and documentaries conjured up dozens of scenarios of societal breakdown as the "bug" took effect. The doomsday forecasts included total blackout of the electric power grid, failure of food distribution networks, closing of banking institutions, collapse of the stock market and economy, and total shutdown of the Internet. As a result of these impending disasters, many otherwise reasonable people were stockpiling food, water, and gasoline. Whole new industries flourished, providing emergency foodstuffs and survival gear for the crisis. Survivalists were turning their homes into fortresses, building bunkers and stockpiling weapons so they could shoot their unprepared neighbors when they came looking for the food. And politicians at all levels fanned the flames of hysteria by assuring the public that the National Guard, police, and firefighters would be standing by to control the chaos and civil unrest on New Year's Day.

In spite of many computer experts' assurances that any potential problems had been sidestepped with updated equipment and software, hundreds of millions of people went to bed on December 31, 1999, expecting to start the new millennium with widespread power outages, no water, and no food on store shelves, along with civil pandemonium and martial law. The Apocalypse was Now.

Well, the first day of the year 2000 turned out to be shockingly normal: the sun came up, power plants continued to run, water flowed out of taps into coffee pots, local 7-11s still had adequate supplies of Big Gulps and Twinkies, and ATMs dispensed cash and credit. Most amazingly, computers

booted, the Internet was alive, and e-mails were sent and received as usual. Civilization had survived! (Although the survivalists were probably annoyed and disappointed.)

The strangest aspect of Y2K was not that it turned out to be uneventful, but that the population at large was so worried and convinced that defective computers would bring modern society to its knees. After all, twenty-five years earlier mainstream society did not even use computers, yet in the year 2000 civilization apparently could not survive without them.

How did the Y2K phenomenon, which began as a simple computer design oversight, evolve into such fear about what would happen to the modern world on the first day of the year 2000? The panic generated by Y2K was not caused by realistic concerns about defective computers, nor were any serious scenarios of industrial collapse or civil chaos forecast by credible sources. Instead, it was caused by the fearful, timid, and dependent attitudes and behaviors that prevail today in modern culture. The Y2K hysteria is just one notable example, among many, of what we have become as a society at the beginning of the twenty-first century: A Culture of Crybabies.



This book is not about Y2K or computers. It's about the increasingly bizarre, fearful, and dependent culture that we have evolved into. In spite of our knowledge and the technologies that make our lives easier, healthier, and a lot more fun, we have become a culture of wimps, whiners, and victims.

This cultural attitude is not limited to just a handful of vocal complainers or an elite class of spoiled and pampered

celebrities. It has permeated the core of our social foundations and ethics to such an extent that it goes well beyond even being labeled as the behavior of a “new generation.” Whether or not you personally participate in this established social mentality, the Culture of Crybabies affects every one of us in our daily lives, and has defined who and what we are as a society in the decades surrounding the new millennium.

Now, most reasonable individuals will tell you they would not tolerate whiny, bratty, lazy, irresponsible, stupid, or needy behavior in their personal lives. Yet, as a whole, society is apparently not concerned about such attitudes and conduct in our social, political, and legal structures. Consider:

Criminals and out-of-control kids are not responsible for their behavior. Blame it on some new medical syndrome or society at large.

Political Correctness has thoroughly embedded itself in our culture and social institutions. Today, every spoken word and action must be cleansed through a PC filter to ensure no one is “offended.”

The news media has evolved from news reporting organizations to entertainment networks with ratings to maintain. More significant, the media is creating, managing, and serving up the news to a thought-challenged audience who doesn’t know the difference between fact, opinion, and speculation.

The vast majority of politicians at all levels do not represent the people who elect them. First and foremost they serve their political parties’ interests, manipulating issues, legislation, and the public to gain power and reelection. Apparently feeling powerless against this

self-serving arrangement, we whimper our objections and continue to reelect them.

An unfortunate event is never an accident or your fault. You were victimized by some other person or company who now owes you compensation. Juries award millions of dollars to idiots who spill hot coffee on themselves, or willfully smoke cigarettes and then sue for their self-inflicted condition. Lawyers, along with the “I’ve been injured” mentality of their clients, have impacted every aspect of our society and economy. We function in fear of the lawsuit and pay exorbitant fees to insurance companies in hope of avoiding financial liability.

In the United States—like the Middle East—religious attitudes and behavior often prevail over logic and common sense. While religion has always been a cornerstone of American culture, it has departed home and church to take up permanent residence in Washington (with a second home on the Fox News Channel).

Our fear and overreaction to 9/11 have changed our way of life to a degree the terrorists could never have achieved on their own. Thanks to direct government acts that curtail civil liberties, we now live on the brink of Orwell’s *1984*, and our society is burdened with draconian “anti-terror” and “security” laws. Meanwhile, the timid citizenry are duct-taped inside their homes, cowering under the bed. The terrorists are winning.



The Culture of Crybabies does not refer to a particular nation or people. All ethnic and economic groups are

culpable. Many cultures, including those of North America, Europe, and most other first-world nations, deserve the label. Notably, and in spite of much partisan rhetoric to the contrary, it defies mainstream political divisions. Liberals, moderates, and conservatives of many governments all contribute to the Culture of Crybabies. Nor does it apply just to the current generation. Certain attitudes prevailed a hundred years ago. Indeed, blind faith in religious dogma has dominated for thousands of years. For the most part though, the Culture of Crybabies has grown dramatically over the last fifty years, and is in full bloom now at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Although this culture has spread worldwide, the United States is particularly culpable. In spite of its much-touted image of being the world's leader, and a technical and economic powerhouse with one of the highest standards of living, U.S. society has devolved into a spoiled, under-educated, over-fed, and over-sensitive nation of wimps, whiners, and victims. While the United States is not the exclusive focus of this discussion, it is the primary reservoir for so much of the Culture of Crybabies.



This book holds up a mirror to the face of modern America. Although we claim to reflect the image of a society built on character, responsibility, self-sufficiency, courage, justice, democracy, and common sense, it is an illusion that we cling to as we function in fear, conflict, faith, and dependence. Personal character, responsibility, and achievement have morphed into Political Correctness, excused laziness, and a

sense of entitlement; individual and national courage have given way to fear, paranoia, and lack of resolve; knowledge, logic, and common sense are often overshadowed by religious faith, prayer, and hope; and our democracy has been hijacked by career politicians and party machines that humor the public with the notion that your vote really makes a difference. While some individual citizens may conduct their lives according to the high ideals that we claim, our society as a whole has abandoned those principles and succumbed to fear, whining, and victimhood.

The third chapter is titled “I’m Offended!” You may already be offended by some of the statements I’ve made so far. That’s precisely the point. As a society, we have come to expect, even demand, a life guaranteed to be free of discomfort, mishaps, accidents, and even opposing attitudes or opinions.

If you are not offended yet, sit back and enjoy; we will have good fun examining this strange new world in which we live. For you confirmed Crybabies, I will try to give advance warning when we are coming up on potentially controversial comments that might offend your delicate sensitivities. Get some Kleenex and fasten your seat belt. It’s going to be a rough ride.

And should you be on the verge of dismissing this as the standard rant of Rush Limbaugh and Company, do read on. Many of their sacred cows will soon be heading to the slaughterhouse.

