



The Illusion of a Frictionless Existence

不和任何人产生摩擦只能是幻想

Date: Feb. 22, 2023

Today's teens drive less — just 25 percent of 16-year-olds in 2020 had a license, as compared with 50 percent in 1983 — and work less, with the share of teens participating in the labor force having declined 17 percentage points since 2000. In short, teens are doing way less of what used to be the activities that **bridged the gap** between them and adulthood and **autonomy**.

如今开车的青少年变少了——在 2020 年，16 岁青少年拥有驾照的比例只有 25%（注：在美国年满 16 岁周岁可以考驾照），而在 1983 年这一比例为 50%——工作的青少年也变少了，自 2000 年以来，加入劳动力大军的青少年比例下降了 17 个百分点。简而言之，青少年所参与的活动越来越少，而这些活动过去是他们迈向成年和自主的桥梁。

This is where today's teenagers and young adults differ. Gen Z is not just remaining **ensconced** for longer in the protective **cocoon** of adolescence, reliant on their parents for everything from health insurance to transportation to conflict **mediation**; they also appear to be far less interested in ever leaving the cocoon at all, having **persuaded** themselves that independence is too **fraught** with danger to be worth it.

这就是今天的青少年以及年轻人的不同之处。Z 世代不仅在青春期的保护茧里待得更久，从医疗保险、交通到冲突调解，事事依赖父母；他们似乎也根本不想离开这个茧，他们让自己相信，独立充满了危险，不值得独立。

So much of what used to be the ordinary **friction** of existing as a person in the world have been removed via technology. Smartphone technology has so **utterly** transformed our lives, turning countless points of human contact into

515 Words

bridge the gap 缩短差距 |

Alvin managed to bridge the gap between ballet and modern dance. 阿尔文设法弥合了芭蕾舞和现代舞蹈之间的差异。

autonomy [ɔ:'tɑ:nəmi] *n.* 自主，自主权；自治，自治权**ensconced** [ɪn'skɑ:nst] *adj.* 舒服地坐于……的，安坐的 | Nick was comfortably ensconced in front of the TV set. 尼克舒舒服服地安坐在电视机前面。**cocoon** [kə'ku:n] *n.* 茧；保护膜，防护层，软罩 *v.* 把……保护起来 | You cannot remain forever cocooned from the outside world. 你不能永远生活在与外界隔绝的状态中。**mediation** [ˌmi:di'eɪʃn] *n.* 调解，斡旋 | The agreement provides for United Nations mediation between the two sides. 该协议为联合国对双方的调解奠定了基础。**persuade** [pə'sweɪd] *v.* 使信服，使相信；劝说，说服 | Their argument failed to persuade me. 他们的论点没有使我信服。**fraught** [frɔ:t] *adj.* 充满……的 | Their marriage has been fraught with difficulties. 他们的婚姻困难重重。**friction** ['frɪkʃn] *n.* 摩擦；摩擦力；

computerized **transactions**, that the old way of doing things can seem not just needlessly complex but actually insane. In the age of swiping and tapping your way to a **bespoke** pizza order in seconds, you want me to call a phone number and tell some complete stranger who I am, where I live, and what I want to eat?

技术消除了一个人生存于世会经历的许多普通摩擦。智能手机技术彻底改变了我们的生活，将无数与人接触的时刻变成了计算机化的交易，以至于旧的行事方式看起来不仅没必要这么复杂，而且实际上有些疯狂。在这个只需要几秒钟就能划动屏幕点一份定制披萨的时代，你还想让我打电话告诉一个完全陌生的人我是谁，我住在哪里，我想吃什么？

And yet, we did lose something when we started replacing cashiers with contactless payment. One need not be anti-tech to see how our social skills, like any other, **atrophy** for lack of use in a world where human interaction is **on the wane**.

然而，当我们开始用非接触式支付取代收银员时，我们确实失去了一些东西。人们不必反对科技，也能看到在一个人际互动日益减少的世界里，我们的社交技能和其他技能一样由于缺乏使用而退化。

Today's teens and young adults have spent their whole lives being overscheduled and **micromanaged**. All of this has been **well-intentioned**. Nobody wants their child to experience **trauma** — or heartbreak, or failure, or any other kind of hurt. But in seeking to provide kids with a frictionless path through the world, and by teaching them to expect one, we are also sending a powerful message: You can't handle this. Inadvertently instilled in many of this generation's kids is a lack of faith in their ability to negotiate discomfort, to recover from emotional wounds, to **weather** a difficult situation and experience growth as a result; instead, we teach them that bad experiences create **permanent** trauma and should be avoided **at all costs**.

当代青少年和年轻人的一生都被过度安排，被事无巨细地管理。所有

争执，分歧 | The decision is likely to lead to friction with neighbouring countries. 这个决定有可能导致与邻国发生摩擦。

utterly ['ʌtəli] *adv.* 完全地，彻底地 | Young children are utterly dependent on their parents. 幼儿完全依赖他们的父母。

transaction [træn'zækʃn] *n.* 交易，买卖；办理，处理

bespoke [br'spəʊk] *adj.* 订做的 | a bespoke suit 一套订做的衣服

atrophy ['ætrəfi] *v./n.* 萎缩，衰退 | Memory can atrophy through lack of use. 记忆力不常使用就会衰退。

on the wane 变小，衰落，减弱 | Her popularity has been on the wane for some time. 她的人气一段时间以来江河日下。

micromanage ['maɪkrəʊmænɪdʒ] *v.* 微观管理，微观控制 | The problem may be that you are micromanaging your team. 问题可能是你对团队的管理过于苛严而琐细。

well-intentioned [welɪn'tenʃnd] *adj.* 出于好心的，善意的 | He is well-intentioned but a poor administrator. 他用意良好，但却是位糟糕的管理者。

trauma ['traʊmə] *n.* 痛苦，创伤；外伤 | The patient suffered severe brain trauma. 患者的大脑受到严重损伤。

weather ['weðər] *v.* 经受住，平安

这些都是出于好意。没有人希望自己的孩子经历创伤——或是心碎，失败，其他任何类型的伤害。但是，在试图为孩子们提供一条畅通无阻的道路，并教导他们期待这样一条道路的同时，我们也在传递一个有力的信息：你处理不了这件事。这一代的许多孩子在无意中被灌输的是他们没有足够的能力克服不适、从情感创伤中恢复、度过困境并最终获得成长；相反，我们教给他们的是糟糕的经历会造成永久性的创伤，应该不惜一切代价避免。

The **irony** is, the result of all this effort to protect Gen Z from feeling anxious has only made their anxiety worse.

具有讽刺意味的是，所有这些保护 Z 世代不让他们感到焦虑的努力，结果只会让他们的焦虑更加严重。

Indeed, the world is an uncomfortable place, filled as it is with 8 billion humans who think differently, talk differently, live differently. People of different religious faiths; people of different political persuasions. Living in a society means encountering people who test us, or annoy us, or **infuriate** us — or to whom we ourselves are **tiresome**, annoying, and infuriating. Two things are true: that a frictionless world would **spare** us the duty to tolerate all of these people, and that we would be the worse for it. Perhaps it's for the better, then, that such a thing is **unattainable**.

的确，这个世界不是一个舒服的地方，世界上挤满了 80 亿人，他们的思维方式、说话方式和生活方式都不同。他们有着不同的宗教信仰，不同的政治信仰。生活在社会中意味着我们会遇到考验我们、烦扰我们、激怒我们的人——或者对他们来说，我们令人厌烦，惹人恼火，让人愤怒。有两件事是真的：一个没有摩擦的世界可以让我们不必容忍所有人，而我们将因此变得更糟。这样的事情不会发生，或许是件好事。

地渡过（困难）；褪色，变形 *n.* 天气 | The company just managed to weather the recession. 这家公司勉强渡过了衰退期。

permanent ['pɜːrmənənt] *adj.* 永久的 | The accident has not done any permanent damage. 那场事故没有造成什么永久性损伤。

at all costs 不惜任何代价

irony ['aɪrəni] *n.* 有讽刺意味的情况；反语，反话 | The irony is that when he finally got the job, he discovered he didn't like it. 讽刺的是，当他最终得到那份工作时，他发现自己并不喜欢它。

infuriate [ɪn'fʊəriət] *v.* 使极为生气，激怒 | Her silence infuriated him even more. 她的沉默使他更加愤怒了。

tiresome ['taɪərsəm] *adj.* 讨厌的，令人厌烦的，烦人的 | Buying a house can be a very tiresome business. 买房子有时是件很麻烦的事。

spare [speɪ] *v.* 省得，免去；拨出，留出 *adj.* 空闲的，闲置的 | He wanted to spare his mother any anxiety. 他不想让母亲有丝毫的担忧。

unattainable [ˌʌnə'teɪnəbl̩] *adj.* 无法得到的；难以达到的 | an unattainable goal 难以达到的目标

➤ 脉络梳理

- Para. 1-2 指出当代年轻人独立参与的活动越来越少，更加依赖父母
- Para. 3-4 分析造成这一现状的技术原因：智能手机的出现减少了人际接触，造成社交技能退化
- Para. 5-6 指出父母的过度保护让年轻人不愿独自处理问题，反而加剧了他们的焦虑
- Para. 7 指出人与人之间的摩擦不可避免，应当正确面对

➤ 长难句拆解

