



GEN Z IS SICK OF IT...

BUT THEY'RE MAKING SHIT HAPPEN.

A LOOK AT GEN Z BY  CHEMISTRY

Image via IG:
@zendaya



“I just wanna say that there is hope in the young people...to all my peers out there doing the work in the streets: I see you, I admire you, I thank you.”

- ZENDAYA

ABOUT THE REPORT

At Chemistry, we were inspired to see Zendaya become the youngest woman ever to win an Emmy for Lead Actress in a Drama series. From actress to activist, she boldly represents a generation that is sparking endless conversations about the realities and empowerment within Generation Z.

As one of the most influential generations living during this time, we wanted to dig deeper, ask different questions in different ways to get some real, first-person answers on how Gen Z is feeling, who they're following, what they're thinking, and what they're doing about it all.

We fielded a conversational survey to get an inside look at Zoomers across the country. Here's what they had to say, and what we took away.

(Designed, Edited and Consulted by the Gen Zers of Chemistry).

OUR AUDIENCE



62%

FEMALE

38%

MALE

19

AVERAGE AGE

13-24

AGE RANGE

261

RESPONSES



62%
WHITE

18%
HISPANIC/LATINO

8%
ASIAN

8%
BLACK

4%
OTHER



SAMPLE QUESTIONS





How do you feel about the state of the world today?



What issue has you ***MOST*** concerned?



How would you say COVID-19 has affected your life?



Talk to me about why your generation has the power to change things.



Tell us three accounts I should be following right now.



Are you nervous or excited to go back to school?



How would you use your phone to escape for a bit?



What's some good gossip you would ***NEVER*** tell your parents?

A black and white photograph of a person with long, light-colored hair sticking their tongue out. A large, red, irregularly shaped graphic overlay covers the person's eyes and the word 'RESULTS' in the text. The text 'THE RESULTS' is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

THE RESULTS



GEN Z IS SICK OF THE HOT TAKES

Let's get one thing clear - no, Gen Z doesn't eat Tide pods.

Like generations before them, Gen Z is actively being stereotyped. This time, instead of spending all their money on avocado toast or ruining Applebee's, Gen Z is assumed to live on TikTok, watching dance videos all the time.

Hot takes were easy ways to get headline clicks, but they won't be as accepted by this vocal generation.



GEN Z IS SICK OF THE HOT TAKES

“

I think my generation is tired of hearing all the headlines. Hopefully people wake up soon. - 21/M

”

“

My generation is the first to grow up in the time of the internet. This unprecedented access to communication and information has allowed us to see and understand the world's issues at a relatively young age. - 24/F

”

“

It's said that my generation 'has no fear' if you will. They say we ate tide pods, we started riots, we did deadly challenges – and all just for fun. So for me to say that my generation can change and affect our situation, I think I'm right. - 15/F

”

GEN Z IS SICK OF THE BAD NEWS

This is the first generation to grow up in a post-9/11 world. They are used to chaos and divisiveness. And now as emerging adults, living through a pandemic, economic transformation and political/social unrest, they're rightfully feeling unsteady...

Gen Z has experienced a lifetime of societal change in fewer than two decades. This volatile world is the only one that Gen Z knows, and it has made them tired. This disaster fatigue has led to behavior changes that focus on either coping or escaping the 'bad'-ness.



GEN Z IS SICK OF THE BAD NEWS

“

When I unwind I just watch movies/tv shows from my childhood to remind me of the good times when I was oblivious to all of the world's problems. - 15/F

”

“

I feel more antisocial and depressed because I feel like our world is going to crap. It has affected my life tremendously because every normal thing we used to do in life is now altered. - 17/M

”

“

The news is SO depressing to me. As a pretty positive person, I feel like it's just not good for my mental health. - 21/F

”

“

I find it overwhelming how many issues there are. I always think about how there seems to be so many issues going on that there's no way we can possibly solve all of them. - 20/F

”



GEN Z IS SICK OF PICKING SIDES

Left vs Right. This vs that. Good vs. Bad. To this generation, our world is becoming more polarized, and as a result, less productive. While Gen Z tends to be very open about their beliefs and stances on current issues, they refuse to be boxed into the same old sides of the same old debates.



GEN Z IS SICK OF PICKING SIDES

“

I am most concerned by the extreme political divide in this country, and feel like I'm alone in the middle of the spectrum. - 22/M

”

“

Me and most of my friends are right on the line of two generations so we have a decent understanding of both sides of the arguments and are able to provide a middle ground that appeals to both. - 25/M

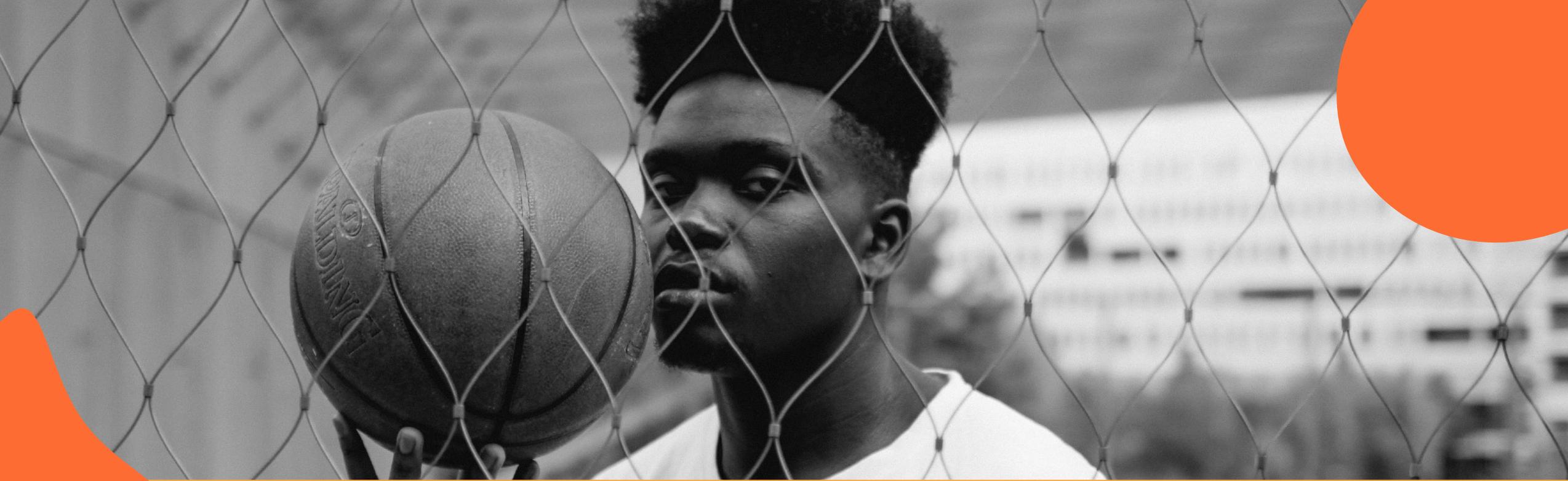
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“

While I believe racial injustice is terrible and there is absolutely a big racism problem in the world, that can't take away from the fact that I'm scared of what will happen to our police systems. - 18/F

”





GEN Z IS SICK OF PICKING UP THE MESS

Gen Z isn't going to turn this ship around today. They just can't. While they can make a lot of noise and raise a lot of awareness, they don't have the power to make the much needed policy changes. Gen Z is stuck watching and hoping older generations can take charge and actually put in the work to steer us in the right direction. They need to be heard.

GEN Z IS SICK OF PICKING UP THE MESS

We have the power to change because we are sick of standing idly by to see people that are wayyy older deciding what is best for us without listening to us. - 17/F

Honestly it's hard to see that we do have power. The youth don't have very much influence in comparison to the influences of money in the political process, which is sad and which is why I don't know how things can get better. - 15/F

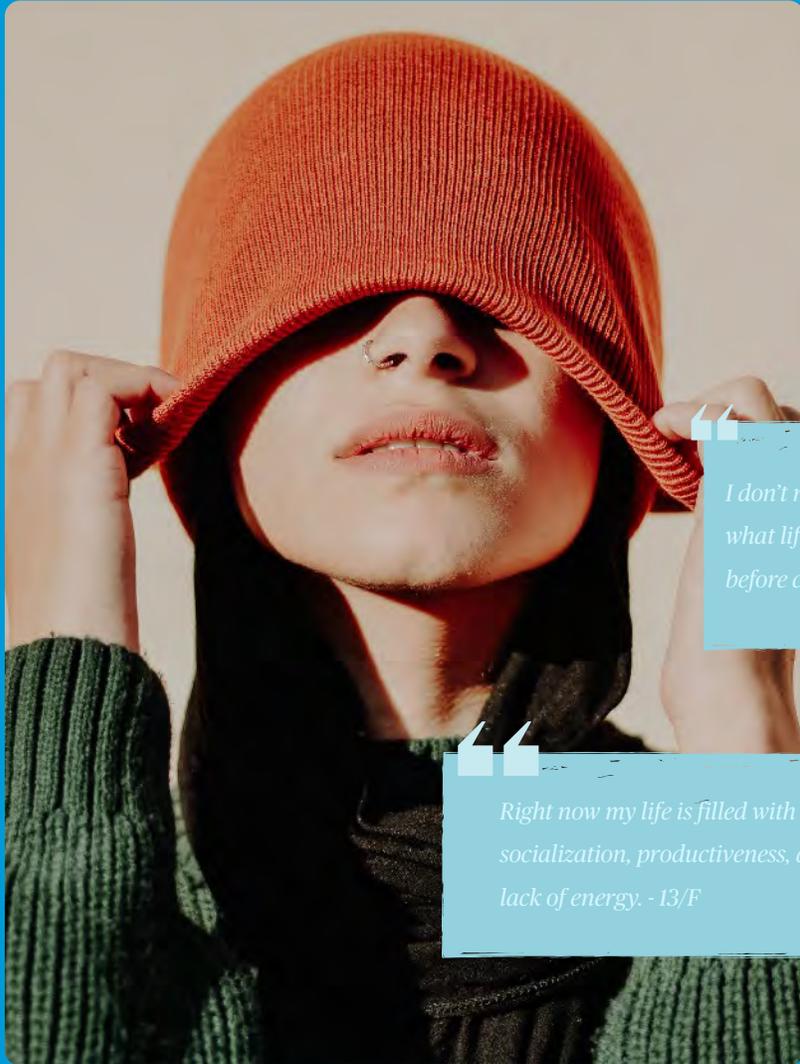
Since I can't vote, I just have to trust that everyone older than me will make the right decision. - 17/M

It's great to think that youth are being vocal and active and stuff, but really we need the people who are supposed to help us to act like adults and see the threats to the country that are right in front of their faces. - 15/F

GEN Z IS SICK OF FEELING LONELY

This pandemic has been tough on everyone. For this generation, it has uprooted every sense of routine and normalcy they knew. Major life milestones are being replaced with Zoom links and Instagram memes. With many schools remaining online and cases continuing to spike, these feelings will continue. The after-effects of this period of loneliness may be our next addressable pandemic, and should be treated with the same attention and care.





GEN Z IS SICK OF FEELING LONELY

I don't remember what life was like before covid. - 15/F

Right now my life is filled with lack of socialization, productiveness, and lack of energy. - 13/F

While COVID's given me the ability to say no to things more easily, it's been a bit lonely/boring though. - 21/M

I opted to take all online classes because it is the financially conscious thing to do but I feel like I will be very lonely so I am looking for front line worker jobs just to get out of the house. - 20/F

I saw an ad recently that said COVID has 'taken away the moments that make life worth living' and I think that hits the nail on the head. - 24/M



GEN Z IS SICK OF FEELING LIMITED

Dealing with COVID-19 has given Gen Z a rare glimpse into their own mortality at a young age. When our future is not guaranteed, it makes us truly evaluate what we are working towards. What are our goals, our dreams...do they really matter?

GEN Z IS SICK OF FEELING LIMITED

“

I have had to start therapy. I lost my job and have struggled with online classes. My parents have lost their jobs. I'm questioning if I have dreams that matter. - 20/F

”

“

The inability to have all the resources that were once available pre-covid has made it harder to just live the life I was used to living.. - 19/M

”

“

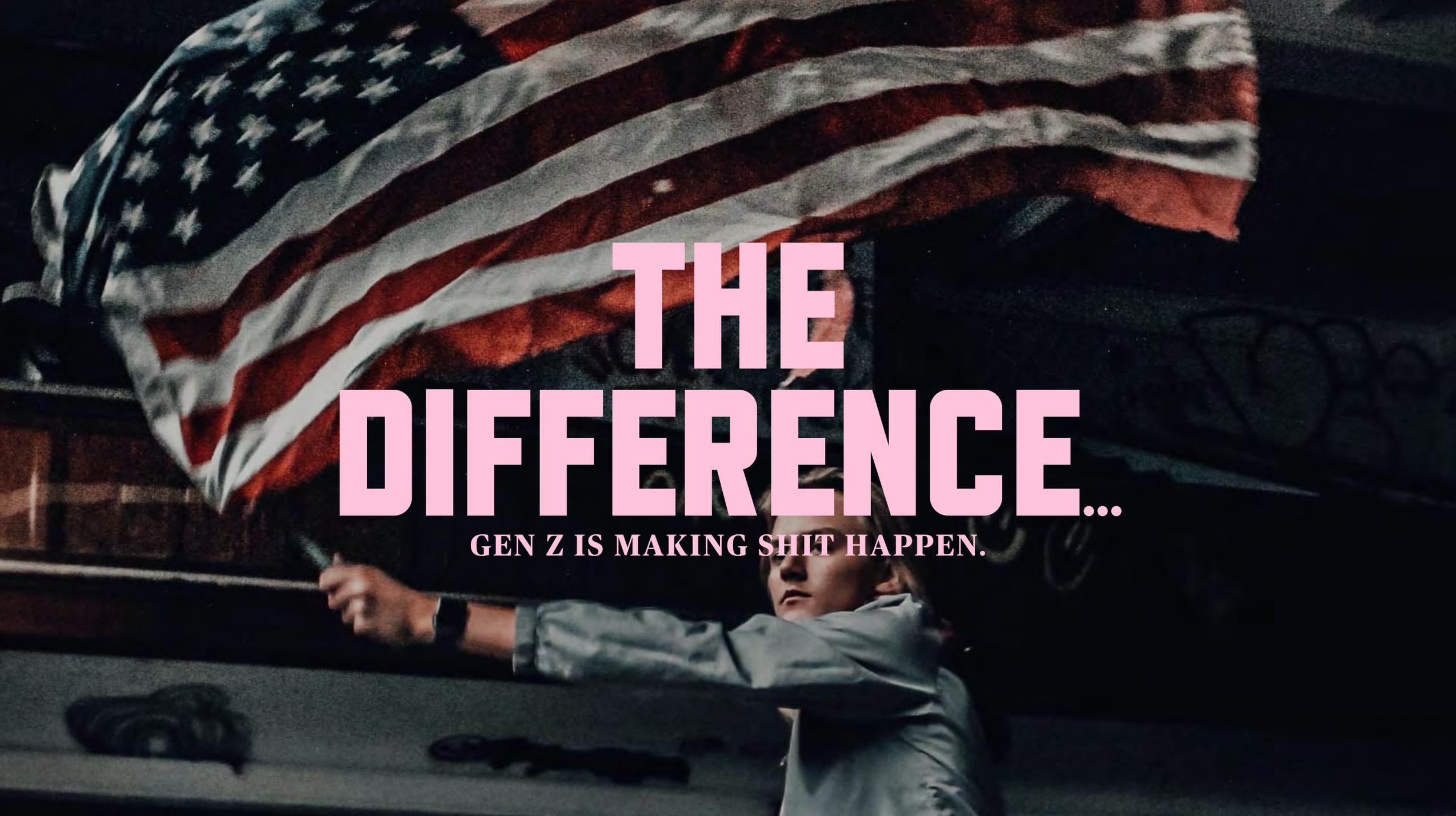
It's weird not being able to be with my friends the way I normally am and I'm afraid I'm forgetting how to be with people normally. I'm afraid about a lot of things. I've downloaded a lot of those relax apps and they are very helpful for meditation and to calm yourself. - 15/F

”



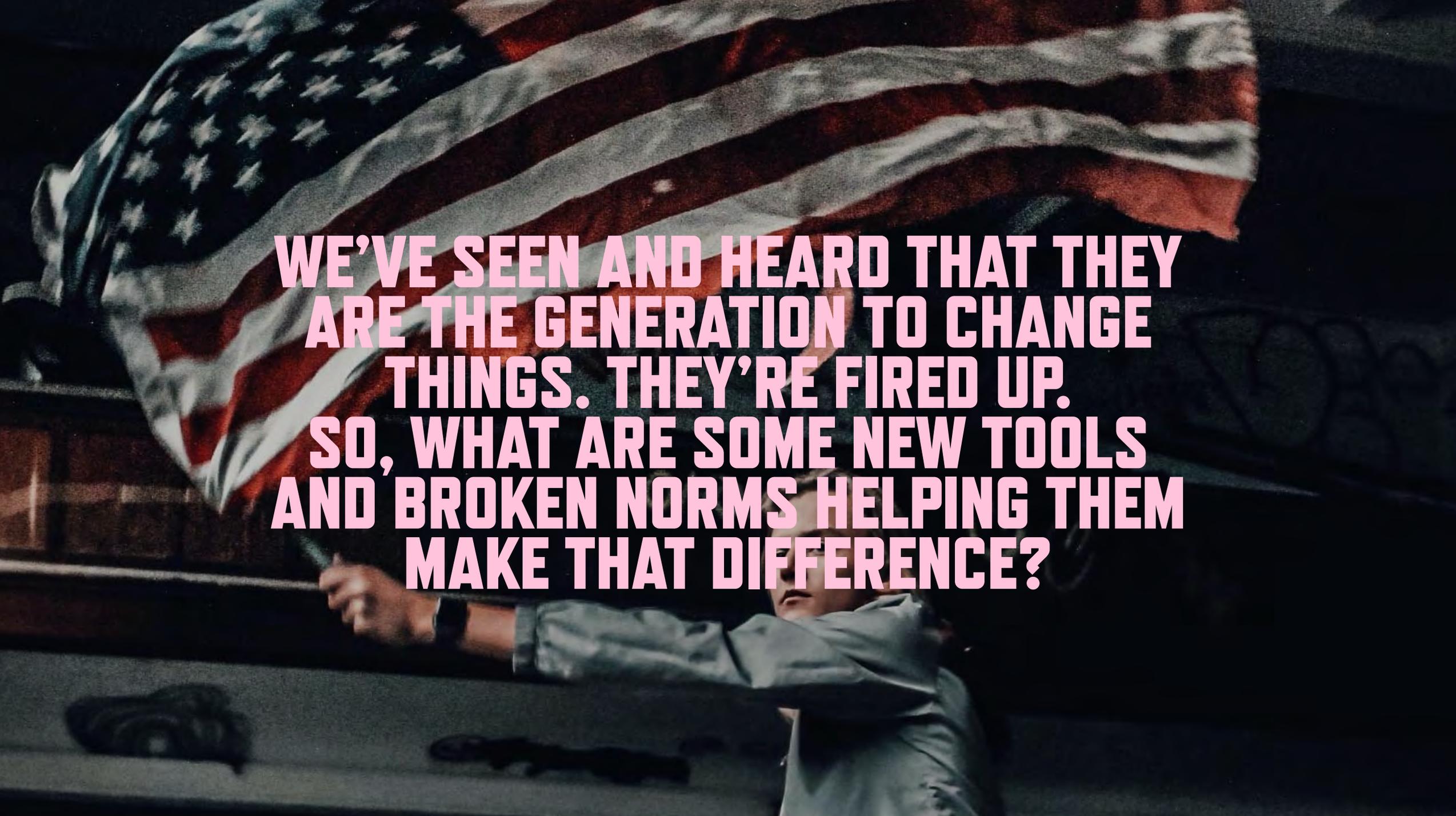


**BUT AT THIS
POINT, AREN'T WE
ALL SICK OF IT?**

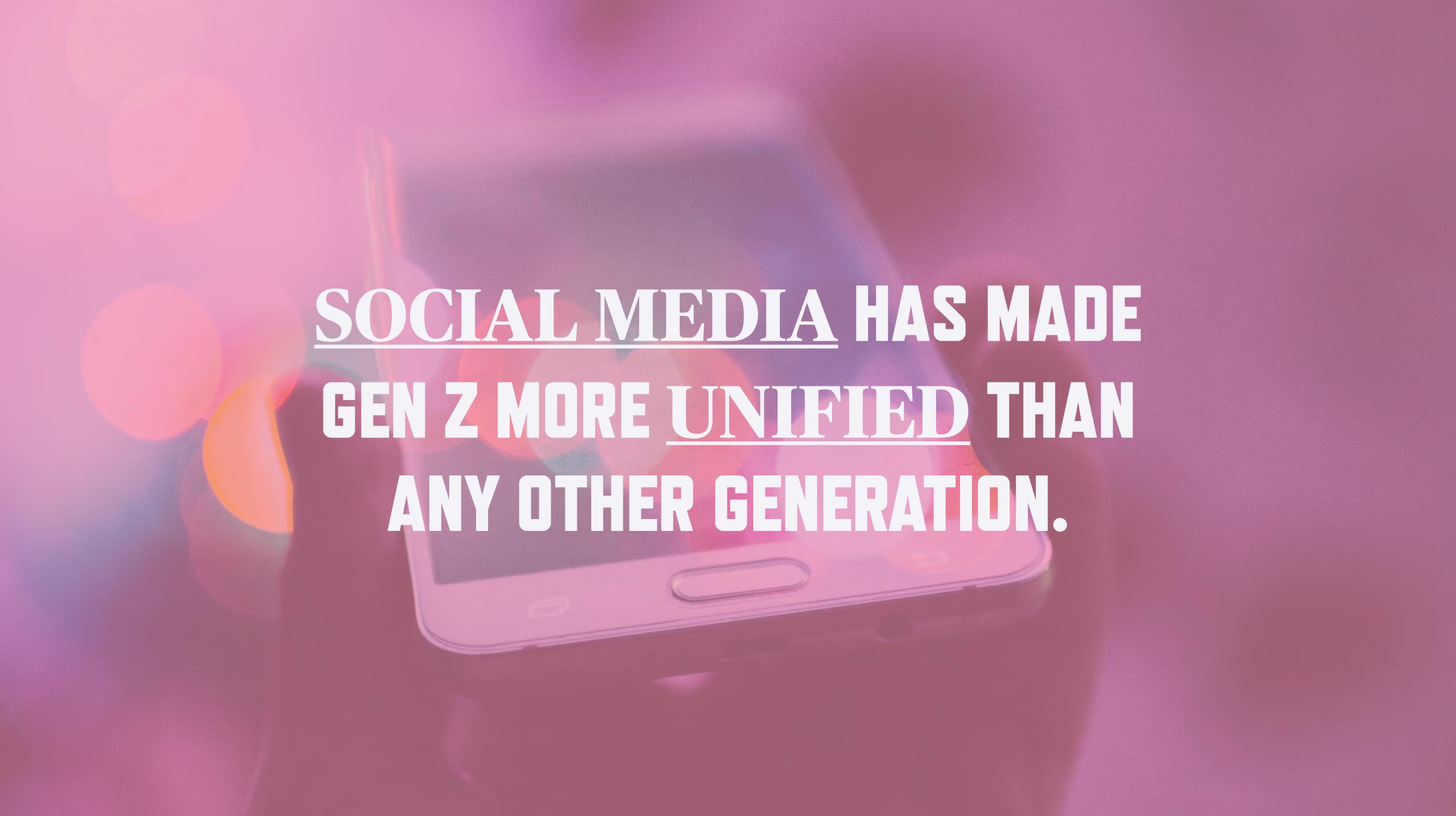
A young person with light-colored hair, wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt, is shown from the chest up, pulling on a rope to raise an American flag. The flag is partially visible at the top of the frame, showing the stars and stripes. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an indoor setting like a gymnasium. The overall mood is one of determination and action.

THE DIFFERENCE...

GEN Z IS MAKING SHIT HAPPEN.

A young boy in a light blue shirt is pulling on a rope to hoist an American flag. The flag is partially visible, showing the stars and stripes. The scene is set against a dark background, possibly at night or in a dimly lit indoor space. The boy's expression is focused as he works to raise the flag.

**WE'VE SEEN AND HEARD THAT THEY
ARE THE GENERATION TO CHANGE
THINGS. THEY'RE FIRED UP.
SO, WHAT ARE SOME NEW TOOLS
AND BROKEN NORMS HELPING THEM
MAKE THAT DIFFERENCE?**

A hand holding a smartphone is the central focus, set against a background of soft, out-of-focus bokeh lights in shades of pink, orange, and purple. The text is overlaid on the phone's screen area.

**SOCIAL MEDIA HAS MADE
GEN Z MORE UNIFIED THAN
ANY OTHER GENERATION.**

Not surprisingly, social media is one of the biggest catalysts for real generational change. Fueling all their actions, these platforms are at the heart and soul of the future that Gen Z is building. While the world's issues can be depressing for some, other Gen-Zers seem to be empowered by their ability to fight and organize.

The reason why my generation has the power to change the world is because we have something many of the other generations do not have, we have unity. - 15/F

“Unlike other generations, we aren’t afraid to make noise and use our strengths to our advantage. - 17/F

I’ve been to multiple protests that were planned by teens. I will never tell my parents, but I recently snuck out with a few of my friends to go to a “black lives matter” protest. - 17/F

So many online campaigns and movements. So many support groups and relief initiatives getting started. - 20/F

A group of diverse young people, including a woman on the left, a man with glasses in the center, and a woman on the right, are shown in a crowd. The image has a blue tint and white text overlaid. The text reads: "AND THEY REALIZE THESE TOOLS ARE FOR MORE THAN JUST SELF-GRATIFICATION."

**AND THEY REALIZE THESE
TOOLS ARE FOR MORE THAN
JUST SELF-GRATIFICATION.**

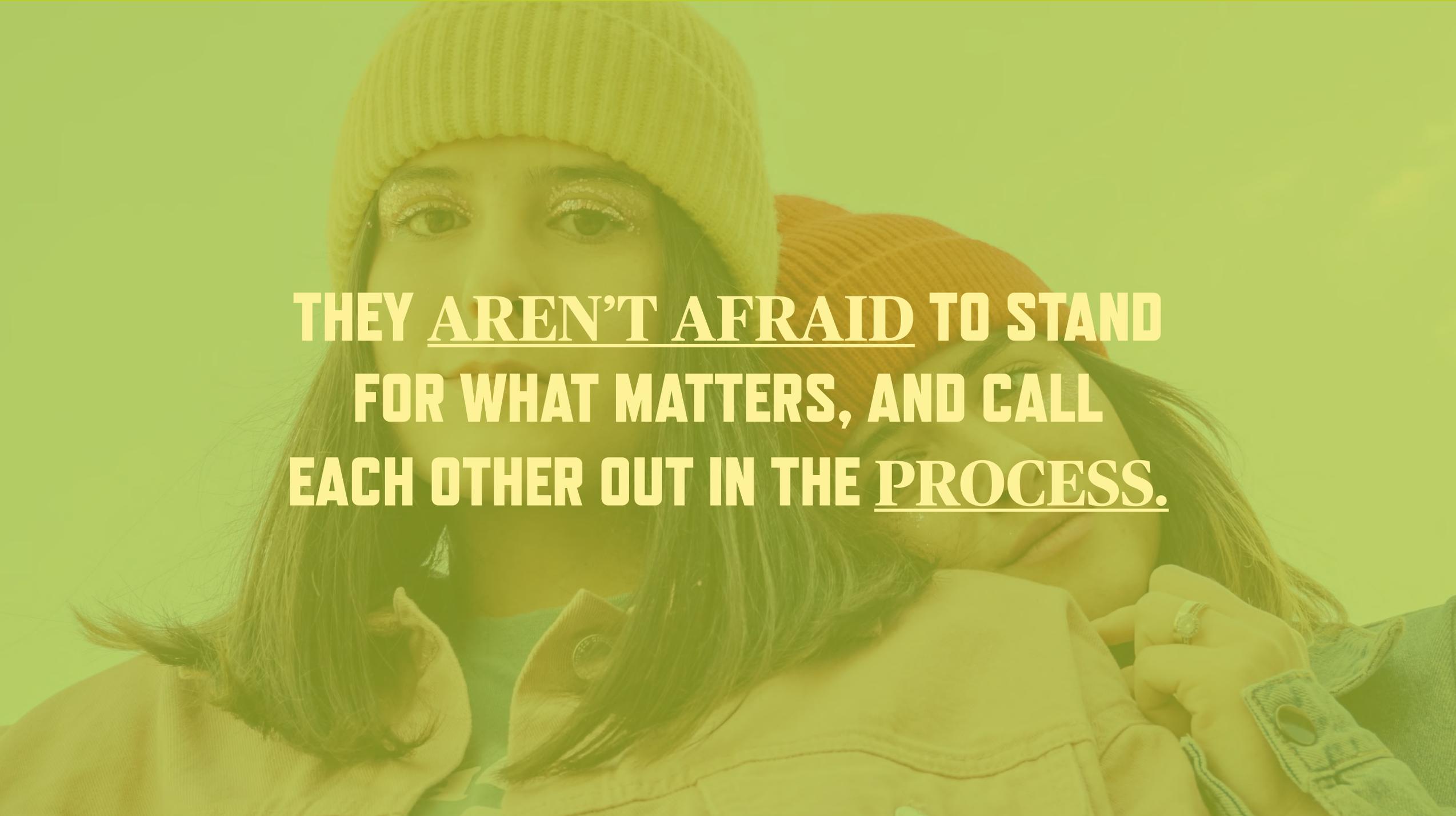
In direct opposition to the ‘dance video’ stereotype, Tik Tok is being used to take down giants. With all these social platforms that make the World so much smaller, Gen Z is using them to make their impact so much bigger. Social media continues to evolve further from the initial purpose it intended to serve.

“ Gen Z is so strong and so digitally savvy. They can make movements through TikTok and it blows up. The right content in front of the right people can transform society. - 23/F ”

“ I am fully supportive and aware that something bigger and more important takes priority on such a powerful platform given the circumstances. That includes protest videos and covid updates. These are essential in our current time. - 19/M ”

“ One video going viral is how thousands of people in my generation helped derail Trump's rally in Tulsa - no one came :). - 13/F ”

“ TikTok has been a huge part of teens' lives recently. Not only is it a place to express yourself, but it has changed the world and people's lives. We can spread information like wildfire, we have lots of platforms to communicate and debate with, and since we're still young, we're all still forming opinions. - 15/F ”

A photograph of two women wearing winter hats, overlaid with a green tint and a text overlay. The woman in the foreground is wearing a white knit beanie and has her hand near her face. The woman behind her is wearing an orange knit beanie. The text is centered and reads:

**THEY AREN'T AFRAID TO STAND
FOR WHAT MATTERS, AND CALL
EACH OTHER OUT IN THE PROCESS.**

A close-up, top-down view of a woman with short dark hair, wearing glasses and large hoop earrings, gently holding the face of a man lying on the grass. The man has his eyes closed and a peaceful expression. The woman's hands are resting on his cheeks. The background is a soft-focus field of green grass. The entire image has a warm, golden-brown color cast.

**THEY FIND VERY LITTLE TO BE OFF-
LIMITS, LEADING TO MORE OPEN,
MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS.**

A young man with a mustache and short dark hair is shown from the chest up. He is wearing a red and white patterned shirt. His right hand is raised to his forehead, and he is looking upwards with a contemplative or distressed expression. The background is a window with white frames, and the entire image has a blue color overlay.

**THEY RESPECT CERTAIN PAST
VALUES, BUT KNOW THEY HAVE THE
POWER TO SMASH BROKEN ONES.**

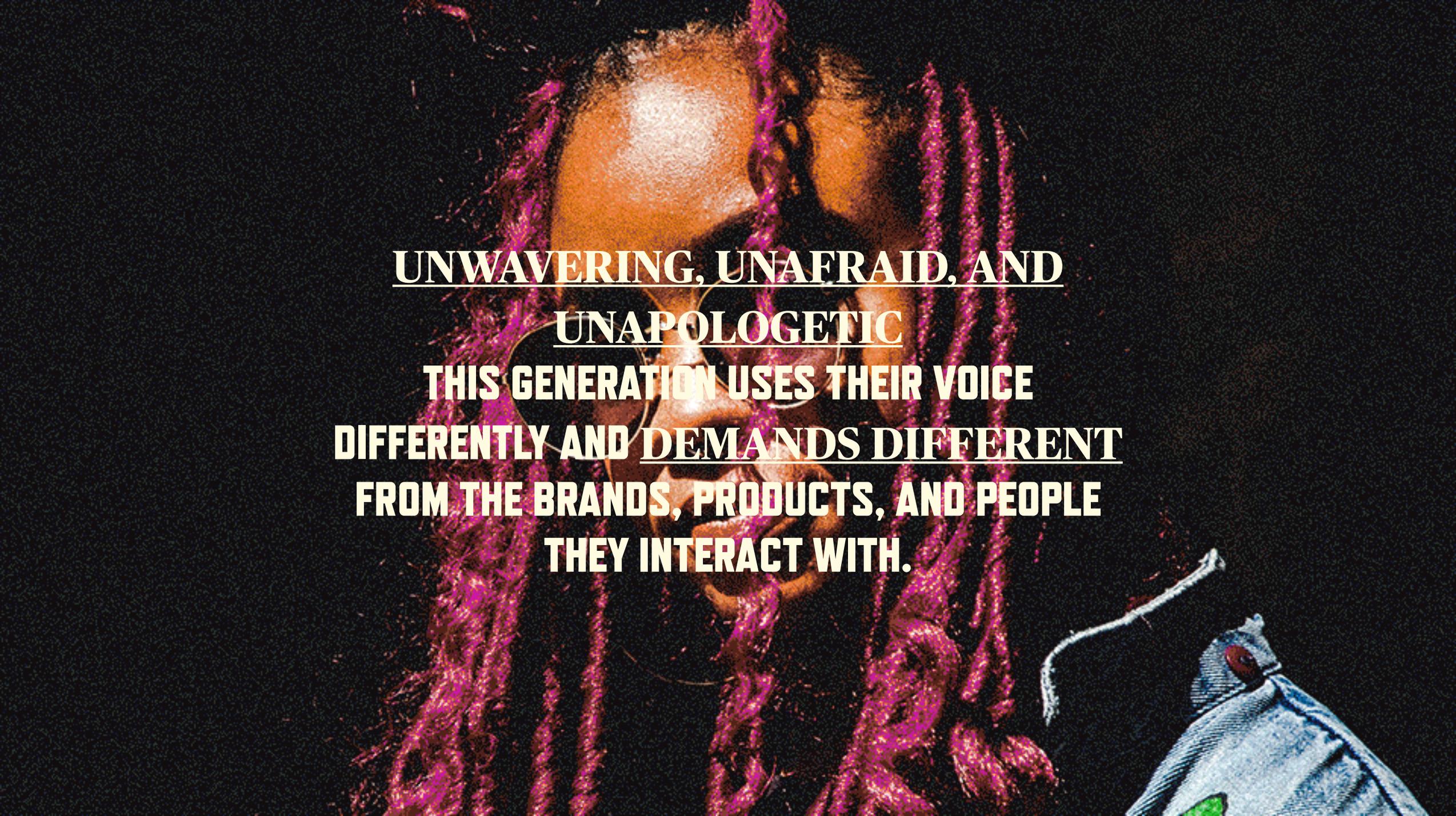
What might be most defining for this generation is their balance between respecting and defying authority. While they aren't the rebel archetype of past youth generations, they are just as much willing to go against the "man". Bringing major attention to anything and everything that was once delegated as "just the way it is..."

This generation values knowledge, truth, and joy. they've shown that they will fight for others and value evidence and truth over arbitrary laws and systems established by ancestors. - 22/F

Gen Z is afraid to ask for a refill at a restaurant but doesn't think twice about setting a police car on fire.' LOL. It's just a meme (kinda) but I think what its really getting at is that when it comes to things that are important to us, we are willing to do and say whatever it takes. - 20/F

Gen Z is so unafraid of authority and willing to question the status quo. There is a kindness that Gen Z has that is unlike anything I have ever seen – it's an inclusive kindness. We are strong-willed and we know what kind of world we want to live in. - 21/F

I think people 18-26 don't buy into the idea that "this is the way the world works," and are willing to fight to change things because they don't want to perpetuate current structures. - 22/M



UNWAVERING, UNAFRAID, AND
UNAPOLOGETIC
THIS GENERATION USES THEIR VOICE
DIFFERENTLY AND DEMANDS DIFFERENT
FROM THE BRANDS, PRODUCTS, AND PEOPLE
THEY INTERACT WITH.



There is a realness and rawness about Gen Z, especially during this time, that will continue to permeate culture and make them more impactful. They are driven and passionate, trying to figure out how to help themselves and the world all at once, and balancing their struggles with a fierceness that's driving them to drive change. To connect with this influential generation, brands need to acknowledge their mindset, individuality and unique perspectives. They need to speak to them in a way that's both purposeful and passionate, with a level of openness and transparency they demand.

CONCLUSION

GEN Z NEEDS BRANDS TO LISTEN TO THEM, PROTECT THEM, AND AMPLIFY THEIR VOICES.

WE MUST ALL BECOME ADVOCATES THAT HELP DRIVE A BETTER FUTURE FOR THIS GENERATION.

**FOR MORE INSPO ON GEN Z,
CHECK OUT SOME OF THE
PEOPLE AND PLATFORMS
THEY'RE FOLLOWING:**

@chnge
@feminist
@shityoushouldcareabout
@humansofny
@getrealmovement
@victoriahammett
@wetheurban
@ajplus
@anxiety_wellbeing
@macdoesit
@diet_prada
@tryguys
@yayayayoung
@aoc
@gramparents
@positivedelight
@tanksgoodnews
@goodnews_movement
@goodhumansonly
@soyouwanttotalkabout

@zamfamcrew
@sophia.joan.short
@hersocialapp
@fentybeauty
@howmental
@werenotreallystrangers
@peopleiveloved
@tksjuicypolls
@themodernproper
@pantone
@cbhoyo
@meundies
@chicksforclimate
@weylie
@collinskey
@signamae
@dixiedamelio
@charlidamelio
@iamtabithabrown
@mkbhd



We believe in experimenting with everything and constantly questioning. Come experiment with us.



All data from study available upon request.