**Get Your Own Slang!**

I’m standing outside Embry-Riddle’s Hunt Library in Daytona Beach, Florida, and a group of students are talking:

Student 1: Hey brah, ‘s’up?

Student 2: Nothin’. Just had a argument wit’ Isabella. I think she low-key hates me.

Student 1: I feel you bro. But no sweat. You goin’ to this party tonight?

Student 2: Ah yeah, fam! It’s gon’ be lit!

I’m only a few years older than these kids, but I need one of them to translate for me. I’ve just entered a new culture, and all the rules, at least for language, are different here. The conversation seems casual, but I don’t even know if they’re being nice to each other or saying something offensive.

There’s a term that’s been used for a while for this generation of students: The Millennial Generation. But you won’t find such a formal phrase in their vocabulary. They have always used slang to identify for others in their age group and to show their independence from adults at the same time. Using slang gives their “club” its own language. When teenagers use slang, they’re communicating their connection with each other, their group identity. These kids aren’t just talking about what they’re doing; they’re connecting with each other by speaking the same language to talk about something that is probably only relevant to them.

Like students of every generation, today’s kids have many ways to establish their independent identity. They wear the same sorts of popular styles in clothing. Friends and larger peer groups travel in packs. Listen to the same music, and do all the same activities. And yes, they speak whatever slang is currently in style.

I say, let them have their slang. We had ours, so it’s fair. Being part of a group is important and “secret” languages are fun. The next time you hear teenagers speaking what sounds like a foreign language, just smile and say to yourself, “Cool.”