

TOMORROW'S QUESTIONS OF TODAY'S WORLD

What in today's world will horrify our grandchildren? **Dini Martinez**. Photography by Federico Peltretti

One of the things I get asked most often as a sailing mother of two is about our kids' schooling – at times with a tad of reproach in the questioner's voice: "What, you're not planning on sending them to an accredited and socially accepted institution of curricula-controlled mass education?" That always and inevitably takes me to a place of wonder. How can anyone claim to have the answer as to what prepares our children best for their future? We don't even have the slightest understanding of what this world will look and feel like in 50 years' time.

What I am pretty certain about is that many things that we do habitually will be appalling to our grandchildren and I don't know how I'm going to look into their eyes answering their question: "Why did you continue exploiting the earth for polluting energy sources if you knew their negative effects on

the environment and there were so many viable, clean and renewable sources of energy around? Why did you treat your animals worse than things and then wonder why everyone got cancer, psychological illnesses and other diseases from eating them? Why did everyone seem scared of death, yet lived most of their life in a completely unsatisfactory work/life balance with barely any time to ever really live?"

Health care

Did you know that in so-called developed countries, on average, three-quarters of an individual's lifetime medical expenses are spent in the last six months of life? Are you aware that most of a doctor's training – initial and on-going – is sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry which, for obvious reasons, has no interest in a healthy population?

Will future generations have difficulty understanding our strange dependence on chemicals suppressing the body's signs of a need for help: "Great-grandma, when you got a headache back then, why did you guys take a tasteless pill with 101 side-effects, rather than rest more, breathe deeper and take in some fresh air?"

WHY DID YOU CONTINUE EXPLOITING THE EARTH FOR POLLUTING ENERGY SOURCES IF YOU KNEW THEIR NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND THERE WERE SO MANY VIABLE, CLEAN AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY AROUND?



perplex them that a woman's economical contribution was valued much more than the shaping of the next generation?

Sugar and chemical-filled gigantic portions instead of real food

What about the food we eat. Great-grand child number two might say: Did you never get tired of putting sugar into everything, including your curries, bread and tomato sauces? The late 21st century may have seen a revolution back to more wholesome food, as scientists and politicians launched a successful mass education and awareness-raising campaign as to the shocking effects on our health caused by processed food filled with sugar and artificial preservatives.

People started eating meat and fish in less quantity but better quality. Fruit and vegetables will have been grown in all gardens and public spaces to ensure an ample supply for a stabilised world population without the need for pesticides and chemical fertilisers. The children of 2065 will condemn our gargantuan portions and our inability to tolerate the mildest grumbings of hunger while, across the world, millions starved. Taste buds will have been retrained to appreciate natural tastes and view our largesse with sugar, portions and chemicals in food in a similar way to how we view smoking on aeroplanes today.

Environmental awareness

Some places, such as Germany, view plastic bags in supermarkets as a similar completely senseless thing of the past. Others still live in that past and, at most, marvel at Germany's ability to return glass bottles to the place of purchase and recycle properly (nope – plastic and paper really don't go together!), build energy-efficient houses and drive extremely fuel-efficient cars.

After huge efforts to clean up the massive garbage islands in the middle of the Pacific and restock the over-fished oceans of this world, 2065's world inhabitants have found a way to live without plastic and the exploitation of finite resources – as we had done for centuries and millennia before. Thanks to a consortium of global scientists, the energy crisis has been positively resolved, supplying renewable power from solar, wind, tidal, waves and geo-thermal not only to the 20 per cent of people who used to have access to such luxuries in the late 20th century, but also the 80 per cent of the world who then were still deprived of it. Modern gyms have hooked up their spin bikes to create their own electricity. Free yoga classes are offered by every community around the world each morning in a combined effort to promote internal and global health, happiness and peace.

« Why did you take more pills to suppress the occasional fever, therewith ridding the body of its natural and healthy response to kill pathogens? And why did you take even more pills to suppress stomach complaints, rather than change your diet to a healthier and more agreeable one?»

Hopefully, doctors of the future will understand that extending the number of breaths you take is not what counts. What does count, however, is the number of moments that take your breath away – one of them being the magic of pregnancy, birth and parenting.

Child-care arrangements

Zoom forward to 2065. Will our grandchildren and great-grandchildren feel revolted by the fact that, in the early 2000s, it was the norm for infants from six months onwards to spend their days from 8am to 6pm without a parent in an institutionalised child-care system? Did people not realise the shocking effect this would have on a generation's cognitive abilities and capacity to empathise?

We are a society struggling with mental and social illnesses. If youthful depression, heavy drug use and anti-social violence will become more clearly apparent, will politicians start to wonder whether there could be a link to the little maternity leave granted to working mothers to dedicate to their offspring? Will it

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Global peace

Reading *First's* issue of July 2065, it is now the norm for local as well as international political meetings to be preceded by a joint meditation session involving all parties. Wars and genocide have, at last, been buried in history as modern education has started including education about – and the tools to achieve – a balance of emotional, mental, spiritual and physical health into their curriculum, taking global economies to look beyond pure financial gains. This successfully counters an alarming trend of ill-health in the early 21st century.

Doom or gloom – what things do you think will be regarded as appalling 50 years down the line? Write to the editor... ●