Farnoosh Tarnabi’s editorial titled “A Fictional Barrier is Healthier” achieves an important reality check for those obsessed with unreal reality shows. She writes accurately of a new culture, a culture that codifies wealth with wicked behavior. One need only to watch ten minutes of any of the “Real Housewives” franchises to witness the wisdom of her words.

This phenomenon, one that viewers might liken to the film “Mean Girls,” rewards screaming, backstabbing, gossiping, and living generally vapid and unfulfilled lives.

MTV’s old show, “My Super Sweet Sixteen” was an early entry into the foray. It illustrated spoiled teeenagers who tried to outdo each other on two levels. The first level involved extravagance. The second level involved vitriole. Teenagers routinely left classmates out of their over the top parties, or created some sort of nasty drama among their friend groups. For this, parents then threw them parties that can only be described as epic. What kind of a wealth culture does this promote? A misleading and misguided one.

In order to present viewers with a more accurate view of wealth, television reality shows that focus on the lives of the wealthy should present more positive points of view. For instance, rather than showcasing one wealthy housewife throwing wine in the face of another wealthy and equally vapid housewife, producers need to select cast members who actually do something with their lives, something purposeful.

Some will say that viewers don’t want this sort of television, that this sort of television only panders to what audiences want, but we should challenge television producers to raise the bar a bit. Think back to how Adolph Ochs elevated the newspaper business with The New York Times. The shows that will last and carry import are those that rise above the lowest common denominator.