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Condemned and Hated
Isis Nelson

Adults have consistently ignored young opinions and voices forever. It's taught to us that we should respect our elders, because they're old, and not speak unless spoken to by an adults. They constantly fail to protect and help us. The history of our world is filled with young people and children being failed by adults and losing their rights. From birth, we're told that we are inherently inferior. Year after year, young people's ideas are shot down by older relatives, older siblings, teachers, professors, leaders, bosses, etc. Our ambitious, often progressive, ideals and values are instantly invalid because we're "young and inexperienced", full of "idealism", or told older people "know better". Love, compassion, inclusivity, and ideas of acceptance are laughed off by adults.

We're compared to communists, socialists, "feminists" (with very negative denotations), "hippies", "SJWs" (whatever that means to them), and oppressed by systematic, visible, active values older people have against the young. We're constantly told that change has to be incremental and slow; almost-like how the U.S. government allowed states to adjust, meaning it took years for schools, mostly in the South, to desegregate. Incremental change is inefficient and never-enough for the most ignored people in this world. I am absolutely tired of waiting for older people to catch up with our always changing, diverse planet and inhabitants. We cannot allow older, ignorant actions and opinions to blind us from the humanity of others. I don't have any patience for adults' failings, stale, failures to acknowledge oppression, and absolutist ways. I am tired of having to respect people older than me without ever knowing their actions or inactions. Too many adults in my life have failed me to let me allow this to continue. I, for one, refuse to give in the oppressive, stagnant actions and views elders and adults have against us. As if we're not educated, socially aware, smart, and worthy of respect. I'm tired of being yelled at because "not everything is about race", or how "unrealistic" my ideas are.

Children and teenagers have rights, just as every human does. We cannot be made silenced or ignored due to older peoples' unchanging values. Just because they lived in the 60s or 70s are alive doesn't make me respect, and or like them. I do not care for people that think I should like them because they're older than me. I judge others by their character, actions, and views, not age. I like and respect people for their actions, inactions, attitudes, ethics, and ways of thinking. I don't like or respect others when they oppress/harm children, and then actively allowed for their generation to destroy that which is around us, promoted hawkish ideals and inhumane actions. My snarl will vicious and my voice louder when I'm discounted just because of my age. As if my years and experiences on Earth confirm my ideas and views.

Age discrimination against young individuals is called "adultism" and is currently defined as "positive bias toward adults, addictions to adults, and discrimination toward the young". At the heart of most conversations and actions between adults and youth have positive adult bias. Education, youth work, business, schools, government organizations, or elsewhere, adultism is motivation behind behavior. It is present in attitudes, cultures, systems, physical places, and much more. Adultism also goes hand-in-hand with ephebiphobia, the fear of youth. This phobia is full-blown in modern media. Academics, government agencies, educators, and youth advocacy organization describe ephbiphobia as "any loathing, paranoia, or fear of young people, or the time of life called 'youth'". This widespread feeling among adults affects everything, and it's

a legitimate issue. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Denying young people their right to vote and representation, creating policies, laws, and structures excluding youth voices very well might be ephebiphobia. Along with legislation, agencies and libraries that exclude or deny youth participation as an outreach method is an act of discrimination. This applies to police, government personnel and administrators that act in overbearing or misguided ways.

Ephebiphobia, unfortunately, has a large affect on politics. Once young individuals connect with their community through forms of civic engagement like volunteering and activism, they're far more likely to be become and remain active voters for the rest of their lives. Fear of youth has led legislators and voting organizations to ignore young peoples' concerns and enthusiasm to influence the world around them. In culture, media networks and publishers often demonize young people's interests, activities, and ideas. Through this, we feel ashamed to be involved with our own peers and communities. To add onto that — young PoC are neglected by youth leadership programs, and are then locked up in juvenile detention centers, making their experiences of racism and sexism much worse. This reinforces stereotypes of minorities, meanwhile forcing young PoC to silence themselves and their cultures in fear of being persecuted.

June Jordan, a Caribbean-American feminist poet and activist, in her book Passion, a set of poems from 1977 – 1980, said this about hippies in the 1970s: "When we heard about the hippies, the barely more than boys and girls who decided to try something different … we laughed at them. We condemned them, our children, for seeking a different future. We hated them for their flowers, for their love, and for their unmistakable rejection of every hideous, mistaken compromise that we had made throughout our hollow, money-bitten, frightened, adult lives…" Does this not ring true about current socially and politically aware teenagers and young adults? We're condemned for dreaming about better and different futures filled with acceptance, love, and new values, free of any discrimination. Why is that a bad thing? Why must we be so hated for thinking forward about our own future and the children that will inhabit it? Why is positive progress suddenly so appalling that we're shamed for even thinking about it? Does democracy not apply to us too?

Ephebiphobia and adultism have existed for thousands of years. Plato once remarked, "What is happening to our young people? They disrespect their elders, they disobey their parents. They ignore the law. They riot in the streets, inflamed with wild notions. Their morals are decaying. What is to become of them?" Versions of this are continually echoed throughout time. Hatred of young people is very real and very damaging. Because of our continually risk-adverse culture, most children's behaviors are constrained and restricted by their parents. We're raised and educated, then kept "safe" due to our parents' own anxieties, which are fueled by stories and images of violent, aggressive crimes. Young people are labeled as "troublemakers" and "failures" because societies fail to even notice our bright, and sometimes hidden, potentials.

These fears of youth culture and prejudices against us lessen the chances of the youngest generations to succeed in the future. I despair for my fellow minors everyday. A violent, aggressive, antisocial minority, one that's always existed, causes us to be viewed through slanted lenses. This view is so distorted, young people face a self-fulfilling prophecy: why even bother to try when you're told that you're a failure? Why try to strive when your very existence is seen as an annoying nuisance? Adult paternalism wants to protect young people, and if this process curtails freedoms, damages potential, and destroys civil liberties, it's viewed as merely incidental. Most of the old do not care about us, or our experiences. We're barely human at all to them, just naive children who don't learn or think.

My message to other young people: rebel, liberate yourselves and peers. Do not allow adults or elders to treat you as sub-human. You are your own being, with your own thoughts, feelings, values, and ideas. Do your best and fight against a society that was not made for you. Be fair, kind, compassionate, and accepting of those different than you. Please don't be ashamed to be who you are. You are valuable and just as human as your parents, teachers, or anyone else. We, like every other person, deserve to be respected and only judged by our character, not by our age, race, religion, nationality, etc. Being a "special snowflake" isn't a bad thing. Shed the ugly labels those who're older than you embedded in your skin. Aspire to be better than the generations before us. Don't let oppression remain in your homes. We have the potential to make the world a better place, so we will. We are the future, after all, and we know the world is better when we work together. Show hateful adults what the future looks like.

Saying No Is Enough
Akilah S. Richards

I often hear people talk about pregnancy from a space of gratitude – and sometimes excitement. Though I agree that the journey is incredible and enriching, there is another, perhaps less embraced aspect: For me, pregnancy was also full of moments of intense vulnerability, fear, and at times, anger. I felt fearful about my own safety, it being so inextricably linked with the safety of the person growing in my belly.

Inadvertent pushes from someone who stood in a line behind me, an overly-ambitious driver who darted across me at an intersection, a woman who threatened me because she (wrongly) assumed I stole her parking spot – all those instances of intense vulnerability and primal fear, stemming from my need to protect my future child. Even more unnerving were the instances where physical contact with my belly wasn't just implied, it was accomplished. This is where my anger would rise to the surface – I'd get angry at the people who felt completely within their rights to touch my belly, to touch my baby. Whether from an elderly man or a woman who was also a mother, I resented them for feeling okay with touching my child without permission, even when she was in utero. For sure, I felt uncomfortable with them trying to touch my body – and all that that says about being a woman in public space. But more than that, it clued me in to many adults' idea that they don't need children's permission to touch them – or to require that they touch someone else.

Today, my daughters are twelve and ten, and I still feel the need to protect them physically – and to advocate for their right to govern their own bodies. But I have to do more than advocate for them. In a world that constantly sends messages to women about connecting their value with their physicality and desirability, I need to help them operate with an awareness of their right to reject or accept physical touch, or any act that affects their personal space or feeling of safety, from any adult or child. And that means I have to be honest about the ways that I, myself, might infringe on their personal boundaries, and I have to facilitate these conversations with the adults around me. And I don't just mean conversations about what we can do to protect children, but what we must do to help children understand their options for protecting their physical and emotional selves.

One way we can approach this goal is to explore some of the common mistakes we adults make when it comes to helping children practice bodily autonomy, which is at the root of con-

sent culture for children. Otherwise, we will continue to do the things that compromise the self-confidence, the sense of safety/ bodily autonomy, and the mental wellness of the children we love. Because the reality is that children are coerced into situations where their bodies are treated as the property of their parents. The instances vary from making them hug a family member to trading their body for sex, drugs, or even food. All of these instances can send a message to children that their bodies are not their own. They also blur the lines between safe and unsafe touch, or consent versus coercion, and make it difficult for many children to identify when they're being inappropriately or uncomfortably touched by an adult or another child. Many of us send messages that lessen their ability to recognize and trust what feels safe and uncomfortable for them, as well as how to confidently communicate with an adult that they trust when their personal boundaries are violated by anyone, including an adult or child they know and trust.

Statistically, the percentages are wildly unnerving: 90% of child sexual abuse victims know the perpetrator in some way, and 68% are abused by family members. What's more staggering is that 90% are abused by someone they know, love, or trust, and that 20% of child sexual abuse victims are under the age of eight. Most of them don't tell until they become adults. One of the reasons for this is that as children, they didn't have language around those feelings. No one was talking to them about their right to feel safe in their own bodies – to have and assert personal boundaries as a way of protecting themselves.

Consent culture is often confined to the topic of consensual sex or intimacy among adults, and that it should extend toward all behaviors and to children. Similarly, the term bodily autonomy tends to be more widely recognized under a specific topic: reproductive justice advocacy – and more specifically, the pro-choice movement among abortion rights. So as to extend these important concepts beyond the scope of sex and reproduction, let's look how parents' mistakes around bodily autonomy can contradict the practice of consent culture among children. Because when children don't feel sure about inappropriate touch, we must look at the narratives around body ownership and consent. For this reason, we must look at confident body autonomy for all people, even before they become adults, and outside of the context of sex.

Teaching Children to Ignore Personal Boundaries

In the US, we have a subtle history of showing children that their bodies are owned by their parents. Forced physical contact with relatives reinforce the dangerously wrong message that relatives can't be abusers. "Grandpa just wants to hug you – don't back away," or other similar verbal prompts, tell children to ignore their feelings about a person (whether based on intuition or past experience) and listen to what an adult says instead. As well-meaning observers, we adults often infringe on personal boundaries within children's interactions. Coercing a reserved child to hold hands and dance around with an outgoing child may feel like we're helping that child develop good social skills. But what we may actually do is teach them that it's okay for other people to force them to do what makes them (or other people) comfortable.

In later years, that can cause some children to feel that they need to be forced to do things, or that their natural tendency is somehow not okay. This can also have long-term negative effects on their social skills because self-esteem and authentic friendships are difficult to form and maintain when a person isn't okay with who and how they innately are. Also, many children who endure sexual abuse in particular don't tell because they're afraid of being blamed for being complicit in the abuse. This tells us that children don't understand abuse. That's in part because we, the

adults, don't give them the language to name these experiences, and to feel safe coming to us about them.

Difficult aspects of personal boundary violation, particularly peer-to-peer abuse, make it extra complicated for adults to feel clear on how to broach the topic with children. But children need to know that other children can be abusers and that they can abuse another child by touching them without permission, even if that child told them yes in the past. Whether subtle or overt, the effects of childhood body violations are that we don't feel that we own ourselves. I know this from personal experience. We feel uncomfortable, unsure, or even afraid about asserting dominion over our own bodies. And again, it's important to realize that our bodies and our boundaries exist outside of sex, and consent is required for anything having to do with our bodies.

A solution to the blurred lines of personal boundaries is to practice parenting without coercion. Consent culture should start with children – and when children grow up believing that all people have the right to control and protect their own bodies, then they're likely to respect other people's boundaries, and to speak up when boundaries – whether their own or those of others – are being violated.

Reinforcing Shame or Silence Around Body-Related Feelings

Instead of starting positive, developmentally appropriate conversation about bodies, sex, and intimacy in general, many parents tend to omit those terms when conversing with their children. But getting comfortable with saying penis, vagina, anus, or even the more popular (and maybe less easy to hear from a child) slang terms like butthole, for example, can lessen the feeling of shame around talking about private body parts or body-related feelings.

These same types of conversations can also help children feel equipped to communicate with someone they trust if they are being sexually violated, for example. This way, we're not just giving them language about what's happening with them, we're also helping them express what's happening to them. If they're comfortable naming them, then they have language to utilize when those body parts are affected by anyone in any way.

Another word that often goes unspoken among parents to children in healthy ways is masturbation. It's normal for children's curiosity to include their own bodies, sometimes showing up as self-pleasuring. Labeling that form of self-exploration as bad, or avoiding the topic with your child altogether, can make it difficult for a child to feel comfortable with their own bodies and physical feelings. As caring adults, one way we can nurture safe space for children is to educate ourselves on taboo topics like masturbation and children, particularly prepubescent children. Some of us may have incorrect ideas about masturbation based on our parents' perspectives or other aspects of our own introduction to sexuality. But our children are not us, and though they are our responsibility, their bodies and experiences are their own. In support of that, we can read, discuss, and watch our way towards a sex-positive approach to parenting so that our children feel safe asking questions, and knowing (from experience) that they can discuss any aspect of their bodies with us, including sensations and thoughts that they may find pleasurable.

Personally, I address masturbation with my daughters in part because I don't ever want to set the precedent that anyone (not even their mother) needs to validate how to explore aspects of their sexuality. My intention is to avoid making masturbation an issue of morality or appropriateness, and instead focus on what is socially safe and personally hygienic. In other words, as Lea Grover so perfectly stated, "We don't play with our vulvas at the table."

Neglecting to Teach Your Child the Importance of Their Intuition

Intuition is not exclusive to adulthood, and it can play a very helpful role in helping a child develop a healthy sense of bodily autonomy. At any age, we have feelings in our bellies or chests, for example, that are directly triggered by feelings of safety or lack thereof. Help children to name and acknowledge those feelings – and to trust them.

One way I practice nurturing intuition is to help children understand what intuition does. For my girls, I like the simple definition of intuition as a kind of internal safety alarm. I give them specific examples of times that I listened to my intuition and kept myself safe, and times that I ignored my intuition, and wasn't sure how to protect myself when I faced danger. I'm not always sure if this is effective, but it helps me be sure that I'm practicing what I believe will work, and what has worked with them in prior instances. Asking them how intuition feels for them is good, too. That way, they've verbalized the feelings and can more easily recognize and even share them when they show up.

Some parents tend to direct their child on how they should interact with a new adult, instead of watching and seeing how their child responds to them and going from there. That's an example of intuitive interference. In order for a child to develop a sense of trust in their own intuition, we as parents have to respect their choices, and decide on a safe place and time to discuss the interaction and see if our child has questions. This is where we parents can be advocates and allies for our children.

For example, if I meet up with a friend who has an outgoing child and I have my bona fide introvert in tow, I tell that parent know that my daughter may or may not play with their child. Or that she may not hug them, nor participate in any well-meaning small talk. I often bring books, games, and even art supplies along so that my daughter can feel comfortable in that setting (where she's accompanying me somewhere) without feeling pushed to engage with anyone, child or adult, unless she chooses to do so. We can also tell them about your own experiences with intuition and encourage them to talk, write about, or act out moments when they recognized intuitive feelings. When we parent without addressing intuitive feelings and how to express them, we can miss opportunities to convey the importance of words like "no" and "stop," or phrases like "I don't want to" or "I don't like that."

If a child is playing with someone whose body language or verbal cues lead a child to start feeling uncomfortable, we can tell them that an uneasy feeling in their belly or chest is enough to warrant them saying "no," "stop," or "I don't like that," because their bodies are their own, and they get to choose what is done to it. And more than that, they get to express their choice through consent or refusal. Also tell them that it's important they stop whatever they're doing to someone else's body when that person uses those key terms. This way, we help children to start exploring the reality that they may not agree with or understand why someone is saying "no" to them, and that the person does not need to explain whatever they're declining. Saying "no" is enough.

There are examples among children in all parts of the world that stem from lack of consent where children are concerned. Certainly, this includes sexual abuse, as is the normal conversation around consent culture, but it includes more. It also includes non-sexual activities and daily occurrences that offer opportunity to practice consent culture in all aspects of living. The point here is to become much more proactive about preventing sexual and other forms of physical abuse by adults to children, and among children as well.

We may not be able to prevent all instances, but if we raise young people who are clear about personal boundaries and armed with the language and clarity about their feelings and bodily rights, then we can minimize these instances, as well as the harm done by them. And we can stop the cycle of children who become adults wrestling with unresolved pain and trauma from their bodies not being treated as their own property.

As a Trans Boy

Sometimes when I read crappy articles, I like to go through them and make sure I understand why they're so crappy.

Daycare Workers Fired for Not Acknowledging 6-Year-Old as Transgender Boy: At what age should a child be allowed to express themselves as transgendered?

This phrasing implies that children should be punished until a certain age for behaviours that are manifestations of transgenderism. That's worked out really well for gayness, has it not? Maybe the way parents respond to manifestations of transgenderism might differ based on the child's age, but you can't get away from the fact that "disallowing" transgender expression is oppression.

That is the question surrounding a wrongful termination lawsuit in Katy, TX over a six-year-old girl whose parents now wants to be recognized as a transgendered boy.

Their six-year-old trans boy who wants to be recognized as a boy. It's cissexism privilege that lets the writer think he knows better than the boy (and his parents) and state that this story is about a girl.

The privately-owned learning center that the child attended for over four months as a girl disagrees. Until recently, all interaction with her was as a young girl.

It's a common misconception, I think, that trans people are one sex until we one day decide to be another. Just like cis people, trans people are one sex their entire lives. What changes is the ability to recognize and manifest this. The point is that even if he attended the daycare presenting as a girl, his experience there was still different than that of cis girls. It's inaccurate to say that he attended "as a girl". He attended as a trans boy presenting as a girl.

In recent weeks, the child's appearance changed, including a short boyish haircut, and the parents told the daycare staff to now treat her as a boy because she was transgendered.

The order of this sentence is telling. The writer seems to think the change in appearance is more important than the declaration of identity. Of course this serves to trivialize transgenderism and frame it as something artificial. While the external changes that come with a transition are important for many reasons, they're also technically irrelevant. The kid would be a boy whether or not his hair was short.

This included a name masculine change.

I can see how someone might see this as trivial as well. It's like when you take a foreign language class in elementary school and everyone picks a "Spanish" name. It's gender class and everyone gets to choose a boy name. In reality, choosing a name is about acknowledging that the medical industrial complex coercively assigns sex at birth, and one of the clearest and most symbolic ways it does this is by demanding that infants be given gendered names before their genders can even be determined. Working through this and choosing a new name, it seems to me, is an important part of understanding cissexism and coming to terms with transgender identity.

Two members of the Children's Lighthouse Learning Center's staff disagreed with this.

They've been taught simplistic messages about what sex and gender are and what purposes they serve, and they've been told that transgenderism is a unecessary and possibly harmful denial of those messages. Their privilege protects them from the need to examine those messages. And privilege always makes the beholder think they have an objective view on the marginalized position. It's some impressive cissexist ignorance and arrogance to think that it's any of their business or in any way their place to even have an opinion about this boy's identity.

The manager of the daycare, Madeline Kirkse, and worker Akesha Wyatt refused the parent's request.

It's also some impressive arrogance that they think they know better than the parents how to take care of the child. Of course, we're not exactly getting the whole story here, but one would think there would have been a discussion wherein the parents request that the caretakers respect the boy's identity. And when the parents are informed that the caretakers refuse to do this, it seems like a very logical that the parents should withdraw him from their care. You have to be pretty full of yourself to think that you know so much better than the parents (and your employer) that you bring a suit.

Both women voiced concerns about possible bullying from other children and parents towards the child because of the sudden turn of events.

Bullying that it would have been their responsibility to call out. It's some backwards bullshit to put the onus on the kid for being oppressed rather than on the oppressors for oppressing.

Additionally, Kirske opposed the request due to religious beliefs.

I know the pope hates trans people, but I still call bullshit. If your religions requires you to oppress people, then your religion is bullshit. Oops my atheism.

Both were terminated and are now suing the daycare for wrongful termination, represented by noted attorney Houston attorney Andy Taylor.

It occurs to me that the cause and effect alluded to in the title of this piece isn't really accurate. They were fired for being privileged bigots and they're suing their employers because their privilege tells them they have the right to be privileged bigots. The boy is almost beside the point. Whether or not the suit is successful, those two women aren't going to be looking after this child. Trying to blame this kid's parents (or his transgenderism at large) for these women being fired is a gross oversimplification of the situation.

According to Taylor, "This case involves a little 6-year-old girl who has been attending a private school in Katy, Texas for the last four months as a little girl. She has parents who are a same-sex couple, two men, who decided that she was transgender. On Friday, that little girl left school. I'm not going to use names, but (she was) known to everybody as 'Sally,' and on Monday, this little girl returns to school calling herself "Johnny."" But according to Dr. Johanna Olson, Adolescent Medicine, Assistant Professor, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, just because a child exhibits behaviors of the opposite sex does not necessarily mean a child is transgendered.

But? This statement is in line with everything else written so far. Where do you get off saying but?

In an article for Human Rights Campaign, Dr. Olson states "I think you have to follow the affirmative approach to care – so what does that child need to feel safest and to feel the most whole in that moment in time? And, the biggest question is do you support a child going through a social transition in early childhood? The reality about these kids who are asking to live as gender different than their assigned sex at birth is that they usually have immense amounts of gender dysphoria. We do

know that kids who are more gender dysphonic in childhood are more likely to have trans-identities as adolescents and adults."

I suppose it's good that the writer felt the need to include some sort of counterpoint, but some vague quote from a cis person parading around as an expert on trans people's needs is the opposite of useful. It's more of privileged cis people acting as if they have the objective view on our experience. Fuck off.

Here's the thing, if the world weren't so fucking cissexist, it wouldn't matter. Especially for such young children who aren't doing hormone therapy or surgical intervention. Children should be able to experiment with their hair and their clothes and their names and their pronouns. They should be safe to figure out how gender works and how they fit within that structure without having to worry about bullying and bigots and lawsuits. Because seriously, who cares whether this kid is a boy or not. It has no impact on anyone except him. It's no one else's business.

No Homes on Our Horizon (Excerpt: XenoFeminism)
Laboria Cuboniks

.. From the street to the home, domestic space too must not escape our tentacles. So profoundly ingrained, domestic space has been deemed impossible to disembed, where the home as norm has been conflated with home as fact, as an un-remakeable given. Stultifying 'domestic realism' has no home on our horizon. Let us set sights on augmented homes of shared laboratories, of communal media and technical facilities. The home is ripe for spatial transformation as an integral component in any process of feminist futurity. But this cannot stop at the garden gates. We see too well that reinventions of family structure and domestic life are currently only possible at the cost of either withdrawing from the economic sphere — the way of the commune — or bearing its burdens manyfold — the way of the single parent. If we want to break the inertia that has kept the moribund figure of the nuclear family unit in place, which has stubbornly worked to isolate women from the public sphere, and men from the lives of their children, while penalizing those who stray from it, we must overhaul the material infrastructure and break the economic cycles that lock it in place.

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