



Mixing Four Generations in the Workplace

A two-program DVD featuring Cam Marston

Facilitator's Guide

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Introduction

In today's business environment, with a vast range of ages and background experiences at play, you are more likely to be managing, coaching and leading people who are nothing at all like you. Let's be honest—this is the first time we've had all four generations actively working together at the same time in the workplace.

So, how do you find that all important common ground? One increasingly important starting point is to gain an understanding of generational dynamics in the workplace.

The two-DVD multi-media learning system, ***Mixing Four Generations in the Workplace***, will provide participants with the understanding and tools necessary to effectively coach, manage and retain each generation at work.

Today's workforce comprises four distinct generations; each with its own shared history, common biases and core beliefs. Learning what makes each generation tick, and taking the time to consider your communication approach, will advance your relationships and help you lead your team during good times and through stressful situations.

This course gives your participants that generational insight. Throughout this course, participants will learn the common drivers of each generation—what are they looking for, how should you interact with them, how do they make decisions, and what is most important to them.

This two-DVD program will help participants:

Communicate easier - By increasing shared understanding between the different generations.

Motivate, coach, hire and retain employees of different generations – By understanding what makes them tick.

Create and sustain a productive workforce – By increasing their understanding of one another, the different generations will work better as a team, effectively resolve conflicts and be more productive.

Enjoy and appreciate the people you work with – By understanding the different generations we learn to enjoy and appreciate who they are. This appreciation will help reduce stress in the workplace and create more enjoyable relationships.

Course Overview

The *Mixing Four Generations in the Workplace* course is a two-program DVD multi-media learning package designed for classroom facilitation and instructor-led training (ILT). The first program (18 minutes) focuses on defining and understanding the four generations and the second program (16 minutes) focuses on dealing with the four generations in the workplace.

You will find everything you need for either a 2- or 4-hour workshop on interacting with the four generations in the workplace.

Customization and flexibility are primary objectives of the program. Print components, including this *Facilitator's Guide*, are included on the copyright free CD-ROM in your instructor's kit. The Microsoft PowerPoint® presentation on the CD-ROM is a great tool for organizing, outlining and hammering home your key points. The PowerPoint® presentation is easy to customize and will help you stick to your agenda. You can also print out the PowerPoint® presentation as a handout and photocopy it for attendees.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the program, participants will be able to:

- Define the four generations and their workplace characteristics
- Identify the common drivers and value systems of each generation and how those drivers affect motivation and behavior in the workplace
- Describe how each generation defines success and understand how the differences affect communication and relationships in the workplace
- Determine your employees generational bias and how your approach may need to change when coaching, managing and retaining employees of different generations
- Appreciate and gain respect for what is important to each generation

Session Agenda

2-hour session

Introduction	10 minutes
View Program 1 and Discuss	30 minutes
Generational Voices Quiz	25 minutes
View Program 2 and Discuss	35 minutes
Commitment to Action	10 minutes
Session Debrief	10 minutes

4-hour session

Introduction and overview	20 minutes
How We Perceive the Four Generations	20 minutes
View Program 1 and Discuss	30 minutes
Generational Voices Quiz	25 minutes
Reviewing our Perceptions	15 minutes
Break	15 minutes
View Program 2 and Discuss	30 minutes
Determining Generational Bias	10 minutes
Coaching, Managing and Leading the Four Generations	45 minutes
Commitment to Action	15 minutes
Session Debrief	15 minutes

Preparing for Your Session

Prior to the session, make sure you:

- Review both programs several times and become familiar with the content.
- Review the *Facilitator's Guide* and determine which agenda will be appropriate for your organization. Make sure you read the *Getting Oriented* section of this guide.
- Outline your presentation, considering your audience and objectives.
- Review the exercises and try and find an opportunity in the materials where you feel you have a personal story or anecdote to add to the program. This will help support the material and personalize the session for you and your participants.
- Review the PowerPoint® slides and determine if they need to be customized for your organization.
- Determine where the training program will take place. Do you need to schedule or reserve space?
- Identify the number of attendees making sure you have appropriate accommodations for any participants with disabilities.
- Make sure you have the following equipment and materials:
 - Flip chart and markers
 - TV/DVD player with remote control
 - Computer and screen (if you choose to display the PowerPoint® slides on screen.)

Getting Oriented

The four generations in the workforce today – Matures, Baby Boomers, Generation Xers and the New Millennials – each bring a unique historical perspective that shapes their interpersonal and business biases. It is important to understand each generation, not only to determine how best to work with them, but how your own generational bias may be getting in the way of your success.

It is human nature to work and communicate from where we're most comfortable; however, that may not be a match to your employee's comfort zone. Recognizing yourself in these descriptions may make clear why you've had trouble connecting with other generations. Interact with your team on their terms and you will reap the rewards.

Generations in a Nutshell

To help you identify yourself, and those you work with, here are snapshot descriptions of each generation in the workforce today.

Matures

Born between 1909 and 1945, Matures came of age during the Great Depression. They experienced Pearl Harbor, World War II, and Hiroshima. As a result, they are driven by the ideals of duty and sacrifice. Of the four generations, the Matures are the smallest in numbers (30 million). They are also the wealthiest. They either first entered the workforce after WWII or came home from the war and got a job with companies that took care of their employees. Both the company and the employee believed that loyalty to one another created even more loyalty. Most of the Matures worked for only one company, staying with that employer until retirement.

In the workplace, Matures are loyal to their employers and expect the same in return. They possess superb interpersonal skills, viewing the workplace as a collective whole that must work together. Additionally, Matures often measure a work ethic on timeliness, productivity, and not drawing attention to oneself.

As consumers, Matures place great faith in the nation's institutions: people, companies and the government. They value quality over speed and efficiency, and do not require fancy options and customization. Though loyal, they are not afraid to shop around.

Matures often measure a work ethic on timeliness, productivity, and not drawing attention to oneself.

Baby Boomers

One of the largest generations in history, the “Me” generation of Boomers was born between 1946 and 1964. They led the Civil Rights Movement and experienced the assassinations of Martin Luther King and the Kennedys. Many fought in or protested against the Vietnam War. They are a generation focused on prosperity. And they are largely in control today. Boomers run our local, state, and national governments. They are the bosses, supervisors, managers, and CEOs of most companies, and they dominate the workforce because of their enormous numbers—80 million people.

In the workplace, Boomers believe in, champion, and evaluate themselves and others based on their work ethic, which is measured in hours spent on the job. Productivity is less important than face time. Boomers are team-oriented; they consider relationship-building skills critical for success. As such, they expect loyalty from those they work with. The term “workaholic” was coined to describe the Boomer’s work ethic.

In the workplace, Boomers are looking for products and services that help regain control of their time. They are mixed in their views on technology, believing it brings about as many problems as solutions. Status and individuality are vitally important to Boomers, who want their products and services to be customized and a personal demonstration of their own successes.

Generation X

One of the most significant impacts on the workforce came with the introduction of Generation X. Born between 1965 and 1978, Xers were quickly branded as slackers and skeptics, reluctant to grow up and conform. What many failed to recognize at first was the source of this reluctance. Raised in a world where the “national institutions” seemed to fall like dominoes—church scandals, impeachments, divorce—were almost normal. Generation X was taught to question authority. As youth they were told they’d be the first generation in the nation’s history that would not be as successful as their parents. Instead of becoming pessimists, however, they have embraced a carpe diem attitude—one that flies in the face of Boomers’ and Matures’ long-term strategizing.

In the workforce, Xers dismiss the Boomers’ work-till-you-drop ethic. They also eschew hierarchy—seeking open communication regardless of position, title or tenure. Today, productivity on the job matters more than time on the job. They are moving into management positions where they are effective, profitable and responsible, but definitely different. Perhaps most importantly, Xers invest loyalty in people, not companies.

In the workplace, Generation Xers pose a tough sell. They have been conditioned to spot a phony a mile away. They want to control the decision and the plan, selecting options that make sense to the way they live and work, not what someone has predetermined for them. They embrace technology, using it in most aspects of their lives—including competitive analysis for almost all purchases.

New Millennials

The latest entrants into the workforce are the New Millennials, born between 1979 and 1988. They have been coddled since birth, protected by their parents from all manner of atrocities and threats seeming to infiltrate the world. New Millennials were raised with terrorist attacks. They are also technology gurus. They've never known a world without cell phones, laptops, remote controls, and travels to outer space. And, as a whole, they've never known depression—New Millennials have lived almost their entire lives in a growing economy—until recently.

In the workplace, the New Millennials like to align themselves with individuals who will help them achieve their goals. They seek open, constant communication from the boss. Interestingly, they work quite well with members of the Mature generation. New Millennials seek personal fulfillment from their jobs, not necessarily financial security. Among the most overscheduled youth in our nation's history, they seek ways to shed stress in their lives.

In the workplace, New Millennials are torn between individuality and fitting in. They want to be like their peers—but with a twist. They are loyal and consider a company's altruistic attitude and culture. They don't want to be hurried and will take the time to search for a unique answer.

New Millennials seek personal fulfillment from their jobs, not necessarily financial security yet.

Facilitator's Materials

Introduction and Overview

Time and Materials Needed:

- 10 – 20 minutes, depending on which agenda you choose
 - PowerPoint Screens 1-8
 - Participant Guides
-

1. Before participants arrive, **DISTRIBUTE** the participant guides to the tables.
2. **DISPLAY PowerPoint (PP) 1** and have it showing as participants arrive.
3. **WELCOME** participants to the training and make any necessary introductions
4. **DISPLAY PP 2. REVIEW** the learning objectives.
5. **DISCUSS** the agenda and take care of any housekeeping issues such as: breaks, bathroom locations, etc.
6. **DISPLAY PP 3-7.** Briefly, **DESCRIBE** the four generations.
7. **ACTIVITY:** If you are using the four-hour agenda, include the following activity:
 - **DISPLAY PP 8.**
 - **DIVIDE** participants into small groups of two or three.
 - Give each small group 5 – 8 minutes to **DISCUSS** the following:

Think back to a time when you had to interact with someone from a different generation. This can be from your personal or professional experience.

How is communicating with someone from another generation different from communicating with someone from your own generation? Share your experiences with your group.
 - After each small group has an opportunity to discuss the question, have them **SHARE** their insights with the large group.

How We Perceive the 4 Generations

Time and Materials Needed:

- 20 minutes – to be used with the four-hour agenda
 - Flipchart Paper and Markers
-

1. Prior to the training, **CREATE** four flipcharts. On each flip chart page write one of the four generation categories. Then, place each page on one of the four walls of the room.
2. **EXPLAIN** to participants the following:

Every generation perceives the other generations differently. Sometimes our perceptions are accurate and other times they are just stereotypes, or were based on one significant interaction.

In order to effectively coach, manage, and lead each generation, we need to make sure we are not being affected by inaccurate assumptions.

Let's take a look at some of the commonly held perceptions we have about each of the four generations. Then, we will compare our perceptions to the information in the DVD. Our perceptions have a very powerful affect on our attitudes and behaviors. This exercise will allow us to review our perceptions and determine for ourselves if they are accurate or if we need to rethink them.

3. **ACTIVITY:**

- **DIVIDE** participants into four groups.
- **ASSIGN** each group one of the four flipchart pages to start with.
- **EXPLAIN** to participants that each group will have a chance to respond to the perceptions of all four generations.
- **ASK** each group to jot down the first things that come to their mind about each generation. These can be commonly held perceptions that they have or they can be perceptions that

they have heard others comment about the different generations.

- **ROTATE** the groups every 3 - 4 minutes so that each group travels to all four walls. This will ensure that each group gets to comment about their perceptions of each generation.
4. **DEBRIEF** the exercise when everyone is finished by highlighting some of the interesting perceptions about each of the generations. You will complete the debrief of the exercise after viewing program one.

Program One: Defining Four Generations in the Workplace

Time and Materials Needed:

- 35 minutes
 - DVD, *Defining Four Generations in the Workplace*
 - Flipchart paper and markers
 - PowerPoint Screens 9-11
 - Participant Guides, pages 7-8
-

1. **DIRECT** participants to turn to pages **7-8** in their guides.
2. **SHOW and DISCUSS PP 9-10.** Explain to participants that there are some specific things you would like them to watch for when viewing the DVD. This will make viewing the program an active rather than a passive interaction. When participants know that they will be responsible for discussing, sharing and reporting back on specific information in the DVD, they will pay closer attention to the material. This will also help increase retention of the material.
3. **CHOOSE** from the following approaches:
 - **Option A: ASK** participants to take notes on each generation. Pages are provided in their guides for note taking.
 - **Option B: DIVIDE** participants into four *random* small groups and assign each group one or two of the questions listed on PP 5 and tell them they will be responsible for reporting back to the large group the information obtained in the DVD.
 - **Option C:** If you have all four generational groups represented in your session, **ASSIGN** each group their own generation to report on. Ask them to include additional thoughts, ideas or anecdotes from their own experiences.
4. **PLAY** the DVD, *Defining Four Generations in the Workplace*.
5. After viewing the DVD:
 - If you used **option A**, then as a group develop a list of the generational highlights from the DVD.
 - If you used **options B or C**, **ASK** participants to take a few minutes to discuss observations of their assigned generation or question and then create a flipchart page that represents the

highlights. Then have each group share their list with the large group.

6. Once you have reviewed each generation, **SHOW PP 11** and **DISCUSS** as a group. The goal of the question is to get the participants thinking about how all this information applies to the workplace. Don't expect one right answer from participants, instead allow them to interpret and respond to the question from their own experiences.
 - **At the end of program one, Cam poses the question, "What happens when generations define success differently? How do the conflicting definitions of success affect how we motivate, coach and encourage in the workplace?"**

Generational Voices Quiz

Time and Materials Needed:

- 25 minutes
 - Participant Guide, pages 9-11
-

1. **DIRECT** participants to turn to page **9-11** in their guides.
2. Allow participants 10 minutes to review each statement and choose the appropriate generation.
3. There is a facilitator's version of the ***Generational Voices Quiz*** in the back of this *Facilitator's Guide* in the *Materials* section. The answers for each statement are provided.
4. Once participants have had a chance to answer each statement, discuss the answers as a group.

Reviewing Our Perceptions

Time and Materials Needed:

- 10 minutes
 - Four-hour agenda only
-

1. Participants are going to review some of their responses from the *Perceptions* exercise.
2. **ASK** participants the following questions about their perceptions.
 - Look at the perceptions made by our group. Now that you know a little bit more about each of the generations, where do you think some of these perceptions came from?
 - Are there any perceptions listed that you think are unfair or inaccurate? If so, which ones are unfair and/or inaccurate and why do you feel that way?
 - What do you think caused the misperception?
 - Are there any perceptions listed that you feel really represent a certain generation?
 - How might these perceptions, assumptions or stereotypes affect how we interact with one another in the workplace?

Program Two and Discussion

Time and Materials Needed:

- 35 minutes
 - DVD, ***How to Deal with the Four Generations***
 - Participant Guides, page 12
 - PowerPoint Screen 12
-

1. **DIRECT** participants to turn to page **12** in their guides.
2. **DISPLAY and DISCUSS PP 12.** As participants watch program two ask them to focus on those things that need to be considered when working with the other generations in the workplace.
3. **CHOOSE** from the following approaches:
 - **Option A: ASK** participants to take notes on each generation. Pages are provided in their guides for note taking.
 - **Option B: DIVIDE** participants into four *random* small groups and assign each group one generation to focus on and tell them they will be responsible for reporting back to the large group.
 - **Option C:** If you have all four generational groups represented in your session, **ASSIGN** each group their own generation to report on. Ask them to include additional thoughts, ideas or anecdotes from their own experiences.
4. **PLAY** DVD program two, ***How to Deal with the Four Generations.***
5. After viewing the program:
 - If you used **option A**, then as a group **DEVELOP** a list of the generational highlights from the DVD.
 - If you used options B or C, **ASK** participants to take a few minutes to discuss observations of their assigned generation or question and then create a flipchart page that represents the highlights. Then have each group share their list with the large group.
7. **ASK** participants if they have any questions about the material.

Determining Generational Bias

Time and Materials Needed:

- 10 minutes
 - Participant Guides, page 13
 - PowerPoint® Screen 13
-

1. **SAY** the following:

Now that you've gained a better understanding of where each generation is coming from and what forms their attitudes, values and workplace behavior, you're all set, right? OK—Not exactly. Even when employing a generational strategy, age-ism is the death of a good manager, leader or coach. You must be careful to employ these tactics subtly and correctly. First you must determine how to accurately assess your employee's generational bias. That is, which generation does he or she most strongly identify with? This may not be determined by his or her birthday. And it is never determined by how old or young you think they look.

Generational stereotypes are based on the average behaviors and beliefs of a collective group. Individuals within each group may lean toward the values and characteristics of the generation above or below them (especially true with those at the outer edges of each birth range). Or they may be a living, breathing poster child for their age group stereotypes. Understanding the characteristics of each generation and identifying them within your department will help you develop the most effective coaching strategy.

Rest assured there are several general questions you can ask to help ascertain an individual's generational bias without requesting a copy of his or her birth certificate. Luckily, most are easy to work into the conversation as they relate to technology preferences and how they see their role models and heroes.

2. **DIRECT** participants to page 13 in their guides.
3. **DISPLAY** and **DISCUSS PP 13**, then have participants create some additional questions that will help them identify an employee's generational bias and have them write them in their participant guides:
 - **How do you prefer to communicate—email or phone?**
Phone indicates a Mature or tech-phobic Boomer, while email indicates Xers, New Millennials and some Boomers.
 - **What operating system are you running?**
Matures & Boomers are likely to have to ask someone.
 - **Who are your role models/heroes?**
Matures—Military; Boomers—JFK, MLK; Xers—those people they believe have proven themselves; Millennials—Parents, Grandparents
 - **What additional questions can you think of that will help you identify which generation your employees identify with?**
4. **EXPLAIN** the following to participants:

Even after you ask the questions above, you may still be unable to precisely categorize your team member. Thankfully, because you now have a deep understanding how different attitudes and ideals can be addressed, you are better prepared to manage this balancing act. In this case, you must treat each aspect of managing and coaching according to the overriding attributes you've discovered. In other words, meet your employee where he/she is at during each stage in the game.

Does he/she want to complete the process in person with minimal communication via technology (Mature) but desire high levels of customization (Boomer) and intend to privately research alternatives to confirm the approach (Xer)?

In other words, customize your approach to address those various needs.

Now, let's determine some of the specific ways we can manage, coach and retain the different generations.

Managing, Coaching and Retaining Different Generations

Time and Materials Needed:

- 45 minutes
 - Participant Guides 14-24, 29
 - PowerPoint® Screens 14-20
-

1. **SAY** the following:

All four generations have a lot to contribute to the workforce. Now let's talk about how the information we've discussed affects what we do when we get back to our work environments.

2. **DIRECT** participants to pages **14-21** in their guides.

3. **REVIEW** the *Approach*, the *Discussion* and the *Plan* for each of the 4 Generations. There is no need to spend the time reading these sections to participants, instead highlight some of the areas you feel are important and then add a personal example, story or anecdote, if you have one. If you don't have a personal example, ask the group to share their experiences.

4. **DIRECT** participants to page **22** in their guides.

5. **DISPLAY PP 14-20** and **DISCUSS** the Do's and Don'ts of Coaching and Managing. Only the Do's are provided on the PP because that is the behavior you want to reinforce. Feel free to briefly discuss the 'Don'ts' but keep focused on what you want participants to 'DO'.

6. **ACTIVITY:**

- Divide participants into small groups of 3 or 4.
- Now that participants have identified actions to take with the different generations, they will start applying the information to their own situations and workplace relationships.
- **ASK** participants to identify three different individuals they work with that have a generational bias different from their own. It is a good idea to choose someone that they often have some challenges with that may need to be worked out. At least one of their examples needs to be someone they are comfortable talking in their group about.

- **DIRECT** participants to turn to page **23** in their guides. **ASK** them to fill out the worksheet. Then, give each small group 5 minutes to discuss at least one example from each participant.
- **DIRECT** participants to turn to page **24** in their guides. Now, participants need to consider how their approach to the individuals listed on the previous page may have to change given the information that's been discussed and provided. Let participants know about the cheat sheet in the back of their participant guides on page **29**.
- After participants have had a chance to think through their approach on their own. Have participants share their conclusions with their small group. The group can offer additional insight and suggestions as well as ask questions.
- After participants have finished discussing within their small groups, **ASK** one person from each group to share an example with the large group and facilitate any necessary discussion as you see fit.

Commitment to Action

Time and Materials Needed:

- 10-15 minutes
 - Participant Guides, page 25
-

1. **SAY** the following:

Now it's time for you to make some decisions about what actions you are truly willing to commit to doing back in your work environment. We have discussed some specific examples that you all face back on the job, however nothing will change unless you make a conscious effort about doing something differently. Take a few minutes to make a commitment to yourself about how you are going to increase communication with those of a different generational bias.

2. **DIRECT** participants to page **25** in their guides.
3. Allow participants several minutes to think about what they are willing to commit to doing and what event they believe will drive the necessary changes.
4. Go around the room and ask each participant to **SHARE** one thing they are committed to doing differently as a result of this training program.

Program Debrief

Time and Materials Needed:

- 10-15 minutes
 - Participant Guides, pages 26-27
 - PowerPoint Screens 21 and 22
-

1. **DIRECT** participants to turn to page **26**.
2. **DISCUSS** the *Quick Review* and **DISPLAY PP 21 and 22**:
Here are just a few thoughts to consider as you leave here today and prepare to put your plans into action.
3. **DIRECT** participants to turn to page **27** in their guides. Give participants time to fill out the Program Evaluation.

About Cam Marston

Consultant, author, and speaker Cam Marston has worked with *Fortune 500* companies and small businesses throughout the world to improve multigenerational relations and communications. He has appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *New Zealand Herald*, *Entrepreneur Magazine*, *Charlotte Observer*, *HR Management Today*, on the BBC, and in numerous trade journals and city business journals across the United States.

Cam's programs and concepts are the result of more than ten years of extensive research and study inside businesses of all sizes and sectors. In the course of his work, he has interviewed hundreds of representatives of the various generations. Their answers are interesting—sometimes surprising—and always valuable.

Marston began his generational-focused consultancy after several years selling for Nestle Brands Foodservice Company. While at Nestle he discovered that he developed closer relationships with his customers when he talked to them about subjects that appealed to their value systems. He soon learned that his customers had many different values but the values were roughly the same in each generation.

In 1996 he founded Marston Communications. Originally his clients engaged him to conduct surveys, focus groups and research on both their customer and employee bases. Cam's results revealed significant generational differences that his clients had never recognized.

In June, 1997, *Time Magazine* brought Generation X and the generational differences to the forefront of American debate with the cover article "Great Xpectations." Marston read it and realized his findings were the same ones the article discussed. Soon after that he gave his first presentation on generational differences in the workplace. Using the research he himself had conducted within organizations and the explosion of information on the newly-identified generations appearing all over the media, Marston began exploring generational differences in the workplace and presenting his findings across the globe.

In 2005-2006 Marston gave more than 100 presentations. Today his clients range from small, local associations, to national conventions audiences of more than 3,000, to *Fortune 500* senior executives in corporate boardrooms.

Materials

Generational Voices Answers

Who Am I?

The Power of Generational Insight

Matures

Born between 1909 – 1945

Xers

Born between 1965 – 1979

Boomers

Born between 1946 – 1964

Millennials

Born between 1980 – 2000

1. Some people estimate that there were nearly five hundred thousand of us at Woodstock. But if you survey the country today, you'd have to think the number was more like several million.

Boomer. The Woodstock music festival took place between August 15 and 17, 1969. It was a huge, era-defining event. Today you can ask many Boomers living east of the Mississippi and they will tell you they think they remember being there.

2. My sister's son contracted polio. Fortunately, when my daughter was born a few years later, the vaccine had just come out.

Mature. The polio vaccine came into use in 1954 and was developed by Jonas Salk, MD. Before a vaccine was introduced, more than 20,000 cases of the disease were reported annually in the United States and about 1,000 people died each year when the muscles that controlled their breathing were paralyzed.

3. John F. Kennedy was assassinated when I was in junior high. By the time I graduated, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy had also been killed.

Boomer. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963. Both Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King were assassinated in 1968.

4. Crowded? I can tell you about crowded. The Catholic schools in my neighborhood sometimes had 60 in a class! It made everything very competitive. The good thing is you had to learn how to get along, how to team up with other people.

Boomer. The population swell of the 1950s and 1960s overwhelmed school systems and colleges.

5. I think there's a good reason you don't hear much "Oh, he's my hero," talk these days. I just don't think there are many heroes. There are people who are rich, famous, whatever. But not too many heroes.

Xer. As a generation, Xers tend to be more skeptical and cynical. When surveyed, many state they have no shared heroes as a generation. They are the only generation with that response.

6. You might not believe this, but sometimes I borrow my mother's CDs. I mean, we don't have exactly the same tastes in music - but we like some of the same stuff.

Millennial. This is an example of "parent as friend" and other changes in generational relationships. The traditional cultural schisms between generations do not always hold true anymore.

7. The year I turned 15, the unemployment rate was nearly 25%.

Mature. Incredible double-digit unemployment marked the Great Depression of the 1930s.

8. When I was a junior in high school the Grammy for Album of the Year went to Bob Dylan for Time Out of Mind.

Millennial. A folk icon of the 1960s, Dylan still turns out best sellers and Grammy winners. Time Out of Mind won the 1997 Grammy for Album of the Year.

9. You might hear Ludicrous and think: ridiculous. I hear it and want to turn up the radio.

Millennial. Music makers I, Ludicrous (rock) and Ludacris (rap) have both been successful.

10. Once in a while in elementary school, we did these silly drills where we got down on our knees and tucked our heads down with our hands on the back of our heads. That was supposed to help protect us against "The Bomb".

Boomer. Did anyone really think that was going to work?

11. I was just old enough to learn how to drive when I learned about the Chernobyl accident in the Soviet Union. Comforting... I don't think I quite understood the magnitude of that at the time. I do now.

Xer. In 1986 the Chernobyl nuclear accident in the Ukraine was the result of a flawed reactor design and inadequately trained personnel. Some 31 people were killed, and there have since been ten deaths from thyroid cancer and scores more seriously ill reportedly due to the accident.

12. Three Mile Island. You don't hear that much anymore. That was pretty close to "The Big Bang" revisited. I was just out of college and starting a career. I'm lucky it wasn't a short one.

Boomer. In 1979, a malfunction at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, led to the most serious commercial nuclear accident in US history. The system was about 30 minutes away from an irreversible meltdown. Over 90% of the reactor core was damaged, 52% had melted down.

13. Sometimes I get tired of hearing the word loyalty. I think people who have a lot of power like to throw that word down on the people who don't. Look at the record. Look at all the people who were supposed to have long careers and big pensions and got unemployment and social security instead.

Xer. Xers grew up witnessing many of the disappointments experienced by the Matures in terms of lost jobs and evaporated pensions. As a result, many are not very receptive to appeals for loyalty to employers.

14. You pay your dues. You make the sacrifices necessary to make things work. People today ask too many questions. They expect too much too soon. Just do what you're told. Get the job done. You'll get what you deserve in time. Your company puts a roof over your head and food on your table. You have an obligation.

Mature. Loyalty and duty are hallmark words for this generation. They put faith in staying the course and exercising patience in the face of adversity.

15. It was the bi-centennial year. Everyone was in love with Colorado and looking for a Rocky Mountain high. So we packed up the dog in the van and took off cross-country with no particular route, and hardly a dollar to our name.

Boomer. The year was 1976. Lots of people used the bi-centennial as a time to explore the country - sometimes hitchhiking or in vans and VW Microbuses.

16. On my first date we went to see a brand new movie called Gone With the Wind. It was pretty good but, my gosh, it was almost four hours long. I was late getting home and my parents were furious.

Mature. Released in 1939, Gone With the Wind is still with us. Rhett Butler and Scarlet O'Hara are cultural icons. It's tagline, "The most magnificent picture ever!" continues to find supporters some 65 years after its release.

17. Everybody talks about TV this and TV that; this show; that show. I don't really need it that much. There are plenty of other things to do.

Millennial, maybe Mature. Millennials are much more eclectic and are just as happy with video games, computers, and other active pursuits. They are not as devoted to TV as Xers and Boomers. Matures did not grow up using TV as a primary source of information and entertainment. They, too, often find it easier to ignore the tube and do other things.

18. Morning routine. Newspaper. Cup of coffee. It's still hard to beat the newspaper for getting information about things. And a cup of coffee works for me any time of day.

Mature. For the Mature generation the newspaper has always been a primary source of information. Coffee, the drink of choice in their formative years, remains a favorite, often consumed at breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

19. I was in high school when Dallas was huge on TV. The "Who shot JR?" thing was everywhere. Pretty crazy.

Xer. For millions of people around the world one of the most riveting events of the times was the March 21, 1980 "shooting" of Texas oil baron and bad guy JR Ewing on the hugely popular TV series, Dallas. "Who shot JR?" was one of the best-kept media secrets ever. Of course, now the answer's common knowledge...

20. A freshman in college. Planning a major in political science. The Berlin Wall comes down. I was in heaven!

Xer. On November 9, 1989, the border separating West Germany and East Germany was opened and the famous Berlin Wall figuratively and literally crumbled. The Berlin Wall was built in 1961 and not only separated the residents of the city, but also became a prominent worldwide symbol of the Cold War.

21. Geraldine Ferraro becomes Walter Mondale's running mate in a presidential election. I was only 17 at the time. I told my mother I was going to either own my own business or hold public office. She just grinned at me.

Xer. Geraldine Ann Ferraro of New York earned a place in history as the first woman vice-presidential candidate on a national party ticket. In Congress, Ferraro spearheaded efforts to achieve passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and also sponsored the Women's Economic Equity Act in 1984. Her job as chief of the Democratic platform committee helped win 1984 Democratic Presidential nominee Walter Mondale's confidence.

22. When I was a kid The Battle of the Bulge was not a book about getting rid of the "spare tire" around the middle.

Mature. During World War II, on December 16, 1944, the Germans started their Ardennes Offensive which became known in the U.S. Forces journals as The Battle of the Bulge. The battle unfolded during the coldest, snowiest weather "in memory" in the Ardennes Forest on the German/Belgium border. It involved over a million men: 500,000 Germans, 600,000 Americans (more than fought at Gettysburg), and 55,000 British.

23. I'll never forget it. I was home from school in the summer. I sat with my mom and dad and watched as tears came to Walter Cronkite's eyes as he reported Neil Armstrong walking on the moon.

Boomer. July 20, 1969. US astronaut Neil Armstrong stepped off the Eagle lander and uttered the famous words: "One small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind."

24. I was the only kid in the apartment building to have two Cabbage Patch Kids.

Xer. In 1976 a 21-year-old art student, Xavier Roberts, rediscovers "needle molding" a German technique for fabric sculpture from the early 1800's. Xavier creates his first soft-sculptures and calls them Little People. In 1983, they're introduced as Cabbage Patch Kids. By the end of the year almost 3 million Cabbage Patch Kids have been "adopted" - with angry people still waiting in lines. The Cabbage Patch Kids become the most successful new doll introduction in history, and in December 1983, they're featured on the cover of Newsweek.

25. Some members of our generation were to be referred to as "yuppies," supposedly derived from "young, upwardly mobile professionals" or "young urban professionals." Whatever. I don't think it was generally meant as a compliment.

Boomer. The exact origin of the term is unknown and, no, it wasn't generally meant as a compliment.

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