

YOUTH - AMERICA'S STRENGTH ©

By Connie J. Schlosberg

Youth - America's strength? That's a good question. One that deserves to be answered. First of all, I don't know if this is some con game to get one teenager to tell another how great this country is, and how we should appreciate it. Second of all, I hope this isn't "which school has the better students" type of contest, either. I'm not out to win any contest, but I do have feelings and an opinion I'd like to voice.

I feel that America's strength is today's youth, yesterday's youth, and tomorrow's youth. It requires all walks of life of all ages. If someone asks a question like the one you are asking, then someone is being dependent on America's youth. Isn't it funny, though? At the same time, someone else is criticizing us, and no one is giving us the chance to speak up for ourselves. Is that what freedom of speech is all about? Meaning anyone over twenty-one can voice an opinion, and any one under twenty-one can't? Then, when is there a chance for us to talk about our views? No one cares to listen anyway.

I suppose if younger children (under eleven) are neglected and abused to the point where they don't care about living anymore, there's going to be a big crisis in America. More laws should be written about incest, child abuse, abandonment, child pornography, and child prostitution. If politicians have time out to write laws like making a right-hand turn on a red light when traffic allows (which doesn't even hold true on most highways), then they have time to make laws about the ones written in the above sentence. Funds should be given to youth-associated activities. For instance, college costs should be much cheaper, and if possible, made free. Sometimes funds tend to be higher in places that don't need it, and lower in places that do. That's stupidity! Government-oriented people (like politicians, social workers, police, etc...) should pay more attention to youth, because don't they usually say they'll end up meeting us one way or another?

For every problem there is a solution. The most obvious thing that's holding back today's youth's strength is the problems we have. Everyone is too impatient to wait and sort things out in the best way. Maybe if today's society took each problem separately rather than as a group, we'd see results. Everyone must understand that it takes time - Don't rush it. Mistakes are made that way. Also, strength does need Company!

Freedom of thought should reign in this country. I believe too many people aren't doing what they want to do because others are telling them not to do it. And teenagers are the ones who are told to be themselves? What an example! I suppose the reason is because someone is on somebody else's paycheck; so why bother to say anything when your being bribed to shut up? Then they're the ones to complain when something goes wrong, especially with teenagers. Stop being so negative and doubtful with

teenagers, and then there'll be hope for the future. Teenagers do care; no matter what teenager we're talking about.

Suppose if we try more shared ideas, instead of just "my way", "his/her way", and "their way"? Maybe there would be more respect, care, and faith. "We may be able to send a man to the moon, but we're failing as human beings," said my guidance counselor once. She's right. Other countries look up to us, maybe even becoming too dependent on us. If they do get like this, what will happen to us? We can't even solve our own major problems. How can we solve theirs? You ask me about America's strength - youth, but first you answer all my questions. Then, I'll tell you about youth's strength. How can we be strong anyway if we're holding the American flag in the air and beside the flag's seams, written in small ink, is a message saying "Made in Hong Kong". Patriotism? Now that really hurts!