

Youth Culture Lesson
Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
From *YouthWorker Journal* and youthworker.com

Celebs Behaving Badly

Are We Becoming Less Civilized?

By Paul Asay

Posted: Sept. 28, 2009

What Happened:

Taylor Swift isn't just a singer: She's a bonafide phenomenon, and her popularity across the musical spectrum seemed to be cemented when one of her videos was named Best Female Video during MTV's Video Music Awards Sept. 12.

Her moment was stolen, however, when rapper Kanye West jumped on stage and announced Beyoncé Knowles, not Swift, deserved the award. He was booed roundly.

Beyoncé, who later won the biggest award of the night, donated her own time in the spotlight to Swift, allowing her to finish her abbreviated acceptance speech. Kanye later apologized.

Kanye's outburst was just the week's latest example of highly public boorish behavior. Tennis player Serena Williams berated a linesman in a profanity-laced tirade. Congressman Joe Wilson, a Republican from South Carolina, hollered, "You lie!" in the middle of a speech by President Barack Obama.

Civility expert Lizzie Post told *USA Today* that, while all these outbursts were discouraging, the malcontents were put in their places. "These three events were bad, but the reaction to them was significant in that people were not impressed," Post said. "Kanye stole Taylor's moment, but Beyoncé stole it right back."

Talk About It:

Did you watch the Video Music Awards? Did you watch Kanye's outburst on YouTube? What did you think about it?

Do you think people are less polite now than they were when your parents or grandparents were growing up? Why or why not? Is it important to be polite?

If you disagree with what someone says, do you tell them? How do you tell them?

Have you ever said or done something you later regretted? Did you later apologize? Did you make up for it? How?

What the Bible Says:

“... when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 14: 10-11).

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Prov. 15:1).

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: ...a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Eccl. 3:1, 7).