

People today are savvy, but not smart

by MARK PAVILONS

Few among us would question the fact that society is changing.

Every generation brings with it a new approach, new ideas and a new slant on life.

Many of our teens and 20-somethings are likely among the most tech savvy individuals that our society has produced. Good for them.

But being savvy doesn't always mean being smart.

Merriam-Webster defines savvy as "having or showing perception, comprehension, or shrewdness especially in practical matters."

Well, in my experience and opinion, today's tech smart youth may be perceptive, but I'm not sure if they excel in "practical matters."

I'd like to think my wife and I produced and raised rather intelligent kids. They are all smart in their own ways.

Lexie, the university student, is wise beyond her years and exudes compassion. She's well versed in areas of justice and equality. She can manage to drive from London to Goderich to Bolton with no problem. But balancing her cheque book is another matter.

She's had part-time jobs since she was young, and has developed a strong work ethic. She's quick to understand the qualities of her coworkers and knows when to stay clear of a grumpy manager.

While she's months away from her university degree, I'm not sure if she's completely ready for the world. In hindsight, maybe none of us were. She's a well rounded individual mind you, but she lacks some common sense and practical methodology.

She can navigate the public transit system, and has been to dozens of airports around the world, but she has trouble understanding shipping costs, fees or duty when ordering on Amazon. She's frugal, but will stop and buy an over-priced bottle of water at the gas station, just because it's convenient.

Her people skills are impeccable, and she can likely carry on a conversation with pretty much anyone. She's been pretty good, but she does exhibit a certain amount of "me" when she needs or wants something.

My son Liam wasn't much of an academic but is trying to focus on his future. He's a hard worker, and needs a little push more often than not. He has a great sense of humour (what can I say) but he's opinionated and stubborn. He just doesn't get why his pay cheque dwindles because of taxes.

Kyleigh, at 14, is a bit of an anomaly. She's definitely assertive, outspoken and often brash and sassy. She thinks we "get" money on our debit and credit cards. Just where this money comes from is a mystery and she's not sure why there isn't an endless supply. I wonder that, too.

They may be tech savvy and know their way around iTunes, Netflix and Snapchat, but I worry.

When a problem arises, they're quick to call their mom, who always provides aid or advice. I'm told they're leary of calling me because my first reaction would be a stern, "I told you so" when all they need is compassion and caring. Maybe I'm old fashioned but when my dad told me to do it myself, I did it myself. Independence is learned; it comes from experience.

My kids are amazing, but I doubt they could fend for themselves on a tropical island or during an apocalypse.

I remember, to this very day, walking home from public school, at maybe 8 years old, during a snowstorm. My sister didn't show up to take me home, so I trudged along the streets of Etobicoke, until I found my home. Yes, I was much later than usual, causing my mom some concern. And I was quite cold and covered in snow.

But even at that age, I wasn't scared or freaking out. I was driven. I had a task to do and I had to figure out it, using what God gave me.

There were no phones, rides from other parents, or even a local bus on our street.

I have also found that my charges don't much care for unsolicited advice. But I have so much wisdom to impart!

We all have roles and responsibilities in our relationships and households.

In our household I tend to be in charge of major bills, utilities, taxes, car insurance all the really fun stuff! Odd because math was never my strong suit. Maybe it's my Virgo qualities that make me organized and prepared.

Again, most of it came because I simply had to do it. No one held my hand or did it for me.

In our younger years, my wife and I played a little bit of Sega Genesis at home (yes, I know). Through the years we watched as these games progressed, to the point where today, my son is quite the pro on his Ps4 and Xbox systems. He's also dabbled in song production and recorded a couple of songs.

He watches poignant movies and really absorbs many of life's lessons. He has an amazing memory and deep down inside, a good heart.

I credit my wife for giving all of our children some very good qualities.

Maybe I expect too much from them. There's that old adage about tossing them in the deep end until they swim. Well, that actually happened to yours truly during his first swimming lesson.

The other day, a couple of young tellers at the bank had no idea how to handle a cashier's check from the U.S. Surely this wasn't the first time this came across their desk. Alas, in another 10 days or so, I should have an answer! But I have to ask, in this technologically advanced banking system, what's the hold-up?

Will being tech savvy help our kids along their respective journeys? I'm not sure. It does make many things quite convenient, but maybe we're losing some vital skills along this e-journey.

I'd love to fast-forward the digital recording of society, to catch a glimpse our future selves.

There's little doubt that technology will dominate humankind's evolution.

Let's try to retain some humanity, common sense and compassion along the way.