

# ADULTHOOD AT LAST

By dr. SUSANNE PIET, psychologist and future expert

**You could say that, as a society but also individually, emotionally and socially, we are getting ready for a new phase. We are moving away from the I that had been central thus far. Away from self-marketing.**

**Away from enjoying-as-a-must. Away from the teenage stage in which we lived. You Only Live Once?**

**Not anymore, there is a next generation to think of, there is a planet, to boot. We are moving towards maturity, adulthood at last.**

The app-economy, the new digital walker has come to life, to help further this need for autonomy. There is a boom of the digital, but also of arts and crafts. ...are an example the exhibition at the Boijmans van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam in May 2013. Riding horses, art, to be able to sail or bike are newly useful skills. There is a new caste of craftsmen such as cooks, nurses, carpenters, blacksmiths, bakers, butchers, electricians, plumbers and gardeners. Self-sufficiency is in. You are left on your own, but you can also do it on your own, alone or together. Economic movements, trading, banking, security, caring. The joint development of new capabilities. Banks and insurance. The private establishing of city vegetable gardens, for example, on the roofs of common buildings (as in New York and Amsterdam), the launching of private nature or craft shops, whether online or offline, with homemade or self-designed products. Another initiative concerns elderly care: you help build a roof for the elderly and buyin the care, much cheaper than going through the system and considerably more fun and more humane too. The small initiatives. An internet service through which you can begin your own shop. A service to ensure that you can go eat at a neighbour's. A service to find a handyman close to where you live. There is a retired GP in Amsterdam who bikes through the city offering medical help to refugees living in the city's streets. Also in Amsterdam, a "wish ambulance" was set up through private means. It is a good idea to make the last wishes of terminally ill patients come true, through gifts and donations. Examples of wishes are: to go to the theatre once more, to see the sea or attend a wedding. Parents sign up as volunteers and kids want to learn. The initiative was replicated in other neighbourhoods as well. A concerned mother and professional psychologist who witnessed with dismay the abuse case in a city day care, founded, together with other parents, a day care of their own. The parents take turns at running the day care, without handling any money. Service provision becomes trade. You use platforms, FaceBook. The common search for a lost friend. The whipping up support for a television show that threatens

to be cancelled because of low audience numbers.  
Crowdfunding.

## The trends of S,C,R and F

The trends are self-sufficiency (S), cooperation(C), taking and giving responsibility (R), but also being frugal (F). People want to make more things themselves (and with others) and therefore also need workplaces or common buildings in a physical sense. There are already workshops in which, for a small fee, people can go to work on crafts, carpentry, and welding, among other things. These are probably analogous to the so-called Techshops in the United States, spaces where, for a reasonable monthly rent, you can make use of the facilities and of existing equipment. The originally Dutch hobby marketplace Etsy, where individuals could sell self-made and vintage articles, was an immediate hit. It was filled with millions of items, that were actually being traded. The podium was occupied by about a million mini-shops from all over the world. The example was followed by the German site DaWanda. To repair and reuse instead of throwing away. What began as a temporary project had to be renewed time and again, due to increased international success. "If the iPhone 8 comes out and you throw out your iPhone 7 while the iPhone 6 is still good, someone else will take an iPhone 5 and do something really different with it. That's going to be the next big thing, that's the future". That's what the rapper Will.i.am (known from the hit song *Scream & Shout*, among others), believes, he is an entrepreneur with an ideology, who also leads another trend. Open source to encourage children to become tech entrepreneurs. He wants more cruching brains. He considers that knowledge must be free. There is no use for knowledge that is exclusive. Writer Dave Eggers began a network for great open writing schools.

## Yes, playing the no-card

Another example of such an initiative is the chess school in the Amsterdam Indische Buurt neighbourhood. By learning to play chess, children and adults can develop and let their, thus far unsuspected, talents flourish. The idea that knowledge and information should no longer be exclusive has also penetrated formal educational institutions. The establishing of open source education, of high-standards universities and their ability to obtain financing from crowdfunding and exclusive sponsors surprise old thinkers because, what would be the interest of those financiers? With the existence of ten-ners for such an open network of students, you create a larger market for technology products, data from talented people and the market, and scout for the new elite labour market. There is just one signal of maturity I have not yet seen: when will the no arrive? I believe that consumers are brainwashed through framing techniques to embrace new inventions and devices. Even established newspapers print, as a bonus to their news editions, supplements about a luxury life and a modern lifestyle based on acquiring and design.

## The New Alert

In the book *Girlfriend in Coma*, (by Douglas Coupland,

already in 1998, but I think the point he is trying to make has not lost its validity), Karen wakes up after 17 years in a coma indeed, and realises the following, that: People are always showing Karen new electronic doodalls. They talk about their machines as though they possess a charmed religious quality – as if these machines are supposed to compensate for their owner's inner failings. Granted, these new things are wonders- e-mail, faxes and cordless phones-but then still...big deal. She asks her friend Hamilton: "Hamilton, what about you-are you new and improved and faster and better, too? I mean as a result of your fax machine?" To which Hamilton replies: "It's swim or drown girl. You'll get used to them. Oh will I? It's not up for debate. We lost. Machines won".

That says it all. Almost. My point is: Until now the experience society has almost never said no to basically any and all scientific developments, technological innovations and their resulting market deals. The consumer welcomed and embraced the internet, mobile phones, nuclear energy, genetic engineering in animals and plants and the market applications that arose from them. Are these achievements good or bad for us? Did we become smarter after the advent of the smartphone, or rather easier targets for security services and marketeers? In the new stage we become more alert. And in the coming years, I dare predict, we will face ethical dilemmas, indeed up for debate.

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