

## **Entertainment and Society**

Careful analysis and reflection have shown how entertainment has played a powerful role in shaping culture in our societies. The Media and television “programming” are often programming our minds through the influence of gripping entertainment. The growing use of smartphones makes this problem more dominant by targeting a young audience. Most of this influence has been negative and continues to leave lasting impressions on us.

As long as humans are live on the earth, there will always be the effects of entertainment’s colossal impact on society; positive and negative.

Society is a reflection of the home, so there is where the problem must be fixed. Teaching children sound principles, spiritual and moral values, will help to offset much of the negative they are bombarded with on a daily basis. Who or what will you allow to craft your children’s future? Will it be the wizards of negative entertainment and the media, or your awesome parenting skills?

According to Wikipedia, entertainment is all about grabbing the “attention and interest of an audience.” It also “brings pleasure and delight.” With that powerful combination, some will take advantage of the opportunity to plant seeds in ripe young minds, with the intention of influencing how they think.

Entertainment, apart from bringing pleasure and delight to an audience, and grabbing attention, sometimes its purpose is to capture our minds and redirect our value system. Just pay attention to the challenges with our youth. We are seduced by entertainment and some have an insatiable desire for more, so it’s constantly churned out.

Entertainment adds excitement to life. It can provide an escape from a not so glamorous reality. We may fantasize by escaping in the adventures of our heroes or identify with a captivating portrayal of a life we wish we had. Whether it impacts us negatively or positively depends on our state of mind and the extent of our appetite. Real-life seems dull by comparison to the “reality” created in the entertainment realm

Why is negative entertainment so much a part of our culture despite its ability to impact our youth (see here)? What kind of impact does entertainment have on our society in the long term?

Much entertainment has desensitized sex, murder, violence. It has second-guessed integrity, spiritual and moral values. Left alone, it would rob the next generation of any fundamental values period. Still, the ability to pass on the baton of character, and integrity is within our control. We can still do our part to enrich the future but we must take action now!

### Taking Back Control of our Relationships

The relationship is the most rewarding and fruitful union on earth and always will be. If we zero in – marriage and the family. If we zoom out to see the result of the fruit of all this over time – our society and the world.

The quality of our relationships defines who we are as a society. Relationships are a valuable investment we must all strive to protect.

We build houses and institutions to protect and nurture our relationships. There, we teach established principles and values based on spiritual, ethical, learned lessons. This results in a culture that empowers people to function at their best in their respective areas – and pass on their worth to the ensuing generation. This is the garden of human existence in a nutshell.

Negative entertainment with its warped perceptions and models of relationships and values handed down to us, shouldn't dictate or define us. We are responsible for instructing and protecting those entrusted to us; hence the family model.

We are the guardians of our own heritage. We must be committed to playing our part in protecting the future generation, starting in the home. We must discard the things which oppose the ideal family model. We must work hard to overcome all obstacles and become the greatest influence in our society again.

## Choose Good Role Models

It is no secret that people tend to pattern their lives after their influences. Have you ever read the biographies of just about every accomplished person? I am sure you noticed many names mentioned as the reason for their inspiration. So, yes, our influences are powerful factors in our lives.

We are the sum of all our influences and our decisions to date. We should choose our influences carefully because their “superpower” becomes a part of us, one way or the other.

You may be saying, but isn't there positive entertainment?

Yes, there is. But, it is well known that packaging the good with the bad doesn't lessen the impact of the “bad.” The saying “One bad apple can spoil the ‘barrel’” certainly applies here. The best way to communicate a negative is to package it with a lot of positive.

We have no control over what is produced by the entertainment industry so we have to exercise the only control we have, in our homes.

The things we seek to protect our investment in our relationships from are the same things entertainment glorifies. No wonder we struggle to raise our children, the hope of the future.

How Entertainment Influences Society

How does culture shape our identity? Now, isn't it bad enough for negative influences in entertainment to offend us occasionally? Sadly, that's not the case.

These effects are designed to be long-lasting and are also crafted by

- the art of persuasion
- psychological analyses and research
- great packaging inclusive of;
  - paraphernalia – for creating and sustaining a movement that will last beyond the event
  - video games – gain followers and sustain the brand
  - websites/social media – promote social interaction, influence trends, build numbers, create buzz, influence through shares and “likes”

- corporate partnerships – general advertising, promotion on cereal boxes, etc.
- billboards – general promotion and awareness
- trailers/promos – build excitement and gain followers

All powerful tools that further reinforce the impression on our minds. Now we understand why so much goes into special effects and marketing of content.

What we allow to affect us depends on our belief system; Our compliance with spiritual and moral stimuli, instruction from authority figures, and our common sense. A society is demoralized when powerful people use their influence to consistently impose negative “programs” on it. And with little thought about what others think. This is usually driven by two things;

1. Profit: – An entertainment industry driven by profit, will result in compromise and lower values – as there will be a requirement to please all. Eventually, society will mirror these values and merge them with real life
2. Agendas: – When the primary focus is to promote agendas that glorify a set of selfish unpopular ideas, concepts, and lifestyles, the society will deteriorate

#### The Effects of Sex in Entertainment

Why is casual sex and infidelity promoted so much on TV, games, Ads, music, and entertainment in general? The answer is simple... because it sells and perhaps provides a rush for those who are expecting it as a “bonus” or some kind of treat. Most are so stimulated by sex that it prompts them to respond emotionally or physically. Whenever we are exposed to a sexual message in a song, a visual in a movie... we may experience tension. This tension can have varying adverse effects on people, causing some to act out inappropriately.

For casual couples, this “treat” is likely to materialize at the end of the presentation, if you catch my drift.

The entertainment industry benefits from a free, available built-in 4-D special effect in us humans.

It leverages the natural sensations of sexual arousal and imagination in humans. Who doesn't want to be sexually aroused, right? Hence, they meet market-demands and provide a solution. Their unspoken message is loud and reads like this;

Let's satisfy some human needs (not humane) and cater to the fantasies of some at the expense of others. We will promote our own values whether they meet accepted decent criteria or not. We will set up our own boundaries. We don't care whether you approve.

The problem is that all humans are caught in that sexual net whether;

- they are of age
- they want to
- their faith/spiritual disposition, family's or moral standards allow

Who gives the entertainment industry the right to determine your personal values? We may not allow them those rights in our homes and space but they sure have the "right" to do what they do. Let's consider this though...

The things we probably don't do in our own homes, we allow them to do via the entertainment network. Think about that for a moment. Who has greater authority in your home?

Is the Entertainment Industry a Reflection of Society?

Are they solely responsible for what they dish out or do we have a part to play?

Are the negative influences of entertainment merely a reflection of our society that the entertainment industry is capitalizing on?

Are they simply responding to what we want – market demands? Is it OK to meet those demands knowing that they may be adding to the problem? Then whose fault is it? Don't we create those demands? The answers to these questions reveal the real problem at hand, i.e. the components of society. Unfortunately, as with any other industry, the objective is about satisfying demands, money, and influence. The responsibility to positively impact society is left to us.

I believe any industry involved in wielding great psychological power over others, should have higher accountability. Do you?

### The Negative Effects of Entertainment on the Youth

There is research data that shows we are seeing the results of our youth acting out because of the negative influences presented by various entertainment sources. Namely, movies, music citing exposure to violence, illicit sex, misrepresentation of normalcy, and pushed from every corner. What makes this more frightening is when the environment at home is abusive. Young people who are troubled will be spurred by negative entertainment.

It is said that by the time an ordinary teenager reaches the age of 18, they would have witnessed around 16,000 murders and 200,000 acts of violence on TV. That's nothing to do with gaming in which the occurrences are even greater per time spent playing.

Now that's serious stuff. People negatively affected by negative programs will certainly be more difficult to deal with in the future. With our relationships and society affected, what will we do? How can we break these controls and re-focus our efforts on restoring good values again? How can we break free of the negative influences and the agendas of the entertainment industry?

Conclusion:

We have all been influenced by some of what we consumed over the years. Everything has affected us in one way or another but it's not always bad. It has made us who we are today. In spite of the negatives, there were also some positives that kept us steadfast and created balance.

Some of those negatives helped to make us strong and provided opportunities to showcase our integrity and character. If we have paid any attention to life, what we have learned should put us in a position to protect others from needless harm.

Now, this topic has already shaped our present and will continue to define our future, so, we must be concerned. What we watch and listen to can shape our mindset and affect how we function and relate to others.

We must do our best to protect those we love from casual influences. The negative effect of entertainment on society is strong but we must be governed by God, principles, good values, and purpose. We are the defenders of our household. The future our loved ones get to inherit depends on us.

Below, is a guideline you can use to restructure your life and improve values and quality time in your relationships. Enhance it however you like.

- Turn off the TV(s) – only use for approved family entertainment.
- Turn off the computer – if using it for work, assignments, research, fun; fine, but don't overdo.
- TURN OFF the smartphone sometimes – Yes, you will live – just do it. Voice mail still works
- Remove access and unsupervised exposure to negative entertainment from your underaged children – Yes, that includes removing devices or internet and cable access from bedrooms (unless you can properly monitor them)
- Read positive books that promote love, forgiveness, sharing, general education, good values
- Have regular family meetings and plan your own entertainment
- Exercise and increase sporting activities
- Pay attention to the type of music being listened to. Much of it is counter-productive and promotes promiscuity, rebellion, and the occult
- Spend quality time talking about the future and helping one another to accomplish their dreams/purpose
- Play board games

Once everyone is on board (pun intended), the result of doing this can be phenomenal if you manage to pull it off. Your relationships and quality of life will improve and be more meaningful. Life will be fulfilling as time is redeemed and repurposed.