

OK, Boomer, the Kids Have Had Just About Enough of You

For the last few years you couldn't browse the internet without coming across some article on how millennials are ruining the country, with their disdain for brick and mortar malls, sit down restaurants and shunning religion. It has been popular to lament how this up and coming generation was altering the national landscape and in the process, taking away or otherwise diminishing the old tried-and-true and comfortably familiar.

Well the millennials (and GenZ) have spoken up, and they're tired of being blamed for all the changes the baby boomer generation has assigned them. And they're fighting back.

Have you heard of the new meme, "OK Boomer"? It's a trendy response (some say epithet) non-baby boomers have been throwing around when confronted with the "get off my lawn" and "I'd like to speak to your manager" type statements Baby boomers might inflict. It's meant to mock the senior generation and dismiss their comments as outdated, out-of-touch and tone deaf.

It would be easy to conclude that after years of derision, the "OK Boomer" trend is a natural outcome, that baby boomers had it coming, that "what's good for the goose..." and so on.



The real and scary take away from these dividing lines becoming permanently etched in our collective psyche is that we **MUST** work together. Baby boomers must work with, lead and be led by Gen Xer's and millennials, and the younger generations **MUST** work with baby boomers. Even the youngest baby boomers will still be in the workforce for almost another two decades.

This is not to say, "Can't we all just get along?" but rather, "We **MUST** get along!" So long as there are offices, cubicles and printers to share, today's employee will do themselves a favor to recognize that no one is going away anytime soon. If you want to keep working and enjoy your occupation, learning to understand and tolerate one another is crucial.

How would you like to be part of the solution?

Try a few of these ideas to help create a more harmonious and less stressful work environment.

Change your perspective

If you're younger (and lucky), you will be the elder generation one day and new technologies and the latest fads might elude you too. Aging is a one-way street, so get used to the idea. And baby-boomers, remember how it felt to be labeled the "Me Generation" by older people and not finding it helpful, and in fact, offensive? Changing your perspective on how you look at other generations can help change how you feel about them. It can help turn frustration into empathy.

Get to know people as REAL people

If you'd like to live with less stress, get to know your co-workers as the real, fully formed 3-dimensional people they are. It's hard to carry stereotypes and prejudices when you have come to know your co-workers in an intimate way.

Learn to forgive

Learning how to forgive someone, whether they ask for it or not, can be one of the best soft skills to master. To forgive someone is to let go of the resentment and hostility that will shorten lives and make for a miserable work environment. Like all skills, this will take practice, so don't quit trying if it doesn't come naturally.

Try learning from the other generation

Most times, when asked for help, people will gladly accommodate. It's a nice compliment to be asked for help. It says, "I trust you to lead me the right way" and "I have faith you are knowledgeable." Learning something from someone outside your generation leads to collaboration and a healthy interdependence.

Get assistance

If you're having a particularly difficult time working with someone outside of your generation, consider it may not be a "generational thing." Maybe they're just jerks who are hard to get along with. In that case, contact your manager, supervisor or HR representative and relieve yourself of the false-burden of trying to teach them how to get along; it's not your job. Or, maybe the issue is with you? Maybe the co-worker reminds you too much of a parent or a child, and it causes you difficulty interacting with them. Consider speaking with an EAP counselor and get a fresh perspective, so you can rid yourself of hidden barriers to success.

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