



Adjusting my mindset

There's nothing quite like your child's 18th birthday to make you feel older. By the time this article appears in print, Josh will have finished his 18th year and begun his sophomore year of college (see last month's column for more on that).

Children are constant reminders of not only how quickly time passes, but also how it seems to accelerate as they grow. Time, it would seem, is relative. As Albert Einstein once said, "When a man sits with a pretty girl for an hour, it seems like a minute. But let him sit on a hot stove for a minute and it's longer than any hour. That's relativity."

That notion describes how quickly time seems to pass as we watch our children grow.

For those of you without children of your own, there is another way to feel the ever-quickening passage of time. Each year, Wisconsin's Beloit College puts out "The Mindset List" (www.beloit.edu/mindset) to help professors better understand the incoming freshmen class. It's a look at how the world has changed since they were born — or more accurately, it's a description of what has always been true since they were born.

Like Josh, the bulk of this year's class was born in 1993. That group, the class of 2015, has never known a world without an Internet ramp onto the information superhighway, nor has there ever been a time in their lives when there weren't two women on the Supreme Court. For you movie buffs, Ferris Bueller and Sloane Peterson could be the ones sending their child to college.

I remember being awed by the birth of the World Wide Web and laughing at Matthew Broderick's school-ditching shenanigans in the 1986 classic film "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" (Yes, I know, shenanigans is a word the old caretaker used in his

rant after getting caught by Shaggy, Scooby-Doo and the gang on Saturday morning cartoons — one item not on the list, but should be).

Want more?

The class of 2015 is more likely to think LeBron James than Lyndon Baines Johnson when you refer to LBJ. Amazon has never been just a river in South America. O.J. Simpson has always been looking for the killers of Nicole Simpson and Ronald Goldman.

Feeling old yet?

The Mindset List was created by Beloit's former Public Affairs Director Ron Nief and Keefer Professor of the Humanities Tom McBride. According to the school's website, "It was originally created as a reminder to faculty to be aware of dated references, and quickly became a catalog of the rapidly changing worldview of each new generation."

Giving educators a sense of how their students perceive culture and the establishment makes sense. It makes sense for business owners as well.

It's not a bad idea for company executives looking to hire new graduates (millennials) to have a little perspective on how these younger workers view the world.

While you might remember the Bay of Pigs fiasco, they have never known a time when the U.S. government has not housed refugees and prisoners at Guantanamo, or at time when there's been an official Communist Party in Russia.

Not interested in, or able to hire, new grads? The Mindset List still might be useful. The first list was produced for the class of 2002 (those born in 1980). Those workers are now in their early 30s.

Warning. If you think the list for the class of 2015 makes you feel old, taking a look at the Mindset List for the class of 2002 is even worse:

Most have never seen a TV set with only 13 channels, nor have they seen a black-and-white TV. Really? Come to think of it, there's really not that much worth watching nowadays. Maybe we should return to just 13 channels.