

20049 Stop scaring our kids – the world is NOT about to end and we are NOT all about to die

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Children today should be enjoying their youth. They arguably live in the greatest time ever, with unparalleled access to information, connectivity around the globe, advances in health care and tremendous opportunity. But instead of embracing optimism, the adults in their lives are filling them with fear.

In the last few weeks, from town halls on climate change to “climate justice” marches, I have seen scores of children – some teens, some squarely of elementary school-age – proclaim their anxiety about the world ending.

Depending on the source, children are being told that if we don’t act right now to solve one particular “crisis” or another, we will all be dead in anywhere from 18 months to 12 years.

While it is great for children to learn to be responsible global citizens and take care of our planet, there’s a positive and responsible way to communicate that.

Adults can deliver the message of taking care of the planet and have an impact doing so with positive language and outcomes instead of nihilistic ones.

While I am not a psychologist (and I don’t play one on TV, either), I do believe that for kids, who are developing mentally, having this fear communicated to them during this critical time of their lives is abusive. Worse, it is done by parents, schools, the media and politicians alike. Everyone needs to immediately get a grip.

I remember when adults acted like adults instead of fear-mongers. Back in the 80s, when network television ran the nuclear war movie “The Day After,” there were warnings that it wasn’t appropriate for children and our parents wouldn’t let us watch it.

Now, the adults who are supposed to be shielding kids from unlikely doomsday scenarios are forcing those beliefs upon them.

It’s not just the climate change fear. School shooter drills are also an unnecessary form of fear theater that does far more harm than good.

While any school shooting is one too many and more needs to be done to ensure school safety, planting the security threat in kids’ heads with practice drills surely creates needless trauma with no evidence of better outcomes.

Negativity is all around us, from mainstream media to social media. It’s not healthy for us to be constantly consuming a negative information diet, particularly when the general outlook for life is so robust. We need more gratitude towards the abundance, opportunities and advancements that surround us.