

Are little rich kids narcissists in training?

The Rich Babies of Instagram are here, unfortunately, writes **Buhle Mbonambi**

FIRST came the Rich Kids of Instagram, then the show, *The Rich Kids of Beverly Hills* based on some of them, then there was Rich Kids of Snapchat and now there's Rich Babies of Instagram. When will it end?

See, I don't mind rich kids showing off their parents' riches and the toys they get given just because they are rich and can afford to go to Bora Bora for a tan and then back again. But babies? Oh no. That's taking it a bit far. Yet, some people think it's cute, adorable and all the other superlatives that the internet uses for even the dumbest things out there. Yet they are popular and you just need to search the tags – #RichBaby and #RichBabiesofInstagram – to see the opulent lives some of these babies are living.

From babies in golden cribs with hundred dollar bills strewn around them, custom made Ferrari car seats, fancy prams worthy of Prince George of Cambridge, to specially made signet rings, designer sneakers in baby sizes and sporty tracksuits worn with a trucker cap and gold necklace. There's even a gold and diamond encrusted Versace pacifier for one of these babies and a fur jacket for another.

I just can't help but think of the lives these kids are going to have when they have grown up. They are online even before they could speak. It is no wonder that a study found that parents are responsible for their children's narcissism.

According to a study by Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, children who are told they are special by their parents are more likely to become narcissists, according to a study that aimed to uncover the origins of extreme selfishness.

Children whose parents described them as "more special than other children" and as kids who "deserve something extra in life" were more likely to score higher on tests of narcissism than peers who were not lauded in this way.

Imagine these children 10 years from now? They will be worse than Stephanie Seymour's socialite sons, Harry and Peter Brant.

Want to see what I'm talking about? Then these are the accounts on Instagram that have all the pictures of the #RichBabiesOfInstagram @katya_wow_wow @RichKidsTehran @YadonFickett @InstaJaxon @abovethewingtip @mikeknighlee @vernardsings @iamkkokko



Time for a brand new you?

These days, branding yourself is a must. But when is it necessary and when is it just a case of vanity? asks **Alyssia Birjalal**

IF YOU'RE not on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or other social networking sites, then you basically don't exist in this techno-driven world. You could spend thousands of rands on a holiday overseas or have a million rand wedding with a thousand guests in attendance, but if the pictures aren't posted on social media for the world to see, it's as if it never happened.

I've never been a fan of using social media extensively. In fact my colleagues say I need to boost my brand – meaning my popularity on social media.

As a journalist, I use social media all the time. I keep up with trends, see what celebrities are getting up to and follow conversations about whatever is trending. But that's all I really need it for.

I don't have the urge to post statuses, pictures or even tweet. Keeping up with social media is time consuming, but since being inactive makes you invisible I need to up my game.

I spoke to Thebe Ikalafeng, founder of Brand Leadership Group and Brand Africa, for some advice on how to brand oneself.

Thebe confirmed there is a growing awareness and leveraging of the practice.

"This is particularly true of those among the creative class – celebrities, artists and authors. But even in the corporate and other worlds it is a well-established practice. In Africa one sees how pastors such as Pastor Chris and TB Joshua and their churches, for example, are differentiating themselves to attract church-goers; celebrities such as uber-brand Bonang Matheba are building their brands to command better rates and attract opportunities and product endorsements. People like the late Steve Jobs, Richard Branson, Richard Maonya are well-established business brands," he said.

Thebe said branding yourself is about defining who you are and what you do differently and better than others. It's about you.

"In the past, one merely had to do one's job to be recognised equally. But today it is much harder. In a country with unemployment at about 30 percent, a proliferation of borderless media and excess talent, it's more important than ever to stand for something different and to be different for personal and professional advantage," he said.

"One must always remember that everything about you brands you. Your brand is your reputation and is impacted by everything associated with you. What social media has done is to magnify the opportunities and the speed to market your brand – and it has magnified the risks (and opportunities) because one post can reach millions in just one second. It's important to remember that personal branding has nothing to do with popularity – although it can result in it. Personal branding is about understanding and building/affirming an authentic identity and delivering on it everyday everywhere."

He says everyone is a brand – the only difference is that some brands are public and others are private.

"The advantage of a public brand is that you don't have to work that hard to explain yourself as your brand – your reputation – will precede you. It helps to narrow the opportunities you can attract as everyone knows who you are, what you do and what is aligned with your brand. The secret is to be yourself at all times, at home, work and play. That way you don't have to manage multiple personalities – you just have to do you. Live your life, not a lie," said Thebe.

I guess it's time for my first tweet.



WHEN THINKING ABOUT BRANDING YOURSELF, CONSIDER FIVE KEY FACTORS:

1. Understand how you are perceived relative to how you want to be perceived and known. Everyone has a default brand/how you're known irrespective of how you are projecting yourself. Your job is to narrow the gap between how you are known and what is true about you.
2. Define and clarify what you stand for – your value proposition, the brand and reputation you want to build or build on, and your brand promise.
3. Define your touch points – how your brand can be accessed. It could be through a CV, social media, website, work, accomplishments, events etc. These access points have to be aligned with the type of brand you want – public or private.
4. Align your brand at home, work and plan. You cannot be a different person to different people. Great brands are consistent, coherent and aligned.
5. Deliver on your promises. A brand is a promise made and a promise delivered.

CELEBS WHO HAVE THIS BRANDING THING DOWN **BONANG MATHEBA**

This TV host, radio DJ and fashion icon has become a local sensation. She has successfully managed to brand herself and has even trademarked her name.

KIM KARDASHIAN

She is an expert at courting controversy and keeping herself in the news, but always for the benefit of elevating her brand.