

# Understanding the Millennial Mind



A Menace or Amazing?

**FREE eBook  
pdf**

**More free e-Books:**



**Scott Degraffenreid**

Click Page Up, Page Down, or use Up or Down Arrows

*This free e-book may be transmitted and shared freely with the permission of the author. Please do not alter the content in any way - including links, keywords and response information. Help us spread this important information about the Millennial Generation.*

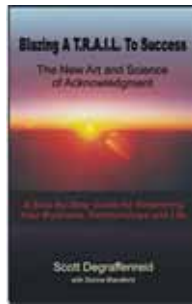
This book is not intended to provide personalized legal, accounting, financial, or investment advice. Readers are encouraged to seek the counsel of competent professionals with regard to such matters as interpretation of the law, proper accounting procedures, and investment strategies. The authors specifically disclaim any liability, loss, or risk, which is incurred as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of the use and application of any of the contents of this work.

***Understanding the Millennial Mind: A Menace Or Amazing?***

ISBN 978-0-9771738-8-4

Copyright 2008 Scott Degraffenreid

All Rights Reserved



Also by Scott Degraffenreid

*Blazing A T.R.A.I.L. To Success:  
The New Art and Science of Acknowledgment*



*Embracing the N.U.D.E. Model:  
The New Art and Science of  
Referral Marketing*

<http://NecessaryMeasures.com>

Coming Soon -



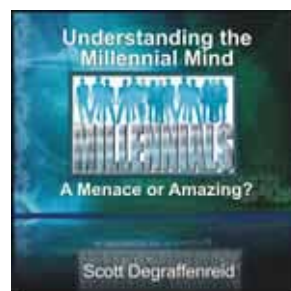
*Authentic Trust:  
How Acknowledgment, Integrity  
and Collaboration Can Revolutionize  
Your Company or Organization*

*Supercharged Referrals*  
by Scott Degraffenreid and Kathryn Booth

<http://SuperChargedReferrals.com>

or

<http://BigBusinessZoo.com>



**To order a softcover full version of  
Understanding the Millennial Mind  
by Scott Degraffenreid  
Retail Price:\$24.98**

## *Dedication*

This book is dedicated to anyone who's ever felt misunderstood, excluded, ignored, diminished or damaged. If you remember what it felt like to experience that as an individual, stop and imagine what it's like to confront those feelings as an entire generation. This book is for those born too late to fit in and a little too soon to be understood and appreciated. This book is for all of us.

## Forewords

"Scott has given us a glimpse into the inner workings of the Millennial generation. His insights and studies illuminate the depth of change that older generations will be required to master and adapt to as we integrate the Millennials into the workplace. Their uniqueness and brilliance should be embraced and celebrated as we move deeper into this age of technological advancements, which to many of my generation seems to be traveling at a hyper-speed rate. To these new generations and Millennials in particular, the pace is normal and expected.

As a father myself, in watching my own boys, it amazes me how quickly they figure out anything that is technology based. When they want me to play a game with them on the computer or phone, it seems to take me forever to figure out how to play, even with their help. When I get a new phone or whatever, I just give it to them to set it up with all the latest bells and whistles. Then I ask them to quickly show me how it works...they just naturally know what to do.

Scott Degraffenreid has captured the true essence of what to expect with this Millennial generation and what to assimilate as we charge forward and adapt our workplaces to incorporate the beauty and elegance of their unique gifts. Understanding that the Millennial Mind is simply amazing in that it gives us a road map to understanding our kids and the Millennial work force."

*Dave Austin*  
Performance Coach and Author  
*"Ordinary to Extraordinary: 12-Steps to Exceeding Your Potential"*

"Being a Millennial myself, I always knew I was different from other generations. After reading Scott Degraffenreid's book, I can see that I am not alone and that there is a large difference in the way we think. I can now interact with the other generations easier after reading this amazing book.

I always wondered if it was just me that was annoyed with the old and outdated methods of teaching, but now I can see that I am not alone in my thinking. I find it really annoying that in school, teachers still insist that we use old methods to complete our research and studies. Instead of just looking something up online, we have to use a textbook? What's the point? Some of those books will be obsolete in a few years anyway, and I find that I can get information faster and more current just off the web.

I completely agree with what Scott points out about the traditional training methods and structures. In my opinion, traditional classroom methods of teaching are a big waste of time because Millennials know that they can use the Internet as a better resource instead of books. Since our minds run at a faster pace than other generations, textbooks and other old methods of research can be confusing because they slow down our Millennial minds.

After reading this book, it helps me understand why my Dad has such a hard time figuring out the simplest things on his cell phone or iPod. I see that our brains are just wired differently. Knowing this I see where I can help him and where we can work together in cooperation just like a team sport. I can help him and he can help me."

*Chase Austin*  
Millennial and 12-year-old Author  
*"Unleash Your Inner Super Hero"*

## *Origins and Operating Instructions*

I've spent a little over two years on this book, much of it wondering who I was writing it for? My clients are mostly corporations. They're more interested in operational knowledge than the theoretical. The problem is there are so many different workplace issues in regard to Millennials I couldn't just churn out a list of solutions that have worked in various cases without explaining why and how they worked. That would've made this a very long and tedious book.

I have certainly written it for parents because clearly there is an appetite there. Many times in working with executive leadership teams, mothers and fathers come up to me and hug me for helping them understand their kids and what's going on with them. I'm not a parent though, so it would seem a little presumptuous giving parenting advice. I can say what I've seen, but it will be up to you as parents to choose how that applies to your relationship with your Millennials.

I want to start a dialogue with educators, because the educational system as it is does not keep Millennials engaged and everyone involved is frustrated.

What I've chosen to do is write a book that can hopefully serve as a sort of conversational bridge between Millennials, their employers, parents, educators and anyone else interested in better relationships with them. For that reason this book is written in a style that will hopefully be amenable to

Millennials without being too distracting or offensive to others.

You're welcome to read this book from beginning to end, back to front, middle sideways or just skipping around to what interests you. It's a little like a website in that way. For that reason some points and sections may seem redundant. Those are ideas I felt worth repeating so that even a casual reader will encounter them at some point.

I haven't troubled with citations, sources or other outside references. My conclusions are based on working with a lot of companies and Millennials, searching out root causes and practical solutions. In many cases, my observations and inferences make sense to people who have experienced these issues, but didn't have enough context or perspective to understand and not just react. More importantly than validating my theories, that will take a lot more time and science, my hope is that the ideas put forth here will spur both conversation and inquiry from all quarters.

You can read this book from the perspective "What if this is true?", "What if it's false?" or anywhere else you feel comfortable. Better yet though, I hope you'll read it asking yourself the questions "What will build bridges and how can we learn from one another?"

*Scott Degraffenreid, N2Millennials*

# Contents

5 Chapter 1: What Are Millennials And Where Did We Get This Information?

*What makes Millennials so different?*

7 Chapter 2: Where Did This Material Come From?

*Scientific Data - Not A Consultant's Opinion*

12 Chapter 4: Scientific Data, Context and Timing – Key Elements to Clear Analysis

*What Does a Guy with No Children and No Millennial Employees Really Know?*

16 Chapter 5: Millennial Quirks Or Big Problems?

*"I Always Felt Like I Was Broken"*

18 Generational Apartheid? "Millennials Are Broken."

*Widespread Corporate Belief – Millennials Need to Be Fixed*

19 Chapter 6: Recognizing A Millennial

*Myths and Realities About Millennials*

*Human Being 2.0 Characteristics*

22 Chapter 7: Root Causes of Millennial Evolution

*How Do You Make A Millennial?*

27 Chapter 8: How Do They See Themselves?

*They Are Stylin'*

*They Are Smart*

*They Are Individualists This is caused by:*

29 Chapter 9: Millennials In Social Networks

*How do they relate to their families?*

*How do they create global social networks?*

*Text speak*

31 Chapter 10: The Millennial Response to Change, Technology and New Systems

*The Rules Paradox*

32 Chapter 11: What Motivates Millennials?

*How Is This Different From Previous Generations?*

36 Chapter 12: "Crash Test Geniuses"(© 2006 Degraffenreid)

*Reset/Reboot*

38 Chapter 13: What Is Their View of the Future?

*Educational relevance*

*Family*

*Millennial's Role As "Consumer"*

41 Chapter 14: The Dark Side of the World of Millennials

*They Really Are Wired Differently*

*The Most Medicated Generation "ADD", Autism, ADHD*

*Depression/suicide*

*Obesity, Diabetes and Heart Disease*

43 Chapter 15: Millennials Are Your New Workforce

*The Millennial Paradox*

47 Chapter 16: Entry-Level Millennials

*Creating a "Winnable Game Worth Playing" for Them*

49 Chapter 17: College Level Millennials - Premium Grade?

*Don't Waste This Expensive, Expansive Blend*

50 Chapter 18: Marketing To Millennials

*Millennials As A Consumer Group*

52 Chapter 19: Educating Millennials

*Current trends – boys drop out... girls conform and excel*

53 Chapter 20: Parenting Millennials

*Creating positive family dynamics*

55 Chapter 21: Millennials and Religion

56 Chapter 22: The Dark Side

*What may happen if we continue on the course of treating them like they are broken and excluding them?*

57 Chapter 23: The Bright Side

*What possibilities for the world come into reality if we embrace, enhance and engage Human Being 2.0?*

58 Chapter 24: Conclusion

59 Scott Degraffenreid



# Understanding the Millennial Mind: A Menace Or Amazing?

Scott Degraffenreid

Copyright © 2008

## Chapter 1: What Are Millennials And Where Did We Get This Information?

### *What makes Millennials so different?*

Millennials are the new generation of workers born after 1982. They have grown up with personal computers, cable, music videos, video games and now search engines as daily interfaces. This has created actual physical changes in the way their brains work, revealed by functional MRI's.

Parents, educators and employers often perceive them as disloyal, apathetic, dysfunctional, illiterate, unwilling to be trained and refusing to be scheduled or instructed with traditional methods. What is being observed is actually their ability to think in non-linear ways, their early recognition of corporate and educational "games" and that they see no need to be "educated" when the information they need is constantly changing and a click or two away.

As is the case in any major shift, those experiencing disruption attempt to eliminate or fix the "problem". Almost everyone who speaks about Millennials as an expert either says or implies that they are damaged, disturbed, narcissistic or broken in some way.

That they are highly connected, mobile and vocal colors this perceived dysfunction a menace. Millennials are too young to see themselves clearly and too marginalized to create solutions and communicate their need to be respected, accepted and

engaged in work that makes a difference.

The fact is, they are not broken and trying to fix them is not the answer. When we look at the pace and their exposure to world events, advances in technology and pop culture that this generation experiences as a normal state, it becomes obvious that change is accelerating.

The life they know is "change is a given, stability is unnatural." Their brains really are rewired, this is one of several root causes we have considered and that many scientists are now studying.



Millennials have a completely different relationship to rules and winning and failure. They don't understand time as an issue because they have access to almost everything 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

They don't mind failing and if their attention is lost, they will ctrl alt delete and move on to the next thing.

Menu's are a natural way to relate to the world and process choices. Because of the evident and permanent ways that their brain's processing functions are "wired" I

have dubbed them Human Beings version 2.0. They thrive on choices and consider it is possible to have it all. Non-linear thinking is their forte' and they can and do process thoughts and reactions in both sides of their brain at the same time.

They have been dubbed "Crash Test Geniuses©" because they aren't afraid to "reboot" and learn faster from failure than anything else. This means that they feel no guilt about walking off the job if it doesn't seem to be working. It also means that they can and will take on market shifts, innovative problem solving and product creation without the fear of failure that paralyzes previous generations.

Many people wonder if this is a global phenomenon, if the Millennials in other countries exhibit the same characteristics. Right now, I can't say definitively. I work primarily in the U.S. and Canada where the data we are discussing was gathered.

I assume that some of the characteristics will be congruent in other industrialized countries to the degree that the root causes are similar. Just to be clear, however, the comments and assertions made herein apply only to American and Canadian Millennials.

As we discuss the root causes for Millennial differences it will become apparent that certain of these characteristics will generally be more pronounced for males than for females.

Again for reasons that will become obvious, this disparity is less and less pronounced with younger Millennials. As a brief example: a female born in 1982, in contrast with a male born in 1982 would seem to possess

very few Millennial characteristics.

Understanding and reaching out to Millennials is the duty of older generations. They did not ask to be shaped in the ways they have been by the technology and culture we created and immersed them in. They have been summarily launched into thought and behavior patterns that no previous generation has ever experienced.

We are the instruments of their differentiation; they are adapted to the world we gave them to live in.

We cannot shut them out or stop them.

They are the future.



## Chapter 2: Where Did This Material Come From?

### *Scientific Data - Not A Consultant's Opinion*

Most of my work is in employee retention and productivity. I work with large and mid-size corporations helping them reduce their turnover. I just recently finished my 110th consecutive engagement where we reduced voluntary turnover by at least 50% with no recourse to compensation or other recurring costs.

I'm very passionate about understanding Millennials. For the last five or six years I have been obsessed with issues of employee turnover in the Millennial workforce. I became aware of it in about 2000 when one of my long term clients, a call center, was suddenly having new employees quitting in very short order such as in three to five days on the job. They would go through a two-week training program and then they would leave in a very short time.

I noticed it first in their reports. They always had the category "Failed to Report" under attrition, which was one of the reasons an employee was removed from the roster. But they added a new column called "Failed to Return."

"Failed to Report" and "Failed to Return" sounded sort of the same so I called and asked about this new category. They said, "Well, you have always encouraged us to be as specific as possible. Usually what happens when people leave without notice is that they don't show up for the beginning of their shift but what was happening in this case is the employees would fail to come

back from a bathroom break or lunch."

The supervisor would look up and their headset would be dangling at their station and they would be gone. That a distinct pattern was emerging caught my interest. I had never seen anything like that before and I had been working on effective models that increase employee retention for a while. I didn't see a lot of new stuff and I had it figured out, or so I thought.

When I started to look at the issue, it turned out that almost all of the "Failed to Return" employees were a part of the demographic that are referred to as Millennials. Basically, these kids were 18 and 19 years old in the year 2000. After a bit of research, it wasn't just a few of them, it was 50% or more of the 18 year olds my client had hired that year quit in less than two weeks. We had never seen anything like that before.

Now it is a fairly well known concern amongst employers, but back in 2000, almost no one had considered what was happening here. At first, like the employers, I thought they were just lazy or disloyal.

That was the instinctive and intuitive interpretation of most employers and it still is to this day.

What I have come to realize and appreciate is that Millennials are 'wired' very differently from the rest of us. It is not wrong. They are not broken. There is nothing that needs to be fixed about them.



Because their environment and their culture have predisposed them to a particular set of assumptions and a particular way of thinking, they are literally the most disenfranchised, disrespected generation of any group or demographic that I can think of, since perhaps blacks during the Jim Crow era. Now some of you may rankle at that analogy but I can defend it. I think you will see why it is a fair analogy as we continue and this will be covered more in depth in an upcoming section.

Remember, I am not presenting this material based on anecdotal stories, these incidents indicated a new pattern and study of that pattern using Social Network Analysis, Behavioral Statistics and Root Cause Analysis revealed this clearly defined, unique and amazing demographic group – Millennials.

## Social Network Analysis

*What is Social Network Analysis?*

Social Network Analysts believe that how an individual lives depends in large part on how that individual is tied into the larger web of social connections. Many believe, moreover, that the success or failure of societies and organizations often depends on the patterning of their internal structure.

From the outset, the network approach to the study of behavior has involved two commitments:

- (1) It is guided by formal theory organized in mathematical terms
- (2) It is grounded in systematic analysis of empirical data.

This scientific specialty has found important applications in organizational behavior,

inter-organizational relations, the spread of contagious diseases, mental health, social support, the diffusion of information, animal social organization and business /marketing development.

Social Network Analysis is used in large corporations and organizations as a diagnostic tool that gives a bird's-eye view of the organization's knowledge capital.

- ♦ An organization's collective knowledge and experience, embodied in informal networks, is its most valuable asset during times of change.
- ♦ With little effort, small but pivotal changes have substantial impact on business performance and therefore on the bottom line.
- ♦ Social Network Analysis is the most effective method of saving money because it targets the causal and most costly asset: human capital, rather than treating symptoms with reactive policies.

## History of Social Network Analysis

Social Network Analysis emerged from the need to understand the complexities of human behavior in groups at a more objective and scientific level than either psychology or sociology. It is devoted to identifying and unraveling the intricate patterns of people and their networks. It is about the kind of patterning that Roger Brown described when he wrote:

"Social structure becomes actually visible in an anthill; the movements and contacts one sees are not random but patterned. We should also be able to see structure in the life of an American community if we had a

sufficiently remote vantage point, a point from which persons would appear to be small moving dots ...

We should see that these dots do not randomly approach one another, that some are usually together, some meet often, some never ...

If one could get far enough away from it, human life would become pure pattern."



Analysis of Social Networks is based on the intuitive notion that these patterns are important features of the lives of the individuals who display them. This kind of intuition is probably as old as humankind. It is implied, for example, by the relative stress put on descent lists in the Bible.

Beginning in the 1930s, a systematic approach to theory and research, based on this notion, began to emerge. In 1934, Jacob Moreno introduced the ideas and tools of sociometry. At the end of World War II, Alex Bavelas founded the Group Networks Laboratory at M.I.T.

It was not until the 1970s, when modern discrete combinatorics (particularly graph

theory) experienced rapid development and relatively powerful computers became readily available, that the study of Social Networks really became recognized as an interdisciplinary specialty.

Since then its growth has been rapid. Today it has become an inter-national effort with its own professional organizations, textbooks, journals, research centers, training centers and computer programs designed specifically to facilitate the analysis of structural data.

## Root Cause Analysis

Let's go back to the mathematics of the call center situation. I had to find the significant variables. What really changed? What is different? Everyone knows that every generation has a falling out with their parents. If it is not loud music, it is Mohawks, tattoos, drugs, etc. Every generation has had this schism with their parents. I ask groups: "How many of you did not have a breaking issue with your parents?" and maybe one person raises their hand (I'm sure they are the orphans).

So, this always happens. Except, what we are talking about is NOT that! This is not the same-old, same-old routine that happens with every generation. This is really very different on a lot of levels and in a lot of ways.

Mostly the people that have been researching this issue have been looking at "How are they different?" That is not a bad thing to look at, but "Why?" is even better. The most important question to start with is "When?" When did it become different? What is the farthest back we can look?

One of the tools of Social Network Analysis, actually of several important sciences, is something called Root Cause Analysis. I'm going to give you a couple of examples of Root Cause Analysis to help you understand how far you must go back to understand something and how important it is to go back as far as possible.

### **An Example: Acid Rain**

In the early 80's scientists became very concerned about the "death" of many lakes in the Northeast. An assumption was made that it must be the result of "acid rain" because the lakes themselves were becoming increasingly acidic and inhospitable to aquatic life. The plausible answer for the acid rain was that industrial smokestacks to the West were belching sulfuric and nitric compounds that contaminated clouds to the East.

The response of the EPA was to mandate scrubbers for all smokestacks with questionable emissions. This was achieved at an enormous, sometimes untenable cost to the industries involved. Many closed or moved offshore due to the inability to comply with new regulations.

Unfortunately, however, lakes continued to die. A more detailed statistical analysis of the situation was performed. That study discovered that the watersheds through which the rain flowed to the lakes had become much less alkaline than in the past. Soil alkalinity in many forests is a function of periodic forest fires that lay down a bed of ash in the ground.

Because of population densities, pollution and other issues, controlled burns were never practiced in the affected areas.

Natural fires were generally contained very quickly. As a result, this soil did not contain the natural ash bed that would've served to neutralize the natural acidity of the rain before it reached a lake.

The actual and much less expensive solution turned out to be laying down beds of ash in the watersheds, streams and rivers that fed into the lakes.

A thorough Root Cause Analysis to understand the real issues at the beginning might have saved literally billions of dollars and thousands of jobs. If the road to hell is paved with good intentions, the road to ruin is paved with bad research grounded on untested assumptions.

### **An Example: O-Rings**

Remember the Challenger Space Shuttle disaster in 1986? They say it was a little too cold when they took off and the O-rings on the solid rocket boosters ruptured and blew up the hydrogen fuel tank. Most people know that part of the incident, right? Many people believe that was the cause.

That really wasn't it. If you look a bit further back, you find out that the solid rocket boosters were never supposed to have O-rings. They were designed to be built in one solid section in Alabama. But they weren't. Guess where they were built? They were built by Morton Thiokol, a company that was headquartered in the state of Utah.

Their Senior Senator was a gentleman named Orin Hatch who coincidentally happened to be Chairman of the Appropriations Committee for NASA. He thought it would be nice that instead of building the



boosters in Alabama, where they could be sent to Florida on big articulated railcars in one piece, they should be built in Utah bringing 600-700 new jobs to his state.

Now we have a problem. To make the boosters manufacturable in Utah, they had to build them in segments because that is too far for them to travel on articulated railcar. So, you can see that it really wasn't caused by an engineering or manufacturing problem. It was a political process that forced "good enough" changes on an engineering process.

Understand, I am not saying that to accuse any political party or any individual. I'm just exposing the process behind an accident that no one wanted to happen.

Now these are just a couple of fairly widely known examples, but I could go on for pages and pages with Root Cause Analysis showing you how people start with bad facts or bad data. When your facts don't match your assumptions, don't try to change the facts. This is true in business and whenever you encounter a new pattern.

Until you understand the Root Cause it is very difficult, in many cases, to really address the fundamental problem. You have to go back as far as you possibly can in understanding where the breakdowns occurred.

In the case of Millennials instead of focusing on the breakdowns and reactions, we used behavioral data patterns to drill down, as far as possible – to find the "Why?"





## Chapter 4: Scientific Data, Context and Timing – Key Elements to Clear Analysis

### *What Does a Guy with No Children and No Millennial Employees Really Know?*

My insights on Millennials go against conventional wisdom and directly counter what most “experts” are saying about them. This is why the scientific element was brought in.

This is not an “academic book”, it’s a practical book that will help employers, managers, planners, teachers and parents understand the Millennial mind and is a beginning explanation of why they do what they do.

Using Social Network Analysis and Root Cause Analysis, I’ve scratched the surface and been able to create outstanding results in the companies I’ve worked with so far. There is still much to explore and today, research is finding out more and more about the amazing changes the Millennials are bringing into the world.

The impetus for releasing this material now is that wherever I go, speaking in corporate, educational and training programs, parents as well as those working directly with Millennials clamor for more information and express delight in finally having some insights that help. Giving them drugs, trying to discipline them into change or avoiding them altogether by raising the hiring age is not working.

I’m going to tell you a few things about myself that will help you understand my perspective, which is distinct and some would say politely “an acquired taste”, to

say the least. An opening joke I use is that my field, Social Network Analysis, is becoming more widely known.

You may have heard of this field, maybe your neighbor is one...(ha ha).

Actually, it is a fairly obscure branch of mathematics. Most practitioners work on government projects or in fun CDC work-groups tracking fatality models that could contain the spread of planet-wide communicable diseases. Fortunately for me, I’ve found a way to use this science to help businesses, organizations and people in the “real world”.

Learning how Social Networks function in corporations and organizations is fascinating math and I find it rewarding. Since 2004, I have actually renamed myself a Social Network Architect because I’m doing a lot less analysis and more network building.

The important thing to understand is that I have no training in psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, organizational psychology or any of those other related fields. I have the emotional intelligence of an anvil. On the bright side, that is one of the things that allowed me to look at this fairly objectively.

I was actually diagnosed, years ago, as having borderline Asperger’s Syndrome, which is really just high functioning Autism. So if I take those personality tests that you take for employment; they have always indicated I should be something like a light-house keeper in the desert or a lone assassin. I guess I am saying I am not a people-person. If you come to me for personal advice, it will look pretty much like “get over it!”

Given that, the question arises: What qualifies me, a 52 year old, childless mathematician to talk to you about Millennials?

My answer is I have been working with them for eight years. I have been observing them in the workplace. I've been talking to them. I've been looking at a lot the objective data.

There has been a lot written about them but most of it has been from a perspective of theory. I don't really do theory. I'm a working consultant and no one has ever offered me \$50,000 for my best theory. They basically want to know "What can you do to 'fix it now'?" So, for the last seven or eight years, I have been "fixing it now." So, that is a bit of background for my perspective and how I'm using real science to build bridges for Millennials and all the generations who work with them.

When I speak to groups, I ask who in the room is under 26 years old. Then, I tell them to stop me if I say anything that offends them or is inaccurate to point it out and then shut up because I'm their elder (No – I'm just kidding). Seriously, the Millennials I interact with are amazed how these conversations help them understand why things occur the way they do.

One of the things I have noticed is that I am in disagreement with most of the people writing and speaking on this subject. There is one book out right now and the authors are fond of the theory that Millennials need more discipline. I ask people in the Millennial group if they feel what is lacking in their life is discipline and no one raises their hands (except people in the older generations who want to vote).

My point is that there are a lot of people

with a lot of theories on what should happen, however, most of them are based on the idea that Millennials need to be fixed. I disagree, there is absolutely nothing wrong with them and they don't need fixing. Get used to hearing me say this!

Before we dive into understanding what created the Millennial generation and what to do next, understanding the timing factor and making sure we are looking at them in the same context will wrap up this Chapter.

### *Timing*

The problem with most problems is people don't start to think about them or even look at them until they've become a problem. Then, once a problem has their attention, they tend to only look at the current condition and consequences.

In order to have any chance of effectively dealing with most problems, you need to look back as far as you can before it was a problem. That is a lot of what Root Cause Analysis is about. Not necessarily problems but conditions.

When it comes to Millennials, people tend to focus on how they are right now without any consideration for how they got to be that way.

### *FAA Plane Crash Investigations*

An example I like to use is the response of the FAA when there is a plane crash. There is always one very serious looking, small team sent to the crash site. They are photographed by news teams charting wreckage and cataloguing whatever is retrieved.

At the same time there are at least two other teams researching the Crash. One is going all the way back to the manufacturer

and assembly plant and finding out the history of every part and system that was in that plane and other planes like it. The other team is checking every single maintenance record and usage log of the plane, and reading the "black box" which records mechanical and systems functions as well as what the crew said and did.

All of these teams are looking for root causes and on almost every occasion, the cause of the crash is not found by the team on the ground measuring the symptoms of the crash. Visible problems are symptoms of something that happened and were created in a previous time. Understanding the "why" and not the "what" gives us a way to prevent future problems which is always more powerful and less expensive than remediation.

*"The pipe is more important than the content within the pipe. Our ability to learn what we need for tomorrow is more important than what we know today."*

*A real challenge for any learning theory is to actuate known knowledge at the point of application."*

- George Siemens

## Context

The importance of context when we are trying to understand the Millennial mind can't be overemphasized. Sloppy thinking leads to sloppy ideas and solutions.

Learning how to think about a problem is the most critical skill you can employ in most any situation. When Einstein was asked what was the most difficult aspect of

the Theory of Relativity, he said "Learning how to think about the problem." This is also known as establishing a context.

If we can look at Millennials in the context that they are not broken, they are functioning as they should, and that their perspectives, capabilities and possibilities are a result of the world we have given them to live in, we can move forward and see this as a quest to understand, to create bridges and connections and to learn to recognize patterns and look for the root cause, not just reacting to symptoms.

For Millennials who are reading this book and are very interested in finding out what makes them the way they are, undeveloped context is your Achilles Heel. The part of the brain that weighs decisions, remembers consequences, forms sound judgments and sees events and information in context is the pre-frontal cortex.

This part of the brain doesn't mature until the mid-twenties and its immaturity is what enables rash decisions, emotionally charged reactions and the feeling that you are young and strong and immortal, and that you don't need to remember anything, you can always access the information at will.

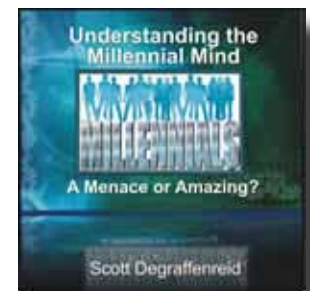
Unfortunately, our educational system doesn't teach logic, pattern analysis and looking at information in a variety of contexts. These are difficult to learn when you are younger, but are the basis for successfully making good decisions and learning how to look at information and situations in context.

The next section of the book will be a discovery of what makes Millennials distinct,

discrete and disturbing to so many people in older generations. Don't worry though, the same things that seem so alien and that are misunderstood, when put in the right context and channeled in a positive direction are the very attributes of Millennials that make them "Amazing".



**To order a softcover full version of  
Understanding the Millennial Mind  
by Scott Degraffenreid  
Retail Price:\$24.98**



## Chapter 5: Millennial Quirks Or Big Problems?

### *"I Always Felt Like I Was Broken"*

When you're doing something and it's working for you then someone comes along and tells you how to do it differently, how to do it "right", what does that feel like? I talk to lots of Millennials one-on-one. Really I mostly just listen.

Sometimes they're guarded at first but they almost always open up when they recognize I'm on their side. I'm a consultant for employers who want to improve retention and productivity in the Millennial workforce.

The natural inclination for most of the young people I work with would be to see me as a tool, someone chartered by the bosses to manipulate them. Sometimes that's what's they think at first, but they so desperately want to be heard it falls away rather quickly.

It helps that despite their generally unfortunate experiences with my generation, they tend to be very gracious. They really want to think the best of people.

I was doing an exit interview once with a young man who was about 20 years old. One of his friends had alerted us that he was not planning on returning to work. I asked him if it would be okay to talk with him for a little bit about why he was leaving. He was hesitant but agreed.

He told me he'd been with the company about six weeks and didn't have anything else lined up. He was doing pretty well at his tech-support job in a large call center. He had several friends there and admitted the pay was more than he'd ever made.

When I politely asked him why he was moving on his short simple answer was QA. In call centers that stands for Quality Assurance. When you hear the message that says, "Your call may be monitored for quality assurance", what they're talking about are people who randomly listen in on a representative's conversation with a customer and assess it for compliance with company guidelines.



I asked him what in particular he disliked about QA. His answer was very insightful and provides a clear understanding of how different Millennials are. He told me "All QA does is tell us what we're doing wrong according to their rules. They don't care my

call resolution rate is. They don't care how high my customer satisfaction is. My job is taking care of customers, not following rules that don't make any sense."

He was clearly becoming emotional at this point. "I've had a lot of jobs I didn't care about and I didn't do them very well. I like this job and I'm good at it. For once I know I'm not broken. If I stay they'll take that away from me." He was almost crying. "They'll fire me for low quality scores or I'll have to sell out. I'd rather just get it over with."

No matter how many times I hear stories like this, it hurts. Young people in workplaces across America are seeking desperately to prove they are not broken.

They try to do this by delivering the best possible outcomes they can imagine. They don't always understand or follow the rules but they deliver the results.

Unfortunately too many companies place a greater emphasis on compliance and conformity than on commitment. I try to remind my clients that rules don't produce results, people do.

### *Have We Reached a Societal Crisis Point?*

Of course there have always been people who believed that results were more important than rules, that how you get there is irrelevant if you can wind up where you're supposed to when or before you're expected.

Depending on the setting, these people may be called pioneers, innovators, entrepreneurs, cowboys or eccentrics.

When these rule breakers are in the minority they are often idolized and considered heroes.

When you have a whole generation of them though, 100 million people who think every rule should be questioned, every assumption challenged and every boundary tested, you have a trial the system was not prepared for. You have a deviation that threatens the status quo like nothing ever has before.

Isolated aberrations and individual defiance were tolerable and even occasionally welcome. Wholesale questioning by an

entire generation of nearly everything that constitutes conventional wisdom creates a confrontation that stands to overwhelm the world as we know it.

Businesses, schools, churches, families and nearly any other cultural institution that interfaces with Millennials are dealing with a tidal wave of what appears to them as insolence. The same type of questioning, probing and willful departure from the beaten path that created Microsoft, Apple, Google, Linux and hundreds of other cornerstones of the new economy barely a decade or two ago, is now regarded as little more than impudent depravity.

When did genius become degeneracy? At what point did innovation become impertinence? Try the year 2000 for most purposes.

If you were an innovator, rule breaker or freethinker before then, you were fortunate enough to be a Millennial before it wasn't cool.

Beginning about Y2K through 2008 the society that spawned them began awakening to the unnerving notion that there is danger in numbers. The ongoing wholesale resistance to the Millennial mindset is evidence of that fear.



## Generational Apartheid? "Millennials Are Broken."

### *Widespread Corporate Belief – Millennials Need to Be Fixed*

We are in the first stages of a social phenomenon that can fairly and accurately be referred to as "Generational Apartheid". I hesitate to use this term because I know it is polarizing and may be viewed by many as overly dramatizing the situation but I will call it how I see it, as an experienced Social Network Analyst.

Throughout America and much of the industrialized world, a quiet offense is being waged against a burgeoning demographic. The remarkable thing is that it is not being done deliberately, systematically or even maliciously. Unfortunately the net effect is and will be just the same as if we had set out to marginalize, ostracize and manipulate this population.

Millennials, the demographic sector born circa 1982-2001, are being held virtual hostages by prior generations. Baby Boomers and Gen Xers were at first myopically indifferent to the profound changes exhibited by the group of young people sometimes inappropriately referred to as Gen Y.

In general, no one considered the far-reaching implications for children raised in an environment that was technologically, culturally and even chronologically different than anything that has ever occurred before.

That lack of foresight and preparation is part of the reason Millennials appear to have landed in our midst like some incomprehensible alien invasion. In truth they did not arrive without warning, and they are clearly finding little welcome.

Because older generations find many of their characteristics somewhere between annoyingly unfamiliar and totally unacceptable, they have taken the position that Millennials must conform to the standards established by those who grew up in a very different environment from theirs.

Millennials are being treated as if they are somehow defective or diseased. Nothing could be further from the truth. They aren't broken and they don't need fixing.

Millennials were raised in the cradle of an unprecedented perfect storm of cultural, technological and historical trends. The result is a Generation of people nearly perfectly adapted to the chaotic, volatile and globally hyperlinked world they must live in and try to shape for the better.

Demanding that they be other than themselves is as naïve as trying to turn back evolution. We must not only accept, but also respect and embrace their dynamic outlook and neurological differences.

Forcing them to emulate us, or simply excluding them if they refuse, is leading to a mutual resentment and alienation that can have no positive outcome and which is rapidly creating a hostile subculture.

Reaching out to Millennials is the duty of older generations. They did not ask to be shaped in the ways they have been by the technology and culture we created and immersed them in.

They have been summarily launched into thought and behavior patterns that no previous generation has ever experienced.

We are the instruments of their differentiation; they are adapted to the world we gave them to live in. We cannot shut them out or stop them. They are the future.

## Chapter 6: Recognizing A Millennial

We'll start this chapter with a brief overview of common misconceptions people have about Millennials, and the realities I've discovered as I've studied their entrance into the workforce over the last eight years.

### *Myths and Realities About Millennials*

#### **1. Millennials Are Slackers**

(Unmotivated)

Millennials are motivated by very different things than previous Generations. Money and status are not their priorities, relationships and experiences are.

Trust and respect are the most important compensation they can receive, and they will work very hard if they believe they are appreciated and making a difference.

#### **2. Millennials Are Lazy**

Millennials work as hard or harder than anyone in return for what is important to them.

They instinctively try to find easier and faster ways to do things, winning at this is more important than "rules".

Learning to capitalize on this can increase productivity as long as they have a clear understanding of the results desired and legitimate limits that make sense.

#### **3. Millennials Are Disloyal**

(They'll Quit at the Drop of a Hat)

This generation has been trained by technology to punch reset/reboot when things are

not working.

They don't take a wait and see attitude if a job is unsatisfying or demeaning.

They believe it just makes sense to start over somewhere else.

If they do find what they are looking for and sense a relationship, they will commit to it 100%.

#### **4. Millennials Are Not Competitive**

They haven't grown up with zero-sum games where in order for someone to win, someone else has to lose.

They are more interested in beating their own best game, so feedback and keeping score is important to them.

They can be highly motivated by team-oriented outcomes that allow them to collaborate instead of compete.

#### **5. Millennials Are Hard to Train**

Textbook and classroom training is tedious and generally ineffective with Millennials.

They prefer to learn "on the job" just as in playing a video game.

They learn quickly from

mistakes and will test the "system" to see if it breaks. This is a process they use to find





workarounds and hidden solutions.

Hence the term “Crash Test Geniuses©”

### **6. Millennials Are Rebels, Always Resisting Authority and Rules**

Previous generations expected to learn the rules before playing a game or sport. They expected those rules to stay the same throughout.

Millennials were raised on video and computer games where there are seldom written rules.

Moreover, they expect the rules to change frequently as the game progresses and for there to be ways to “buy” different rules with credits or experience.

### **7. Millennials Are Not Dependable**

In most of their lives, everything has always been 24/7.

They are accustomed to having what they want, when they want it.

Getting them to show up on time and perform as expected is largely a matter of letting them know you understand and respect their priorities, but need them to respect yours.

### **8. Millennials Lack Communication and Interpersonal Skills**

Because they maintain larger and closer social networks than previous generations, they have an abbreviated etiquette for communication.

While they may gloss over some niceties and are not known for superlative table manners, they have a genuine concern for other people.

### **9. Millennials Are Immature**

(But They’ll Grow Out of It)

There is nothing for them to grow out of. Their brains are literally wired differently.

They are adapted to high flux environments.

They have no resistance to change and little aversion to failure, as long as they learn something from it.

Understanding how they operate makes it possible to utilize their unprecedented skills, creativity and abilities in amazing ways.



### **10. Millennials Have Unreasonable Expectations About Compensation**

This seems wrong if money and status are not their priorities, but they have been conditioned with the idea of a “living wage” and since most have grown up in homes with older

parents with established careers, entry-level expectations are higher for Millennials.

In addition, their role models of young career people from television and the media have a standard of living 200% or more higher than what that person would make in real life.

### **11. Millennials Have Grand Expectations for Promotions and Vacations**

They hate the idea of seeing themselves as “drones”, so rules that imply that they must merely show up so many days a year

doesn't mesh with their perception of being a contributor and performer.

Having a low expectation of ongoing tenure going in, they will ask for more senior allotments of time off and expect faster promotions if they perform well.

## 12. Millennials Are Spoiled

It is true that they have a low threshold for abuse. They see no reason or need to deal with people who don't treat them with appropriate respect and concern.

They also see no reason that they can't have it all.

They are unwilling to sacrifice relationships for success.

They tend to put friends and family ahead of work. In their world, relationships tend to last longer than jobs and they focus accordingly.

### *Human Being 2.0 Characteristics*

- ♦ *Change is a given, stability is unnatural. Their capacity for radical shifts in environment are significantly higher than any preceding generation.*
- ♦ *There are no absolute cultural anchors, there are no constants. Millennials live in a global society and global marketplace.*
- ♦ *They live from moment to moment, 24/7. Everything they want to do, see and consume is available at any time.*
- ♦ *We think we know what they are doing, but they could be lying. There is an operative practice among Millennial social networks, to do what they call "gaming the system". (This means when you take*

*a poll or a survey, you don't always tell the truth because the Millennials perspective is "it is none of their business.")*

- ♦ *There are no predefined rules. Millennials expect the rules to change and expect to learn the rules as they go along not in advance of playing. This alone causes a significant difference in their outlook and response to pretty much everything with rules.*
- ♦ *They exist in an environment of implicit individuality. Millennials personalize their entertainment and can happily exist completely out of the traditional marketing loop that drives consumer desire and purchases.*
- ♦ *They can absorb images and other chunks of information in a flash. When MTV started, the average scene span was 7 seconds. Transition time on most videos now is less than 2 seconds.*
- ♦ *They are great communicators – but they have their own language. The average Millennial text message is less than 30 characters.*
- ♦ *They think of choices in menus and expect to be able to access the available choices or any information they need instantaneously wherever they are.*
- ♦ *Functional MRI's reveal a very different form of processing, using both hemispheres of the brain at the same time. Even the brightest members of previous generations display shifts of activity from side to side rather than true bilateral processing at Millennial levels.*

# Chapter 7: Root Causes of Millennial Evolution

## How Do You Make A Millennial?

### What Were the Root Causes of These Changes?

Demographic groups – Boomers, Gen X, Millennials

Lets talk about what actually is a “generation” because there are no clear definitions of generations. There is no such thing as the Generational Labeling Committee for Accuracy. Rather, there are widely varied interpretations of when a generation begins and when it ends.

There are a lot of people out there who would classically consider themselves Baby Boomers, however, the term Baby Boomer didn’t exist until around 1950 when the baby boom was actually visible demographically.

Just like there was no World War I until there was World War II. There are a lot of terms that don’t exist for a long time until it has a context.

You can see from the chart, there have been a lot of different names for generations.

Generation X (Gen-X) is probably as ambiguous as any other generation. One of the unfortunate things they gave rise to is one of the most misused terms: Generation Y (Gen-Y). This is the group that I refer to as Millennials.

Gen-Y is in no way a derivative of or related to Gen-X other than they happen to be the generation subsequent. To assume that Gen-Y is just some iteration or some further expression of Gen-X would be a grievous mistake.

So, we want to be careful to use the appropri-

ate term: Millennial. For the most part, if you asked Millennials about the term, they will tell you they don’t like the term Gen-Y.

**One reason is that the person who originally coined it, was punning “Gen Why?” in a patronizing, negative context.**

Silent Generation	1925-1945
<b>Baby Boomers</b>	1948-1964
Beat Generation	1948-1962
Generation Jones	1954-1965
Consciousness Revolution	1964-1984
Baby Busters	1958-1968
<b>Generation -X</b>	1961-1981
MTV Generation	1975-1985
Culture Ward	1984-2005
Boomerang Generation	1981-1986
Generation-Y	1977-2003
<b>Millennials</b>	1981-2001
Internet Generation	1986-1999
New Silent Generation	2001-

Millennial is a much more accurate term because they actually began graduating and entering the workforce in the year 2000, in the Millennium.

### A “Precious” Generation

In 1950, the percentage of Americans under the age of 18 in the United States was 31.1%. Just ten years later, in 1960, it had risen by about 18,000,000 people, over 1/3 more young people. That is a huge shift in the population. After 1970, due to the progressive aging of the Boomers

that was the last time for a long time that people under the age of 18 represented so large a portion of the population - until very recently.

There had never been so many kids in the population, at least not since 1970 and it is continuing to grow. As you can see, we had no shortage of children from 1946 to 1964. We were effectively going to be on target to double the population every two generations.

Well, guess what? When you have that many kids, they are not all that important. When I was a kid, every toy I had, you could use to accidentally put an eye out. Our chemistry sets had real chemicals, I mean serious chemicals! The gravel on the playground was all pointy corners and sharp edges and if you fell on it, you would remember to not fall again.

Americans Under Age of 18		
Year	Millions	% of Population
1950	47.2	31.10%
1960	64.5	35.70%
1970	69.8	35.70%
1980	63.7	28.00%
1990	64.2	25.70%
1998	39.8	25.90%
2005	96.4	32%

In the 1980's, we began having a short-

age of kids. Look how far we dropped, down to only about 25% of the population below the age of 18. So, we were having fewer kids and we started to put an emphasis on the safety of children. Megan's Law, Amber Alerts, child safety seats, bicycle helmets, and knee and ankle pads to play in the ball field, etc. were all expressions of the increasing scarcity of children.

Then the Millennial Generation came along and actually trumped all of that; kids were abundant again, but the protections were already in place. So there is one effect here, a very protected generation as a function of their position in society following a very small Generation X.

That would have been enough to make for some interesting changes; just by the fact that they had attained a scarcity or a premium by virtue of Gen X's lower numbers.

Everything I'm going to tell you is true in the context of the United States and Canada because we are the cutting edge of industrialized youth indulgence. We don't have a culture that particularly places any reverence on age. So, Millennials enjoy a unique cultural position that has never existed before. They are plentiful yet highly valued and protected.

*Technological Changes*

The acceleration of change is where it really starts to get interesting.

Look at all the stuff that started happening about 1980.

1982 is the year that I choose to acknowledge the beginning of Millennials because that is the year the PC was invented, Ma Bell was broken up, etc. Look at all the stuff that was happening in this time frame.

24/7 On Demand access to everything they want

Video games and rapid non-linear stimulation

(The preceding two topics will be covered in depth as we look at the world from their perspective in the next section.)

#### *Millennial Technological Advances*

- ♦ *1980's - Personal Computers with modern operating systems & mouse-based point-&-click GUI's, requiring fewer keyboard skills; cable television & MTV were becoming almost universally available; the Millennials have been a much more protected generation than had ever existed before*
- ♦ *Early 1990's - Sophisticated computer graphics in many video games, animated movies & television shows*
- ♦ *Mid 1990's - The Internet in a more prolific form for the general user, robotic & digital pets (1990's-Tamagotchi, Furby/2000's-Robosapien (V2,V3), Aibo, Poo-chi, i-Dog, Pixel Chix, Neopets, Webkinz)*
- ♦ *Late 1990's - Cellular phones, instant messaging, DVD's, standardized testing*
- ♦ *2000's - Digital audio players (MP3 players, iPods), digital video recorders (Tivo, etc.), HDTV, broadband internet, digital cameras, camera phones, satellite radio, GPS systems, city-wide wireless internet access.*

#### *Millennials Process Change and Information That Would Overload Any Previous Generation*

### *World Events and Cultural Changes*

When I was a kid, I can remember two or three important things such as: the invention of the color television, the moon landing, the Kennedy Assassination and the Viet Nam War.

Look at how much is happening as Millennials are maturing. Combined with 24/7 exposure on news and internet feeds there is what would amount to change overload for any earlier generation.

More importantly, it is not the stuff that is happening but the stuff you have already forgotten. Look how many of these things are passing trends or fads that have already gone by the wayside. By the way, these are just the high points. We could go on for hours and hours. There has really been an enormous acceleration of change and transience.

They are very aware of it even if they don't watch the news or read the papers. This is all going on around them all the time.

You can look at the world and technological events listed here, but don't forget there have been a lot of cultural events too. This is what they have grown up with.

#### *World Events Since 1980*

- ♦ *The demise of the Berlin Wall*
- ♦ *Tiananmen Square Massacre*
- ♦ *Loma Prieta (1989) & Northridge (1994) earthquakes in California*
- ♦ *Rwandan Genocide & Kosovo Conflict*
- ♦ *The Gulf War*
- ♦ *Waco Siege involving David Koresh*

- ♦ *Elian Gonzalez controversy*
- ♦ *The end of Apartheid in S. Africa*
- ♦ *Hurricane Andrew (1992)*

### *World Events Since 1990*

- ♦ *Rodney King & 1992 LA Riots*
- ♦ *OJ Simpson murder trial*
- ♦ *The Oklahoma City Bombing*
- ♦ *The return of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China*
- ♦ *Great economic prosperity buoyed by the dot.com bubble; the Dow Jones Industrial Average breaks 10,000 for the 1st time*
- ♦ *War in Bosnia & Kosovo*
- ♦ *The Lewinsky scandal surrounding former President Clinton*

### *World Events Since Late 1990's / 2000*

- ♦ *Columbine High School massacre*
- ♦ *Woodstock '99*
- ♦ *The new millennium & 21st Century*
- ♦ *The Y2K bug*
- ♦ *The 2000 U.S. Presidential Election dispute between Al Gore & George W. Bush*
- ♦ *The September 11 terrorist attacks*
- ♦ *The Patriot Act, The Dept. of Homeland Security & other methods which instilled increased national security*
- ♦ *The 2001 Anthrax attacks*

### *World Events Since 2000*

- ♦ *Global war on terror*
- ♦ *The Beltway sniper shootings*

- ♦ *The War on Iraq*
- ♦ *Darfur Conflict*
- ♦ *West Nile Virus outbreak*
- ♦ *SARS epidemic (2003)*
- ♦ *The Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster*
- ♦ *Hurricane's Katrina and Rita*

## *Changes In Pop Culture*

I have a little sister who is ten years younger and we grew up with more or less the same cultural icons and phenomena. We listened to a lot of the same music, saw the same TV shows and so on. Now, I have friends with kids who are two or three years apart and those siblings share little of the same culture between them because things are accelerating that quickly.

### *Beginning in the 1980's:*

- ♦ *Popularity of The Transformers*
- ♦ *Cabbage Patch Kids & Care Bear crazes*
- ♦ *The New Kids on the Block, Guns N' Roses, Vanilla Ice & MC Hammer*
- ♦ *Ghostbusters media & merchandise*
- ♦ *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles media & merchandise*

### *Beginning in the 1990's:*

- ♦ *Disney Afternoon shows*
- ♦ *Worldwide popularity of The Simpsons*
- ♦ *The game of Pogs*
- ♦ *Periods of rising popularity for grunge & ska music (shared with latter Gen X)*
- ♦ *The new wave children's public television shows such as Barney & Friends*

- ♦ *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers television show.*
- ♦ *Gigapets*

### *Beginning in the late 1990's:*

- ♦ *Tickle Me Elmo*
- ♦ *The Harry Potter & Lord of the Rings book & movie series crazes*
- ♦ *The Beanie Babies craze*
- ♦ *Furby dolls*
- ♦ *A rise in electronic music with samplers, drum machines & computers. This fosters: techno, house, hip hop, trance, break beat, drum & bass, IDM & many other new genres*
- ♦ *Web 2.0 – MySpace, FaceBook, Flickr*

As you look at these lists, consider how many of these events you have forgotten. This is their life too. Now you may be wondering why I tell you all this? We'll get there in a minute. It is here and it is gone. How many of these things are like a flash in the pan to us now? But when they occurred, they were a big deal, everyone was engaged.

The interesting thing here is the technology continues to advance and proliferate. Video games, computers, the Internet and so on, are training Millennial minds faster, better and differently all the time.

Now, imagine growing up with all of this. Imagine this is your life and you were born in 1982, 1985 or 1990. What sort of outlook would all these events bring to your perspective?

This is their life. Change is a given, stability is unnatural. They have an expectation of change. Things are always going to be different because they always have been for

them. There is not one constant that they can point to in their lives, other than their family and it is very likely that may have changed significantly somewhere during their adolescence.

There are no cultural anchors, there are no constants.

That means they are becoming increasingly immersed and adapted to very rapid and constant transitions. Change does not bother them. They are not traumatized with it. As a matter of fact, they barely even notice it. They mostly notice when things stay the same.

Their capacity for radical operational shifts and shifts in environment are significantly higher than any preceding generation. They can adapt in a heartbeat.

This is a very, very admirable trait. They can accommodate changes that would have been traumatic or overwhelming for most of us from previous generations. But this is not the only thing. There is a lot more that is different about this generation.

## Chapter 8: How Do They See Themselves?

### *They Are Stylin'*

Millennials are individualists to the core. One of their biggest flash points is being taken for granted and being treated as drones. Drone is another term you will hear in place of tool in some parts of the country. You have to respect them as individuals. When I tell my clients, the employers, that they say, "They all have piercings, tattoos and pants halfway down their backsides, how is that individualism?"

Well, they are all *different* piercings and tattoos. You will almost never see the same underwear or tattoo twice. Pay attention, I tell them.

I have a long-time friend who is a tattoo artist and he told me "for a long time, all I had to know was boat anchors, hearts and Mom and now every single one is different." They have these Japanese anime' characters, Chinese Ideograms, Hebrew Kaballah glyphs and you name it. It's sort a problem for him because he is dyslexic and he doesn't always spell things right.

### *They Are Smart*

There is nothing worse for a Millennial than you starting with the premise that they don't know anything. It is really just basic respect to find out what they know. This is true of anyone but they bridle at assumptions.

They are really upset when you start from: "In the beginning the earth was without form and void..." You don't need to go to square one. They know a lot. Find out.

Take the time to become aware. It is worth it.

The idea that Millennials need to be fixed is probably one of the biggest problems. What we get into a lot with employers right now are punitive situations where they try to penalize them for things like showing up late.

Think carrots, not sticks. They don't respond well to threats.

### *They Are Individualists*



This is caused by:

1. Choices - Millennials have a huge appetite for choices. If you grew up in a menu-driven operating environment, you always have the opportunity to go backwards, forward, sideways or any direction you choose. You can always pull down more options. So, they are accustomed

to always having options. They expect to be able to "pimp their ride" (or their cubicle).

2. Having it all – They also are accustomed to being able to have it all. This is because they've almost never had to put down one thing to pick up another. The idea that they can have it all actually isn't as absurd a premise as some might think. Driven to its logical conclusion, this could lead to some very happy, fulfilled people ... which pisses a lot of employers off, I am here to tell you.



Millennials seem to have the idea that they should be able to have a social life, relationships, fun *and* a job.

What is wrong with them?

Nothing. Millennials just understand that it is possible in a lot of cases to have it all! Operating from that leads them to some decisions that we see as lack of commitment, lazy or disloyal.

3. Non-linear thinking – The term *grasshopper thinking* was coined almost 10 years ago. When I ask Millennials if being told they have *grasshopper thinking* gives them a warm fuzzy (aside from the old Kung Fu idea of being like a grasshopper), they cringe. This term is not viewed as very empowering, it makes them sound spastic or fickle.

There is probably going to be a class action suit to end all class action suits when people realize how over-prescribed Ritalin is in this country. You heard it here first.

I don't want to be a stockholder in any company that manufactures this stuff because it has seriously damaged a lot of otherwise fine young minds and compromised their ability to learn and participate and a lot of other things, but it does get them to be quiet. It does get them to sit still. Whee!

Millennials are actually just thinking a lot faster. It is not attention deficit, so much as information deficit. They have already thought about what you have shown them and moved on and are waiting for you to show them something else. This is why traditional classroom learning is so unsuccessful and so antithetical to a lot of them.

They are also doing something that is very difficult and challenging for most older people

to do, which is using both hemispheres of their brain simultaneously. Video games and computers have taught them to do this and combined with high speed entertainment, these stimuli have prepared them to do this at a higher and more consistent level than any of the rest of us.

Most of us switch back and forth. If we use both hemispheres at all, we will go left, then right, then left, right, left, etc. (except men who are mostly left, left, left). But Millennials are using both hemispheres at the same time.

4. Rules – Let's talk some more about their relationship to rules.

What do you suppose happens if people who are accustomed to finding out the rules for themselves are suddenly read a list of rules? These can be called policies, procedures, guidelines or whatever. Do you suppose they just accept them at face value?

What if they challenge or test the rules and discover that many are not "real"? They're untrue, un-enforced or enforced in a biased way. What do you expect they'll infer about the rule giver?

Here is something really important that I have not found many people know outside of the Millennial generation. I have talked to lots of teachers in the course of my research and speaking engagements and few of them have been aware of this.

Do you know what the Millennials consider one of their most derisive terms? It is a term where they sort of unconsciously spit when they say it out loud. It is "tool".

### *What Is A "Tool?"*

A tool is someone operating for reasons and objectives other than their own. They really don't see why anyone would do that and when you stop to think about it, do we really have a reason?

They see people who are willing to sell out as their own worst enemies and not someone they want to deal with or resemble in any way. They consider people who follow rules blindly and without question to be mindless drones.

So, you don't want to be seen as a tool. Now, this is problematic for many employers because they are tools. It is antithetical on a lot of levels to try to convince them that you aren't a tool, that you are operating for your own particular reasons, objectives and imperatives. Unfortunately for Corporate America, Millennials can smell it when you're lying. About all you can do is try to be a cool tool.

## *Chapter 9: Millennials In Social Networks*

### *How do they relate to their families?*

For the most part, right now, the older Millennials are the children of baby Boomers. Increasingly, as time goes on, the kids born after 1990-1992 will be the children of Generation-X parents.

Xers generally parent very differently than Boomers. Complicating that we have mixed marriages; where there is a Generation-X step-Dad and a Boomer Mom or any number of other combinations. There is so much diversity you can't say a lot of things with complete consistency; some things will be more true in some families than for others.

Bottom line, no nonsense interactions and communication styles work with Millennials. Being clear, respectful and trusting creates positive changes in families when consistently and patiently applied.

### *How do they create global social networks?*

Thanks to the Internet, cell phones and networking sites of all kinds Millennials are network-building machines. For zero cost and minimal effort they can not only get their messages out but can rely on fast adapting, self generating social networks to find appropriate channels and leverage for those messages.

They rely on their networks both to channel resources to them and to promote the resources they provide.

## *Text speak*

All generations develop a unique slang. It's part of a necessary separation ritual that helps us find our own voice in the world. Text speak is unusual in that it constitutes not only a "slanguage", but an abbreviated and therefore faster method of communication.

While many older people eschew the advantages of texting, Millennials embrace its brevity, simplicity and efficiency. Text speak also has a curious side benefit of highlighting the repetitive nature of many conversations. By reducing oft repeated phrases to just a handful of letters (fwiw, jmo, jsyk) the real "meat" of a conversation becomes more readily evident.

## *Web 2.0 for Human Being 2.0 - MySpace/Facebook/YouTube Phenomenon*

Individuals of all ages have the unique opportunity to reinvent themselves online. Millennials tend to do this not by embellishing, exaggerating or contriving an image so much as sampling and choosing from expanded social networks.

Millennials tend to shop for tastes and characteristics they like in other people's profiles and try them on for a while adopting those they like and modifying or discarding those that don't fit.

The ability to experiment with their persona without exposing themselves directly to disapproval or exclusion allows a far greater range and flexibility of choices in evolving their character and lifestyles.

More About Text Speak... We have a few translations on our website... Of course if they weren't changing absolutely all the time at light speed, Millennials would be truly slacking, so they won't all be up to date when you look...but you'll get the idea.

<http://n2millennials.com/textquiz>

## *Chapter 10: The Millennial Response to Change, Technology and New Systems*

### *How do they respond to technology and new systems?*

Millennials hold a surprisingly blasé attitude about most new technology. Having been immersed in technological transformation their entire lives they are neither threatened nor enthralled by it. They tend to take a “wait and see” rather than “early adopter” position simply because they’ve seen so many technologies quickly supplanted by better ones. In their world, new gadgets are not nearly as cool as new applications.

Once a new technology takes hold in their social network they quickly embrace its advantages and look for improvements, tweaks or hacks. They are remarkably collaborative and acquainting their peers with the operational fine points of a new technology. They typically see little value in asserting “expert” status since they have seen today’s expertise reduced to tomorrow’s common knowledge and the day after’s useless trivia in countless cycles.

### *How do they learn to do things? The Rules Paradox*

Let’s get to the really fun and interesting part. Now a lot of people have watched kids play video games and they think – “Oh, that can’t be good for them.” There is actually no good or bad to it.

How many of you over 30 years old play

video games? If not, you don’t know what you are missing. By the way, they are better after you’ve had a few drinks. You’ll still suck, but you won’t mind as much! I play just to keep up and know what is going on. I’m talking about classic video games, not computer games.

Here is one of the most amazing things that people overlook about video games. When we were growing up, those of us over 25 or 26, and we wanted to play a new game or new sport, what was the first thing we had to do?

Learn the rules!

If you have ever opened a video game cartridge box, guess what is NOT in there?

No rules! They learn the rules as they go so it would be antithetical to open a video game box and find rules. Of course, there are some exceptions like some of the sports games, etc.

But the straight-up, action video games; you learn the rules by screwing up. You learn the rules as you go. Now this is actually pretty good news for people in entrepreneurial roles because that is a lot like business in the real world. No one tells you all the rules for business going into it. You have to find them out and learn as you go.

Now, think about what that means for them in an employment situation or an educational setting. They’ve never had to read the rules for something they really enjoy and know they’re good at – video games. They also know they are much better at video games than we are and they did not learn the rules first. They learned them as they went along. That alone has staggering implications.

## Chapter 11: What Motivates Millennials?

### How Is This Different From Previous Generations?

#### MIND Versus REMIND

Now let's look at the big picture. I love acronyms and this sort of sums it all up.

This is a way to consider the way things used to be versus the Millennials perspectives.

**Here's the way things used to work in the old school for virtually every previous generation up until the Millennials:**

- ♦ *M = Money – Money has been the traditional carrot of choice for as long as it has existed. Money is still the corporate incentive of choice and as incentives go, it is a pretty good one. It is easy to keep track of, easy to count. You can still get a lot of people to do a lot of things if the money is right. Once upon a time, if it was a challenging job, a dangerous job, and unbelievably difficult job – you just paid more for it.*

Money was both the obvious and universal motivator. Strangely enough, it doesn't really have a lot of meaning for Millennials. They are much more frugal than Generation-X.

Where the Gen-X kids would go out and max out their credit cards, buy the nicest car they could afford, live where status was pretty important, going out to the nicest clubs, etc.; Millennials are much more likely to live 3 or 4 together in a 2 bedroom apartment, drive some old beater car, or (heaven help us) even use public transportation.

That is so they don't have encumbrances that will force them to be tools. They are frugal, in

deference to the lifestyle they prefer. They don't want to be trapped in a job. They tend to see money as a potential noose.

- ♦ *I = Identity / Image – We traditionally love image. If you had a job as a vice president, that was pretty cool, unless you worked in a bank where there were only two people who were not vice presidents (forgive me bank people, I will offend everyone eventually, I promise). People would work to get the big chair in the corner office for the status.*

Status worked for the previous generations because for them, it was better to be the president than the janitor. So, for Millennials, status is not a particularly big issue either. They could be working in some high paying, "prestige" job one day and decide that is not it for them; be out of there and be flipping burgers the next day with absolutely no spin on it at all. No embarrassment with their peers, no problem.

For them, it is not about identity or image. It used to be, it still works for the older folks. I like my perks. I like it when my client puts me in first class, but it is not an incentive for them. They'd rather have a day to play at the end of the trip.

- ♦ *N = Needs – Needs was another traditional driver. What do you have to have to get by? There are certain things that you have to have and you will do anything to meet those needs.*

You need to be responsible so you can get a good credit rating so you can buy a nice house. Well, guess what? Time in a job has very little to do with your FICO score, you can have a new job every week and still get a 625+ credit score to get a

sub-prime mortgage. So there is not a lot of consequence from job-hopping for the Millennials in what they can and cannot have. As long as they can pay their bills they're good.

- ♦ *D = Deprivation – This was also a big threat. Deprivation was one of the primary disincentives. "If you don't do this you will grow up to be like your Uncle Joe or a bag lady on the street." That was the type of threat older generations responded to; the stigma of failure. There was always that consideration that if you didn't toe the line, if you didn't follow the given rules, then you would turn out as some sort of bum.*

Firing people in the contemporary workplace, isn't much of a threat anymore. With 4-1/2% unemployment, I can fire someone in the morning and they can be back to work somewhere in the afternoon and they don't have to have much of a work history or many qualifications.

There was a time when quitting or being fired repeatedly would make you a loser or a failure.

You can't really threaten the Millennials with this either because their definition of loser is very different. If they have the money to pay for their cell phone, basic cable and a new game cartridge every few weeks, they are really meeting a lot of their basic needs.

I'm not saying any of this derisively. I don't have any disrespect for them at all. I love Millennials and love working with them and showing employers how to work with them. Traditional assumptions really get in the way a lot though.

## **Now let's look at what Millennials are all about:**

- ♦ *R = Relationships – Relationships are the most important thing to them. Not particularly quantity but the quality of the relationship is of interest to them. More Millennials report having a favorable relationship with both parents than any preceding generation ever.*

They are very cool about relationships. Text messaging, email, instant messaging, etc. is all about relationships.

Relationship is way more important to them than money. So, if a friend is having a party or an event or the friend needs someone to be there and it means losing their job, it is not really a consideration for the Millennial. They don't spend very long thinking about it.

Relationships are very, very, very critical to them and that is good news if you are marketing to them. They understand relationships more in depth, in some cases, than people who have made money and status their primary drivers.

Now, how do relationships help you market to Millennials? They rely heavily on their relationships in buying decisions but not the way you might think. This is not trend consciousness; they are not concerned about fads. They are not going to go out and buy something because their friends bought it, rather they are going to take an aggregate of sources of information from their social network and then use that to form their own opinion.

They actually use a variation on what would be considered interferometry.

Interferometry is where you take a lot of fuzzy images and turn it into one clear one. So they

take a lot of perspectives and use that to make their own idea of what would be best for them.

But their networks are critical. They have very elaborate and extensive networks. That is why referral marketing is really the only effective way to reach Millennial networks. They are not a market in classic terms at all; they are a straightforward social network.

- ♦ *E = Experiences – Experiences are what the Millennials want. They don't want to do the same thing over and over again. They want to go out and try new things. This is why you see the extreme sports. It is not just that the sport is different, it is constantly challenging them to do different things. Most of the popular video games are constantly testing them to go at it from different angles, it is not the same character in the same setting, it is significantly different characters in significantly different settings.*

One of the possible reasons this is so, is that everything in their life has been transient. Every toy they have ever had, a lot of their opinions, and just about everything they have ever owned has gone away. It is only good for a little while.

Relationships and experiences are not transient. You have those no matter what happens going forward. You never have to give up your experiences. That is the one thing that you always carry with you throughout your life.

They place a very high premium on experiences. So, if you can wrap some experiential component around whatever it is you are selling, it will likely be much more successful with Millennials.

- ♦ *M = Menus – They want choices. It is more important for them to keep their choices and options open than it is to have a really hot,*

*fast career path. Choices, options and alternatives are critical. There must be opportunities to customize both before and after the sale.*

Millennials are not accustomed to having only one choice and even 3-4 choices is not enough. The classic marketing example that has done a great deal for the understanding of how Millennials buy is the Mini-Cooper.

Do you know how you buy a Mini-Cooper? You could buy it off the showroom floor, that would be the way an old white guy like me would do it. But the Millennial way you buy a Mini-Cooper is you order it online and you customize it with all the options.

You pick the colors, striping, interior and exterior options you want. You put the car together online and then, you can watch it being assembled for the next 15 or 20 or 30 days or however long it takes. They give you a log in number and you can see your car going down the assembly line and all the options and features being added.

- ♦ *I = Individuality – If it looks like they are being forced to blend or look like everyone else they will go a different direction. They want to be appreciated and understood, each and every one as a unique human being, as we all should to some degree. They are just more committed to it. They are highly trend/fad resistant. They are interested in neither blending nor showing off but seek to express themselves creatively and deliberately. They don't want to be seen as "fad monkeys."*

People often want to push back on this one and say for example: "What about Crocs?"

Those ugly rubber clogs. If you notice, they tend to decorate those very distinctively with buttons or pins or paint. They may wear one color on one foot and another on the other foot. They may cut or modify them in strange ways. But it is the fact that Crocs are so modifiable that makes them popular. Anyone can customize them with very little effort.

- ♦ *N = Non-Linearity – There is no “one way” to do things. Here’s another rule, if you don’t give them the option of going forward, backward or sideways, you are missing a good bet. They can find lots of new ways to do things and think about things. One of the tricks or secrets is to ask them.*

They want what they want when they want it.

This isn’t just about breakfast at midnight either or cereal for dinner either. They just don’t have a lot of attachment to a specific “when” for anything. My generation had a time when we were supposed to be in college, when we were supposed to be at work, when we should get married, when we should have children. They refuse to be defined by clock or calendar and time is clearly not their master.

Older people may bristle and harrumph at this and declare that everyone must have discipline and be punctual. That may always be true for some people in some positions but Millennials are finding a variety of ways to have whatever they want, whenever they want it.

- ♦ *D = Determination – This is not the kind of determination you might think of. They want to be able to have some control.*

*They want to have some say so in how things will go in their lives. They want to see how they can make a difference in everything and that includes the products that they buy and the services they select. They want to have some input.*

If you are not willing to take some feedback from Millennials and find out what they want from your product or service, don’t expect to be selling to them very long. They are very committed to making a difference and having things be better.

***They are not at all given to compromise.***

This is probably one of the things I admire most about Millennials. Once they set their minds on something, something they want, they will wait patiently for it. They will work to save for it. They will do whatever is needed to have the experience and relationship that they want and they are not willing to settle.

One of the interesting elements of the last several years is the average age of marriage for Millennials has gone up faster than any other group in history. So, it is likely that many Millennials will not be married for the first time until they are almost 30 because they are just not willing to settle on the first or the second or even the third relationship that comes along. They want the right relationship. Compromise means selling out. Likewise, they will wait for their ideal products as long as it takes.



## *Chapter 12: "Crash Test Geniuses"* (© 2006 Degraffenreid)

### *Reset/Reboot*

Millennials have been trained by computers and video games and when something is not working, what do they do? They reboot, reset, Ctrl Alt Del or punch out of there. Why would they continue to hammer away at it? If you reset, you get a new game.

Keep in mind that the average Millennial male by the time he is 21 has played, by very conservative estimates, over 5000 hours of video games. That's not really a huge amount. It's only about an hour a day if he started when he was five years old.

On the other hand, that is a bunch of resets. That is a lot of starting over. He is now trained to do that. Should we be surprised when he decides to ripcord out of someplace when something is not working? He doesn't want to wait forever. His experience is if the screen is locked up, it is probably not going to fix itself. Some of us will try to go back and close the same window a hundred times but mostly, after a while, you learn that it usually works best to just start over.

### *They Learn from mistakes*

"Crash Test Geniuses" (© 2006 Degraffenreid)

This is a term I really like. My friend Stan Carpenter suggested this term several years ago during a conversation about Millennial's "odd" behavior. In terms of their learning modality, we call Millennials Crash Test Geniuses©! The reason I like it so much is because they are actually capable of learning faster from failure than most of us learn from success.

Frankly, that would be a good skill for everyone. When you play most video games, what happens in the course of getting to the next level is you get blown up, dismembered, killed, repeatedly gored and torn limb from limb. It is just part of the learning process.

### *Non-linear, instinctive choices help to find "cheats" and "hacks"*

They really have been very astute at reading the situation. If you watch them playing video games (remember there are no lasting rules with most video games), they make some brilliant and intuitive assumptions. They are terrific at natural experimentation. They don't go back and do the same thing over and over again.

When they get blown up, they try something a little bit different or they will try something a lot different. They are very smart in terms of an instinctive, intuitive scientific method and it allows them to learn a lot of things very, very quickly; not just in a video game environment because a lot of the real world works that same way. It is not designed to tell you its secrets but it wants you to try to force and tease them out. They know how to do that. That is a good thing.

### *Compelled to crash system if they can*

We create 'Failure Learning Labs' for Millennials so they can make the wheels come off. One of the phrases that I learned from them that you hear a lot among gamers is "The secrets of the universe are revealed when you break things." I don't know who said that. I think it was some Japanese anime' character.

### *No fear of failure, no respect for "politics"*

I grew up in a very competitive environment where if you lost the ballgame or what have you, you were the goat; you were supposed to feel bad if you lost. This gave us a particular relationship to playing such as "I want to win." "I want to play if I can win but not if I know I will lose."

Millennials have nothing going on with losing and it is not a bad thing. Let me tell you, I have worked with these young people in all kinds of employment learning situations and we can get them up to speed, we can usually have them ready to roll in less than a third of the time over people that learn in traditional modalities or that have issues with failure.

### *Prefer menu-based training*

Windows & GUI (menu-driven)

I want you to think about what it was like growing up with computers. Again, 1982 was the advent of the PC and it was DOS so there wasn't a lot going on graphically (I'm sure some of you remember that nightmare). But as computers have matured and each younger cohort in the Millennials has had the advantage of a computer almost from birth, they have grown up with a certain relationship to the world.

The speed and access to information and the ability to create, change and share information that you have through a computer interface is unlike any other interface that any other generation has ever had.

In a menu-driven operating environment, you always have the opportunity to go

backwards, forward, sideways or any direction you choose. You can always pull down more options. Millennials assume that they always have multiple options.

### *Timelines and tenure based rewards and privileges irritate them*

#### *24/7 for Everything / Time Shifting*

Think about this. (I'm dating myself now, but who else would?) When I was a boy, 7-11 stores actually opened at 7:00 AM and closed at 11:00 PM. For you kids, that is where they got the name. Pretty funny now, you probably thought it was about craps or something. Back then, they were the only stores open in the early morning and late night. Everything wasn't always open all the time.

Now, everything is on 24/7 (24 hours a day & 7 days a week); TV, internet, music, etc.

Millennials don't have to wait for anything. There is not a lot of need to schedule and if you do have to schedule, you can time shift around other things, you can use your TiVo or DVR (digital video recorder) to record it or find it on the Internet. So time has a very different context for Millennials.

Do you remember when you had a "bedtime"? They don't necessarily, because there is always something to watch, do or eat all night. If they want to get up in the middle of the night and watch something, there is something for them to watch. It is always there, happening, 24/7. Even if they just want to veg out on the iPod, or whatever.

## *Chapter 13: What Is Their View of the Future?*

### *Job/career*

Baby Boomers adjusted their lifestyles to their careers. Gen X-ers wanted careers to afford them a particular lifestyle. Millennials tend to shop for lifestyles and find jobs that interfere as little as possible with their chosen way of life.

Millennials are far more likely to decide where they want to live first and then figure out what they'll do to support themselves once they get there. This could be viewed as a form of "destination" career selection. Where previous generations might have looked forward to living in a specific place at the end of their career Millennials choose to create a career in a place they enjoy to begin with.

Millennials work deftly to avoid encumbrances that will force them to remain in an unsatisfactory work situation. Rather than maxing out their credit cards and over extending themselves for the nicest possible cars and housing they can afford as many Gen Xers have they scrimp and even save.

Millennials are frugal almost to a fault. They will live three or four up in a two-bedroom apartment, drive some old beater car or even take public transportation in order to avoid being caught in a credit crunch that traps them in a higher-paying but unsatisfying job.

Absent an unmanageable debt load Millennials enjoy the freedom of experimenting with a wide range of jobs. They may sample and taste from any number of industries and positions until they find exactly what they're looking for.

Without obligations or families they are free to experiment liberally and wait for opportunities that offer the best possible combination of satisfaction and compensation. They are in no hurry and feel no need to settle for less than they choose.

### *Travel and Experiences*

Experiences, in the form of both novel activities and locations are one of the sole measures of status among Millennials. They are far more likely to have been world travelers at almost any point in their lives than previous generations. Their travel tends to be free of itineraries including even start and end dates. They may stay somewhere as long as it suits them or until the money runs out.

As souvenirs more and more Millennials are bringing home fresh ink. Tattoos have become the travelogue, slideshow and postcards of Millennial vacations. Some Millennials collect overseas tattoos the way their grandparents collected state shot glasses. Some locations such as Manila and Phuket are becoming popular chiefly for the quality of their local tattoo artists.

The availability of extreme or adventure sports such as waterfall kayaking and base jumping is also becoming an important draw for Millennial travelers.

### *Educational relevance*

Previous generations could be considered something like marked barrels filled with varying qualities and quantities of content.

Employers knew more or less what they were looking for when hiring based on how full the barrel was. The vaunted GPA was more or less the measure of the quality of

content (1/2 barrel = high school degree, 2/3 barrel = college grad and so on).

Boomers and Xers could be somewhat fairly assessed for their job fitness based on known properties and job requirements.

In the late 90s all that began to change. If you were with the same company more than two or three years and that company somehow retained the same management or ownership for the same period it would still be unlikely for you to find yourself doing the same thing for long. The willingness and ability to adapt to change became increasingly paramount.

In the chaotic workplace of the 21st century, agility and awareness have supplanted skills and knowledge. Millennials have an amazing ability to adapt to radical changes in context. They recognize that as market's and business models transform on an almost daily basis it is essential to be able to reconfigure and transition smoothly into today's environment without looking back. More importantly today's context can only be populated by today's information. Letting go of ideas, abandoning past practices as new trends and patterns emerge is the key skill set for the third Millennium.

No one recognizes this as clearly and completely as Millennials. They have watched as their parents were downsized, transferred or forced into early retirement in order to accommodate the exigencies of the marketplace.

At the time of this writing two of the four finalists in this year's NCAA college basketball tournament have graduation rates among the Nation's lowest for male students with basketball scholarships. The

University of Memphis has a 30% graduation rate while at UCLA it's 29%. Fewer and fewer state schools across the country can claim even a 50% overall graduation rate at the end of four years.

This is a reflection of a number of factors:

- ♦ *A relatively strong economy and low unemployment rate makes decent paying jobs readily available to most dropouts.*
- ♦ *Many students perceive little value in the education provided by traditional institutions that are still primarily content driven.*
- ♦ *Students who are facile at Internet research quickly recognize a significant disparity between truly contemporary knowledge and what they're learning from textbooks and in their classrooms.*
- ♦ *Traditional curricula do not allow students to explore areas of special interest and emerging opportunity.*
- ♦ *A lack of variety and customization in educational agendas strikes Millennials as stodgy and disrespectful of their needs.*
- ♦ *An old-school focus on individual learning rather than a collaborative, team centric approach does not prepare students for a real world where no one person controls an operative set of data to meet specific objectives. Millennials recognize that knowledge resides in networks not individuals*

The high-value high-performance players of the 21st-century workplace will be adept at training both their human and wired networks to bring them the information they need when they need it. The ability to create and manage context rather than knowledge (content) will become increasingly essential even for line level workers in most areas. Millennials are

already well adapted to this approach.

### *Family*

Millennials have a much more organic approach to relationships. If they have one rule in this area it is “do what works”. They are not at all bothered by any traditional expectations in so far as marriage, children, nest building or dominance in a relationship. As in all other areas of their lives additional rules and assumptions must all be thoroughly validated and, if found wanting, created from a clean slate.

What is obvious to everyone at this point is that they are marrying later, having children later and investing in more modest homes at a later stage in their lives than any generation subsequent to The Great Depression. What is less obvious is that this is not a reflection so much of a desire to sow more wild oats as a commitment not to settle for relationships that provide less than they feel they deserve or are capable of sustaining.

Millennials appear to learn quickly from relationship mistakes, avoiding partners with characteristics that have been problematic in previous relationships. They are systematically accountable for discovering what does and doesn't work for them in a life partner. They're cautious both sexually and economically in regard to accepting the responsibility of children. Their commitment to their children once extended is deep and profound. Their parenting styles, while still emerging, appear to reflect a sort of cautious latitude. They're strongly averse to becoming the “hover parents” that many experienced in their own childhoods.

### *Millennial's Role As "Consumer"*

Millennials do not like the idea that they are obligated to support the economy by “consuming”.

Recycling, trading, renting and delaying large purchases make purchase patterns for large ticket items unpredictable.

They want what they want, customized the way they want it and see being coerced or forced to purchase a certain product as being a “tool”.

## *Chapter 14: The Dark Side of the World of Millennials They Really Are Wired Differently*

Now, what does all that mean? Basically, it means they are very different. If you look at their brains on a functional MRI, their minds are not working like older generations' neural circuitry. If you just looked at the functional MRI, you would barely recognize them as the same brains from the same species.

They are processing information very, very, very differently. They are thinking about things very, very, very differently. This is important because there is nothing wrong with them. They are not ADD, they are not ADHD, and there is nothing defective about them. They are neurally wired to think differently and a lot faster.

It is unfortunate that many people think that because they don't think the way we do, there must be something wrong with them. There is absolutely nothing wrong with them, they are just not us. Being aware of that and giving them some respect for not being us gives them a huge space to interact with us on a different level.

For the most part, employers, educators, churches and parents are attempting to assert a very patriarchal and punitive relationship with the Millennials.

They are trying to make them be something they are not. They are not an ugly horse, they are camels. They are very nearly a different species and they need to be understood and interacted with accordingly on that level.

This is a lot of my consulting work, helping employers create an amenable workplace that can support this type of thinking. Because once you get the value of it, it is staggering what they can do that we can't.

### *The Most Medicated Generation "ADD", Autism, ADHD*

We have all heard that they are more prudent, and that there are a lot fewer teenage pregnancies than there have been in almost any time in the last 60 or 70 years. Surveys say that Millennials are not doing as many drugs and their truancy rate is a lot lower than their same age group in the 1970's.

The bad news is they could be lying. Seriously, there is an operative practice among their cohorts, to do what they call "gaming the system" which means when you take a poll or a survey, you don't always tell the truth because the Millennials perspective is "it is none of their business."

So, some of this data may be accurate, we can definitely point to lower pregnancy rates because babies are hard to fake, but with the drug stats, we have some questions as to how much lower the incidence of usage actually might be. We do know there is increasing interest in exotic psychopharmaceuticals and organic hallucinogens.

Millennials are one of the most medicated generations in human history. No generation in history has ever been exposed to such a pharmacological torrent of remedies for emotional/psychological conditions.

Most Millennials readily accept the notion that psychotropic drugs are a safe and effective way of managing not just psychological disorders but their moods. The most frequently

prescribed drug on college campuses today is not birth control pills but Prozac.

While alcohol and hard drug abuse is generally down so-called softer recreational drugs such as ecstasy, Valium, Prozac and the increasingly common Cheese (a mixture of heroin and nighttime cold medicine) are readily available on or near most high school campuses. The infamous pharming parties that began in the late 90s are somewhat on the wane, but parents' prescriptions are still a leading source of recreational drugs for Millennials.

### *Depression/suicide*

Even with increased use of antidepressants & other behavior-altering drugs, Millennials are more depressed than any generation previous. The suicide rate is going up worldwide and the age of suicide is going down. Years ago you just didn't hear about children 8 or 9 years old killing themselves or others.

### *Obesity, Diabetes and Heart Disease*

Childhood obesity is another health problem that has plagued Millennials, as well as Gen-X before them. Lack of exercise combined with low quality, high density calories conspire to frame lifetime health issues. Many Millennials with weight problems resort to medication, both over and under the counter. This can lead to further issues of dependency, making weight problems a potential gateway to addiction.

## Chapter 15: Millennials Are Your New Workforce

### *The Millennial Paradox*

This generation coming into the workforce brings every company to a crucial decision point. Will you act now and treat them as an upgrade or install them over your existing systems and hope they don't crash them?

Employers don't have a choice anymore whether or not they will hire Millennials. They are the age group that has always populated the entry-level workforce, but they are distinctly different from previous generations in terms of their attitudes about entry-level work.

Employers still have choices that will impact both their bottom line and corporate relevance:

#### **Ignore the differences?**

Watch your company's attrition rate skyrocket and customer service ratings plunge.

Take the stance that they are "broken" and attempt to "fix" them with more rules and oversight?

They are "game masters" and if they stay, they feel compelled to beat your game or worse, to crash your company's system.

#### **Upgrade?**

This generation is capable of quantum leap innovations and incredible process streamlining because they track, analyze and think in multiple layers. They have experience since childhood in forming global teams and complex networks to accomplish goals using online video and computer game systems.

*Resistance is futile – They are your new employees.*

I've been waiting a while to begin my campaign about Millennials. I had a lot of employers when they first started recognizing this phenomenon who would tell me "Oh, it's okay, we'll just raise the hiring age for a while and they'll grow out of it." I was fairly confident this wasn't going to happen because once people's fundamental thinking patterns are established during childhood and adolescence, you don't really put them back. There isn't really anything to fix there.

A lot of employers have been waiting for them to "grow out of it". Now, the oldest Millennials are 25 - 26 and it is becoming pretty evident that 100 million of them are not going to wake up one day and say "Oh, I should have been more disciplined! How would you like me to behave, sir?"

You have already figured out that I am a geek and this is one of my all-time favorite Star Trek lines and I like saying it: "Resistance is Futile!" This is the Borg speaking, of course, but it may just as well be the Millennials. They will ultimately win by attrition. Just do the math on this one. This is not hard. Do you want these people who have been abused, disaffected and generally mistreated to be accountable for your nursing home care? I don't! I would like to have some sort of rapport here that establishes that I know you are going to be okay with where you are going and I want to support you in getting there.

You can't really expect to outplay them. A lot of employers are in an interesting situation where they are trying to screen their way out of this problem and find just the



“good” ones. They have applicants take a hiring test, a screening to test to sort out the “good” ones.

What is funny about this is that Millennials are very collaborative and they know how to use the Internet for everything. You give me almost any screening test out there and I can “Google it” and find the “right answers” to get hired within about 15 minutes. This is only funny because companies pay upwards of \$100 for these tests and they think they are doing something. They are; they’re teaching them how to be effective at cheating on the Internet.

Do you, if you are over 25, feel bad if you show up late for something? Of course you do. When I ask Millennials this question, the answer is mostly no. They think – “late is late, I’ll catch up.” Beating up on them for this is a huge mistake because all they are going to do is quit and then they will be permanently “not there” which is like permanently late for most employers because they are not ever there. I’m serious, we currently don’t have that abundant a qualified labor pool, even if we move into an economic recession.

A big problem that employers have with Millennials is their tendency to quit at the drop of a hat with no notice. A lot of employers spend a good deal of time trying to discover why they quit. This is a really challenging question because in a lot of cases, they can’t even tell you themselves. On some level, it feels to them like they are not winning and they are not going to win, so it is time to punch “reset.”

A better question employers could be

asking is “What would motivate them to stay?” In most cases, the short answer is changes and choices. If a Millennial is not winning at one position or location, find out if they would like to move to another. You can even do this after they have quit. Many employers rebel at this suggestion because they feel it is coddling or letting them have their way.

### *Rewards of accepting, changing and revolutionizing “business as usual”*

Improved “hardware” of all types facilitated the agricultural and industrial revolutions. “Software” was the cornerstone of the information age. New and improved “wetware”, the Millennials will be the foundation of the contextual/creative age.

Just as the organizations that were unable to accommodate improved hardware or software were left behind those that cannot adapt to the Millennials will be relinquished to the dustbins of corporate history. Joining the Millennial revolution is not so much about success as survival.

### *Greater productivity, profits and quality*

Employees who are in a position by choice and trusted to perform there consistently deliver more and better results. Inspiration and involvement trump intimidation and inertia. It’s just that simple. Millennials will not settle for a job that has no meaning to them or where they are disrespected. Their selectivity is already transforming the modern workplace in profound but still mostly invisible ways.

### *Higher levels of job satisfaction for everyone*

Because Millennials will not tolerate unac-

ceptable circumstances or supervisors employers are being forced to reevaluate their work practices. Companies that listen are recognizing that Millennials seldom make unreasonable demands and often have clear ideas for economical and implementable improvements. This level of commitment inevitably leads to a more satisfying workplace for all involved.

*They recruit high performance team members if you let them*

Letting Millennials be accountable for helping find their own colleagues is one of the simplest and fastest ways to assure a readily available and competent team. Millennials will not sandbag their employers or themselves by recruiting coworkers they consider less than suitable for a position. Because they maintain extensive social networks they tend to be very aware of what skills and resources are available. When they don't they know what networks to reach out to.

*Ability to innovate, streamline and compete at a global pace*

Another big myth about Millennials is that they are lazy. It is not so much that they don't like to work; they don't like the way we make them work. Again, they love figuring things out. I have found that Millennials are some of the best process improvement people I have ever met. They are instinctive. If we give them an assignment and an outcome and ask them, "What would be your best guess at how to do this?", very often, they will come up with an innovative and improved way to handle things.

What is the problem? Why not let them? Can you see a downside to this? Letting

people use their imagination, exercise their instinctive and intuitive capacity for finding shortcuts and improvements and you are paying them the same wage as a slacker; what's not to like? They are operating like senior consultants for \$10/hour.

They really like a challenging work environment. A tedious, boring, repetitive work environment isn't going to hold their attention for very long. They may do the job but they are not going to do it very well. You have to find ways to keep it interesting and make it challenging for them.

*"Intra-preneurs" – They do not expect to stay long*

Millennials make terrific entrepreneurs. They are great at building and selling businesses. They have the closest to a naturally entrepreneurial mindset of any past generation.

As has been mentioned previously Millennials often take a "sampling" approach to various employers and positions. They see no harm in doing a little of this or a little of that in the process of learning what does and doesn't work for them. Of course this is distressing to employers who see the behavior as disloyal or at least erratic.

The issue can be addressed somewhat by simply using the old practice of a trial or break-in period before hiring for a longer-term. Letting people know they will be cross-trained for a variety of functions at specific intervals can also help to reduce short-term attrition.

Fundamentally however the thing that drives most Millennials is the desire for trust and respect. We will address this subject

further in later chapters and our online course.

*Concept of employee tenure – Keeping your best employees*

This is very important. They have been trained by video games to take losses in the course of learning to win. If they see they have to quit moving forward, they don't have an issue with it. You have got to make it a win for them.

While you're at it, find a way to make working for you a winnable game for all your employees. Retaining people who have experience with complex systems is a key factor in profitability and continued growth. I've studied tenure equity in the course of my work on employee retention programs and there are often people in key positions of influence who have mastered systems and have critical knowledge that don't show up that way on an organizational chart.

## Chapter 16: Entry-Level Millennials

### *Why do they want a job?*

Millennials don't want jobs; they want opportunities to contribute to something meaningful. If they take a "job" it is only to better prepare or qualify them for something they believe will be valuable and important. No matter what they're doing they must understand their work in the context of the positive difference it makes in the world.

### *What are they willing to put up with?*

Very little really. Millennials view basic respect as something of an entitlement. It's very simply what they feel they're owed as human beings. They will wait for trust but not indefinitely. If they see there is no way to earn your trust they are already moving on, at least in their minds.

### *How do they expect to be recognized, compensated and rewarded?*

They expect to be acknowledged both individually and as team members. Money is crucial only if the languages of acknowledgment, trust, respect, appreciation, interest and listening are insufficiently available. Freedom to indulge in their important relationships and passions is more important than status and financial rewards to most.

### *Clash with traditional training methods and structures*

Traditional classroom training is viewed as an enormous waste of time by most Millennials. Computer-based learning and advanced on-the-job training are their preferred learning modalities. The availability of "failure learning

labs" in a space where rules and assumptions can be routinely challenged is essential to an optimal learning curve for them.

### *Creating a "Winnable Game Worth Playing" for Them*

Millennials need to be able to envision themselves in the future in the context of contribution. They don't need to know what they'll be doing for a company as much as what they might be providing. When they understand what a company needs and values they are willing to prepare themselves to provide that. In return the company must understand and respect their needs. Not particularly bad trade when you think about it.

### *Cross-generational conflicts and solutions*

Both Boomers and Xers tend to resent Millennials' sense of entitlement. Older generations expect them to earn their stripes and put in their time. Those attitudes were appropriate to the foregoing economic settings. At the current rate of change, time can simply no longer be a crucial element in the realm of success. The generations who recognize this fact will either embrace it and use it to their own advantage or find themselves chronically angry and resentful of people who do.

### *Training and technology solutions*

Computer-based learning, text message learning, Super-Teaching™, and many other technologies yet undeveloped or undiscovered will make the notion of event type training increasingly obsolete. Training in the contemporary workplace is an ongoing process that never stops. The office, the shop floor, the driver's seat and

anywhere else work is being done is the new classroom. For Millennials the notion that learning day-to-day and even moment-to-moment is an inherent component of every job seems only natural.

*Reward, compensation, scheduling and policy solutions*

My consulting company, N2Millennials prides itself on the ability to create effective, implementable strategies for every size and type of company. There is no one generic solution that works in every setting or for every workforce. All variables exist in the context of your company's objectives. Your specific goals must be understood in order to help you reach them.

## *Chapter 17: College Level Millennials - Premium Grade?*

*Why do they want a job working for you versus your competition?*

Show them how you make a more positive difference in the world than the competition then show them why they are uniquely qualified to contribute in the making of that difference.

*Don't Waste This Expensive, Expansive Blend*

Millennials have a non-political outlook regarding workplace dynamics, they will recommend change and admit to mistakes, and call out hypocrisy, waste and ethical breaches.

Millennials have been designed by video games to systematically seek out and breach weaknesses. If there is a fallacious assumption, pointless rule or inconsistently applied policy they will find it like laser guided missiles to the point that they're actually willing to destroy their career in order to expose an issue they consider untenable.

Hypocrisy in any degree, accepting an inexcusable, intolerable or inappropriate situation constitutes "selling out". To sell out is to become a tool and becoming a tool is worse than surrender. A tool is a deserter. Worse than any failure, to sellout is to go over to the other side, to give up what one stands for. In fact in the Millennial mind to sellout is to give up one's self.

While Millennials are not particularly motivated by money or status and they don't fear failure, they do have something at risk. To become a tool is to give up hope and to give up hope

is to give up life. This may sound rather maudlin. You could also hear it as very principled and idealistic. In fact it is a logical and pragmatic response to having seen many members of previous generations lose themselves in pursuit of wealth and status.

Millennials understand what is at stake and they will work, innovate, solve, develop, overcome or create whatever is necessary to keep from selling out on themselves.

Principles that apply to Entry-Level Millennials are also a baseline standard for working with College Level Millennials.

## Chapter 18: Marketing To Millennials

### *Millennials As A Consumer Group*

#### *How big is their impact now as customers?*

The “Millennial Shift” in consumer behavior is creating upheaval and innovation in every major product category. Status and trends are quickly evaporating as buyer motives in the Millennial market. Companies that cannot provide greater choices and customization, the opportunity for individuality or political/personal statements to be expressed will find themselves increasingly marginalized if not extinct.

Simple trillion dollars statistics cannot begin to adequately describe the impact of consumers who place a higher premium on relationships and experience than status and trends.

#### *How big will their impact be in peak consumer years?*

Millennials are nearly the only growth market for almost every product and service over the next 30 years. There is almost nothing that will be bought or sold, from socks to stocks, that won't need to take their needs and dispositions into consideration.

#### *What are their priorities as consumers?*

The environment, sustainability and value are critical variables for Millennial consumers. They won't buy something just because societal norms suggest they should have it; even less so because their friends have one. In fact they might buy something because they have friends who would want to borrow it.

#### *What turns them off?*

- ♦ *Waste, greed and excess.*

- ♦ *Drone/tool – They don't want to be seen as a mass market, this is why they like high customization – Mini Cooper, Pimp My Ride, etc.*
- ♦ *Corporate misdeeds towards others - “Do no evil” – This is Google's corporate policy and Millennials really resonate with it.*

### *Millennials Are Globally Networked and Globally Conscious*

Sustainability – Green – Eco-friendly – Fair trade are all increasingly top of mind considerations for most Millennials. They are not interested in products that exploit the environment or other cultures.

#### *They are very good at filtering marketing messages out*

Millennials rely almost exclusively on their social networks for buying information. Traditional marketing is both irrelevant and invisible to them.

- ♦ *They monitor their peer network, but don't follow trends blindly like previous generations.*
- ♦ *They're interested in standing out much more than fitting in. They want to be known for their own individual tastes, not for being able to emulate the tastes of others.*
- ♦ *Experience trumps consumables – collectibles*
- ♦ *They much prefer a good story, new anecdote or expanded relationship to any knickknack or souvenir.*

#### *What will they pay a premium for?*

In a word, relationships. Knowing that the company they deal with is trustworthy and honorable can make a bigger difference

than the product or service itself. Good tech support or online help desk functions are crucial.

*What will they reject on principle?*

Waste, arbitrary status symbols and environmental recklessness.

They are powerful referral marketers and powerful “flamers”

Millennials routinely and happily share both good and bad experiences of not only products and services, but employment. A company that fails to respond to Millennial issues may quickly find itself blacklisted with no easy recourse to a clean reputation.

Millennials set a new and higher bar in many regards. They see no reason to settle for less than they feel they deserve. They are both patient and frugal, unwilling to be either rushed or trapped in unsatisfactory circumstances. They will not hesitate to take a step back rather than remaining in an unacceptable situation. They're pragmatic idealists, flexibly intransigent and mercilessly tolerant.

In other words, like most generations they are a paradox. Anything that can be said about all of them may be untrue for each of them.

They are a generation like no other and they are already in the process of shaping the future like none we've ever seen. They will go forward with or without our support. I choose to support and respect them and hope you will as well.



## Chapter 19: Educating Millennials

### *Current trends – boys drop out... girls conform and excel*

Because girls are often forced to the back of the science/technology queue, older Millennial females (born 1982-86) may not have been immersed in video and computer games to the same degree as their male counterparts of the same age.

This simply means that a male born in 1982 will generally exhibit more Millennial characteristics than a female born in the same year. This has temporarily created a very interesting gender gap wherein females operating according to more conventional imperatives are perceived as more desirable for everything from scholarships to management training positions. While having the incidental benefit of kicking a large hole in some sections of glass ceiling this effect is quickly diminishing.

As video and computer game manufacturers have more and more aggressively pursued the female market Millennial gender differences are becoming less and less pronounced. A Millennial female born in 1990 is likely to be nearly as immersed in and facile as a gamer as is her male counterpart.

### *Testing and measurements*

Is it possible to measure the degree of “Millennialization” for an individual or group? Yes and no. There are of course the functional MRI differences referenced in previous chapters.

Certain behaviors, such as job hopping or minimizing financial obligations can also be viewed as representative. There is however at the time of this writing no definitive acid test as to who

is and is not a Millennial.

While this may at first seem frustrating, ambiguous or even evasive consider that there is also no established test for Boomer-ism or X-ism. The characteristics of a generation can be very inconsistent and notoriously transient as the generation matures.

In the case of Millennials however the root causes of their underlying differences are becoming more and more pronounced. The rate of cultural and contextual change is only accelerating. Technology continues to advance a rate approaching singularity.

There is no reason to believe that Millennials or the as yet unnamed generation begun in 2001 will become more moderate or equivocal in the expression of any of the characteristics discussed thus far. Measuring and testing for “Millennialization” is less an issue than keeping up with it.

## Chapter 20: Parenting Millennials

### *Creating positive family dynamics*

Millennials, for all their amazing and vexing differences, are still fundamentally and profoundly human. Their need for approval and acceptance is deepened by the widespread misunderstanding and rejection they face in the world at large.

Because many parents are frustrated by what they see as laziness, apathy and a lack of discipline they fail to extend the trust and respect so essential in forming strong parent-child bonds.

Much has been written about the Millennial need for approval and rewards. This is an unfortunate mischaracterization. They do not need to be “stroked”. Meaningless rewards and feigned approval are actually quite irritating to them. What they need is immediate and actionable feedback.

In much the same way as a video game or computer provides instantaneous response to effective or ineffective actions, Millennials need to know what's working and what isn't. Of course the human environment and relationships are not designed to provide continuous oversight and input, but there are some strategies that introduce this dynamic.

In parent-child relationships an acknowledgment serves as both carrot and stick whether or not the parent is visibly present. The mechanics of acknowledgment are complex and covered in detail in my second book, “Blazing a TRAIL to Success; the Art and Science of Acknowledgment”.

Without digressing into unnecessary detail, the most important language of acknowledgment is trust. Trust is also one of the most meaningful and valued forms of feedback for Millennials. Although nearly everyone will agree that trust is fundamental to successful relationships few of us ever take the time to stop and consider what we really mean when we say “trust”.

To clearly and completely grasp how trust can be applied as an empowering language of acknowledgment is essential to the optimal parenting of Millennials. It is also a core element we introduce in the workplace when we create corporate solutions.

### *Winnable Games at Home*

There is a branch of personal coaching called Coactive Coaching. The fundamental tenet of this approach is that people are most responsive to positive feedback. Focusing on negatives is viewed as having minimal impact on behavior.

Nowhere are these principles truer than with Millennials. This doesn't mean that punishment is never appropriate, simply that most behavior changes occur in pursuit of acceptance and approval.

Millennials are both dismayed and confused by their parent's anger and frustration. They really don't understand what they've done wrong in most cases. Their behavior is a logical and learned response to consistent feedback from their technological environment. When parents send conflicting messages the dissonance is painful and confronting.

### *How will Millennial parenting evolve?*

As parents become more and more accepting of the fact that Millennials are in fact “Crash Test Geniuses©” they will recognize that their

children require greater latitude to explore and experiment without being protected from “failure”.

Parents must learn to respect that Millennials are often unable to differentiate between what is merely risky and what is truly dangerous. This is a very challenging step for most parents. A video game is an inherently safe environment in the sense that it represents very little possibility of physical harm.

Parents must learn to recognize that Millennials distinguish the difference between the virtual and the real worlds the same way a developing mind becomes bilingual without mixing words or grammar from the two different languages.

When parents begin to respect the accelerated learning processes of Millennials they will gradually become comfortable with the notion of letting them “feed on failure”. Unfortunately this may not take place on any large scale until Millennials start raising their own children.

## Chapter 21: Millennials and Religion

### *Their Exposure to Alternate Religions*

Millennials have an almost insatiable appetite for meaning and context. They want to understand whether things really happen for a reason and, if so, what those reasons are.

Authoritarian and patriarchal religions tend to be very unappealing to Millennials. Because of their natural propensity to explore and experiment Millennials are sometimes drawn to new or synthetic spiritual practices that incorporate very broad latitudes of beliefs.

An increasing number of Millennials (as well as older generations) refer to themselves as “spiritual” but not religious. Given the Millennial affinity for relationships, their exodus from organized religions that offer fellowship as a fundamental benefit could be viewed as confusing. This paradox will be discussed in the next section.

### *How Traditional Churches Are Reacting to Millennials*

Traditional, independent and new age churches have all recognized the Millennial thirst for meaning in their lives. Unfortunately most churches engage them as if any spiritual interest is more of a shopping trip than a quest. That is the best most churches offer, the worst is treating them as if they are somehow evil, dysfunctional and broken.

Millennials are not so naïve as to expect easy answers in something so important

and profound as the deeper meaning of their lives. Churches that offer them good, challenging questions rather than cookie-cutter solutions and step-by-step rules will be sought out and respected.

The opportunity to move up through escalating levels of spiritual development is appealing to Millennials. When and how to step up to new levels must be left to their choice however.

### *How Alternative Churches Are Engaging Millennials*

Many alternative churches are creating what amounts to an à la carte menu for beliefs. This means allowing participants to pick and choose what tenets and principles they will adhere to.

While it is known that Millennials are highly menu-centric it should not be assumed they will sell out for freedom of choice.

Millennials also respect that not everything is negotiable nor a matter of personal preference.

While the era of the “have it your way” church may enjoy some temporary popularity, the long-range growth will be in institutions that emphasize fellowship, personal growth and ongoing spiritual development.

## Chapter 22: The Dark Side

*What may happen if we continue on the course of treating them like they are broken and excluding them?*

The Millennial mindset will flourish with or without the support of older generations. The only real questions are whether foregoing generations will benefit from the changes being wrought, and how much will be built on a completely new foundation versus the best of what went before?

If the powers that be seek to preserve the status quo they may well hobble any substantive change for 10 or even 15 years. The penalty for delaying this game will come at a very dear cost, however.

Marginalizing and repressing the Millennial tendencies in the corporate and education realms will result in chronically increasing costs coupled with lower productivity.

### *Business Consequences*

In the business world, the response will be increasing dependence on foreign labor markets where the Millennial effect has not yet taken hold. Wholesale off-shoring of nearly all but firsthand service functions will result in increasing numbers of Millennials entering entrepreneurial markets, pursuing careers in creative fields and seeking overseas opportunities in more progressive economies.

### *Educational Consequences*

On the education front, as fewer and fewer Millennials see the value in pursuing advanced degrees, Universities will seek to make up the shortfall with students from other countries. A few enlightened schools will inevitably respond to the market and create programs with greater relevance that are adapted to Millennial learning

styles. Traditional institutions will naturally resist having any such programs accredited.

### *Family Disruption*

For families with Millennials, continuing to ignore the revised priorities and operating assumptions of Millennials will lead them to seek approval from a variety of peer networks both virtual and real. In lower economic echelons gang membership may skyrocket. In more educated and economically advantaged cohorts, an increase in communal living and youth-centric, self-generated religions and spiritual practices could be expected to increase substantially.

## Chapter 23: The Bright Side

*What possibilities for the world come into reality if we embrace, enhance and engage Human Being 2.0?*

If we were to truly, comprehensively welcome all of the myriad differences encompassed in the Millennial divergence there would be a cultural, economic and spiritual evolution on an unprecedented scale.

Shifting the cultural norms for success from money and status to relationship and experience would require not just redefining but literally reinventing the context for nearly every human bond. Such a dynamic adaptation will obviously take time, patience and understanding.

For example, accepting the notion that support is a higher priority in a relationship than security, and recognizing that travel may have more value than titles, will require quantum rethinking by older generations. While many may never fully accept these notions, they can still agree to respect them.

In the business world, conceding that the ability to adapt is more crucial than the power to control will bring cataclysmic but much-needed change.

Where corporations once created the equivalent of enormous, rigid multilane bridges into a future that may or may not come into existence, Millennials will build hundreds or even thousands of rope bridges, tire swings and catapults that are constantly creating access to new relationships.

The leaders of this new economic era will be distinguished by their ability to synthesize new networks that leverage ideas and implement

change faster than is currently imaginable.

Nowhere will the impact of the Millennial divergence be more apparent than in the world of education. The shift from content to context-driven learning will redefine what teacher, classroom and curriculum mean in the most fundamental and important ways. Computer and video game-based learning will allow each student to advance at a rate that both preserves confidence and assures mastery.

## Chapter 24: Conclusion

There is no one future assured by the Millennial divergence. At this point anything is still possible. What seems most likely is that economic imperatives will dictate that businesses will be the first to reach out and adapt to the Millennial mindset. This will be a simple act of fiscal Darwinism. Businesses that evolve will survive and perpetuate themselves. Those that do not will sooner or later be discontinued.

As businesses adjust to the new Millennial reality, parents will begin to recognize that there is a future for their children that may not look anything like what they had envisioned for them, and that may indeed be a very good thing.

When parents can relax about not having prepared their children to succeed in the traditional sense, it will become far easier for them to accept that Millennials are unwilling to measure achievement with dollar signs. Knowing that happiness and fulfillment will be the coin of their children's and grandchildren's realms may even become a comfort.

Education will likely be the last domain to acknowledge the Millennial divergence. Accommodations will begin slowly at the University level. Eventually, even the teacher unions will be compelled to accept the inevitable.

Millennials are learning machines that operate at fire hose volume and wither and disengage when offered the eyedropper quantities of information available in a traditional classroom.

When the revolution is complete, the world will be unrecognizable, as we know it. The contrast will be like that between a football game and a picnic. When they look back, Human Beings

v 2.0 will wonder how we ever kept from destroying ourselves?

Hopefully they will also marvel that when the time came, we stepped gracefully out of their way and even offered them whatever tools and resources we could provide.

In each generation, humanity has confronted the challenges at hand and dealt with them as best we were able. Unfortunately our solutions have inevitably created new problems for the next generation. We have passed on many advances and advantages as well, but none has come without a cost.

Millennials and the generations to follow have begun to recognize the exploding solution trap. They understand that the legacy that keeps on taking must be stopped.

They will assert their stewardship as leaders, voters, employees, teachers, parents, customers, children and human beings. They cherish the notion that their birthright is accountability for the future.

The best option for older generations is to graciously ask for partnership in that accountability.



## Scott Degraffenreid

is a Social Network Analyst who brings a wealth of knowledge in the areas of business referrals, retention and recruiting

As a Behavioral Statistician and Social Network Analyst, he has participated in projects for over

one hundred organizations with accountabilities ranging from survey research, database analysis and field studies to research design and statistical modeling of group behaviors.

Scott's ability to assimilate and grasp intricate organizational issues as they relate to corporate and market dynamics allows him to bring a unique mathematical perspective to complex environments.

In projects for clients such as AMR, Bell Atlantic, Memorex Telex, The Associates, The Guardian, Erasmus, Inc., Teleservice Resources, the NORDAM Group and many others, Scott's innovative model of employee retention has:

- ♦ Reduced employee attrition by >50% in less than 90 days for most clients
- ♦ Improved overall customer retention >25% in less than 6 months.
- ♦ Trimmed recruiting costs by >75%.
- ♦ Dropped customer complaints by >50% in an operation handling 1.2 million customers per month.
- ♦ Decreased training attrition by 60%.

- ♦ Improved productivity in a diversified manufacturing operation by 30% in 1 year.

Scott's work on employee attrition has been nationally recognized and his concept of tenure equity has been acknowledged as one of the most important new business metrics in a decade. He has developed over twenty new processes, measurements and tools for addressing employee productivity and Enterprise Performance Planning. His Talent Scout recruiting strategy generates more than 50% of all new hires for the businesses that have adopted it.

Scott attended the University of Tulsa for a BS in Accounting. He has been a member of the American Statistical Association, The Society for Social Network Analysis, The American Association of Forensic Accountants and Mensa.

He currently resides in the Dallas, TX area and can be contacted through N2Millennials.com – N2Millennials, Inc.

<http://N2Millennials.com>

Do you employ Millennials?

Do you market to Millennials?

Does your church or organization want to connect with Millennials?

Do your older employees experience a conflict relationship with Millennial employees?

Would you like to create a productive, positive culture that increases customer satisfaction, keeps your best employees and leads to greater profitability?

N2Millennials Consulting Can Help!

1.360.830.6692

[scott@n2millennials.com](mailto:scott@n2millennials.com)

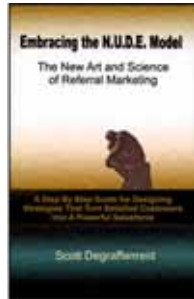


Also by Scott Degraffenreid



*Blazing A T.R.A.I.L. To Success:  
The New Art and Science of Acknowledgment*

*Embracing the N.U.D.E. Model:  
The New Art and Science of  
Referral Marketing*



<http://NecessaryMeasures.com>

<http://WeDidtheMath.com>

*Coming Soon: Authentic Trust:  
How Acknowledgment, Integrity  
and Collaboration Can Revolutionize  
Your Company or Organization*



*Supercharged Referrals*  
by Scott Degraffenreid and Kathryn Booth

<http://SuperChargedReferrals.com>

or

<http://BigBusinessZoo.com>

Would you like to promote your book, product or  
service with a promotional eBook like this?

[kb@bigbusinesszoo.com](mailto:kb@bigbusinesszoo.com)

*We are offering a special Advanced Report for parents, teachers, educators and employers of Millennials called "Getting Gamers" when you sign up for our newsletter.*

***Warning - This report may raise concerns if your children and teenagers play a lot of video games. We are in favor of video games, but this article reveals some information the video game industry does not want the general public to know about their testing and development process.***

During the course of Scott's research into what factors cause the behaviors in the Millennial Generation that differentiate it from previous generations, he was able to access some advanced reports from Video Game manufacturers. Having a hit game and keeping players going with a series of games can be highly profitable for developers. Gaming system companies also spend millions testing how players interact with their base units and accessories.

This research goes far beyond taking surveys from players about how they like the game, how long they play, what keeps them interested, how much they will pay for software, base units, accessories and subscriptions. This research involves monitoring heart rate, pleasure and stress hormone levels, body temperature and neural response rates. Players are even placed in functional MRI units to map out which areas of the brain are stimulated when they imagine playing the game in detail.

The goal is to create a gaming experience that keeps the player engaged for a substantial amount of time, provides enough challenge that they continue to play until they reach the highest level. Unlike a card game, chess game or sport, this is not just one win, but a long series of wins, losses and accumulation of credits, points, imaginary items and knowledge of how to beat each level.

Shortly after Scott did his research, access to infor-

mation about this research disappeared and he decided not to put it in the book. Many parents would be terrified if they understood the level of arousal, chemical and physiological responses and the brain "wiring" that are being stimulated and spread by these advanced games. Players are on some level "addicted" to the chemicals they are producing in their own brain and this needs to be understood and managed.

There are outcomes that are absolutely beyond what scientists ever thought could happen within the human brain. Millennials are training without even knowing it to solve complex problems, to simplify systems and create shortcuts and workarounds, to create flexible and powerful teams and social networks that solve problems together and to attenuate layers of details, spatial relationships and patterns older generations physically can't process.

*Gamers do not necessarily learn social skills, create family bonds or develop networks of support and guidance outside the game that are needed to fully function in the "real world". This disconnection can lead to discouragement, despair, withdrawal and suicide.*

*Millennials need the encouragement and support of older generations, especially parents and teachers and later from employers. They are not broken, they are operating on a different playing field but like every human, they crave connections, community and feeling like they can make a difference.*

*This generation is changing faster than previous generations and we encourage you to stay linked in to our newsletter. Scott is passionate about building bridges and creating positive understanding to displace the hostility and fear Millennials often face when they challenge the status quo.*

**Click here to go to sign up page which will redirect you to the .pdf report**

## ***N2Millennials Consulting Services***

Our consulting approach to Millennial issues in businesses of all sizes has taken a while to develop but we are now confident that the current process is well suited to the vast majority of engagements. Our name for this approach is RICE; that stands for Resolve, Innovate, Collaborate and Evolve.

When organizations are unprepared for the Millennial Mind shifts there are invariably issues to be resolved. The obvious first step is to clearly delineate those issues. The engineering axiom that "any problem well stated is half solved" absolutely applies here. Recognizing that old strategies and principles don't always mesh well with Millennial ways of thinking is the first step. Resolving any problems is relatively easy once the friction points are identified.

Innovation doesn't necessarily mean throwing out old look but it does mean challenging conventional wisdom and prevailing assumptions. Old answers seldom satisfy new questions. Innovation should not be confused with radical change however. In many instances small but counterintuitive adjustments can make a major difference. The willingness to start from a clean slate is often half the game. Millennials see this as a signal that simply fighting the status quo won't take all their time and energy.

Whatever you choose to do with Millennials will be faster and easier if you're willing to do it together. They are hard wired for collaboration! Inviting them into the process on the ground floor shows them you respect and trust them. They'll bend over backwards to show you that trust and respect is well placed and deserved. Their loyalty to teams is fast becoming the stuff of legend.

If a group of people works well together Millennials appreciate the chance to stay together. By the same token forcing them to stay on a team that doesn't mesh is like forcing a square peg into a round hole. Let them work things out for themselves to see how well things can work.

Most importantly be prepared to evolve. Evolution is about adapting to the environment and one thing Millennials understand is that the environment is constantly changing. What you got exactly right today may be the perfect recipe for wrong tomorrow. Be willing to adjust as needed. That doesn't mean drifting with the wind or shifting spastically in response to random events. Millennials respect situational awareness and your ability to recognize important patterns.

The RICE strategy is suitable for a wide range of settings. From large corporations to family businesses, from small families to mega churches and preschool to grad school Millennials need the space to prove themselves. An environment grounded in Resolution, Innovation, Collaboration and Evolution provides the opening for them to be engaged and accountable for everything they have to offer.

### ***For more information:***

<http://N2Millennials.com>

<http://WeDidtheMath.com>

Call our office: 360.830.6692

Email: [Scott@N2Millennials.com](mailto:Scott@N2Millennials.com)



## Specialized info for families, teachers and organizations that work with pre-teen Millennials

*Parenting At WARP Speed* will be coming out this summer from Patty O'Sullivan PhD. Her organization *Envision Your Future* made a tremendous impact in the school systems of Santa Fe NM, dealing with a skyrocketing suicide rate, gang violence, drugs, etc.

Where Scott's work on Millennials targets late teens and early to mid-twenties aged young adults, Dr Patty's work is directed at parents and teachers of pre-teen Millennials.

**Patty O'Sullivan, Ph.D.** is an award winning educator and the recipient of nine national awards for her documentaries. Dr. Patty, as the kids affectionately call her, spent 20 years as a Grey Nun of the Sacred Heart. Her gift for teaching and developing programs has extended far beyond the conventional classroom to the inner-city, to the migrant fields, to the chemically addicted, to Hollywood, to rural communities and with adjudicated youth.

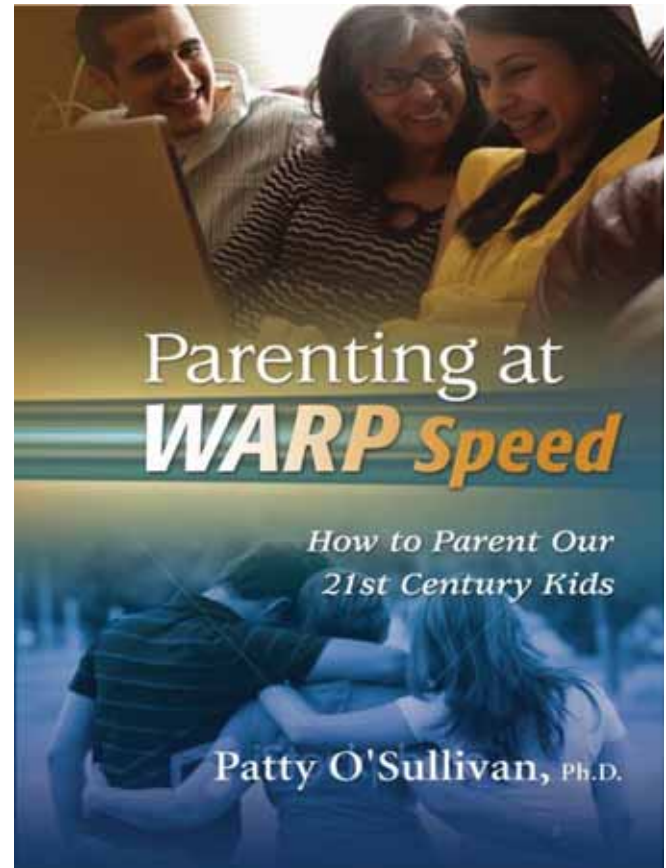


With her latest program, *Envision Your Future*, a non-clinical, positive youth development program, Dr. Patty is spreading a wide net to capture our youth in the excitement of their dreams and engage parents and significant adults in the process.

DrPatty@eyf4u.org

1-505-466-2944

<http://EnvisionYourFuture.org>



Visit [BigBusinessZoo.com](http://BigBusinessZoo.com)  
for a FREE Sample eBook

Sign up for BBZ newsletter to get updates  
and announcement on release of this  
practical, inspiring book.

## Parent's Desk - Your student accounts.

Beside each student's name displayed on the Parent's Desk, a number of icons allow you to select various options. These are:



### View homework

This is probably the icon you will use the most. Here you will see the list of courses your child is subscribed to, and can view the assignments for each course. In this view, you can:

#### View your student's assignments

A list of the student's courses and assignments is displayed. Select the date range you wish to see by clicking on **Current**, **Next 7 Days**, **Past 7 Days** or **All**, then click on each **Due Date** to see the assignment due on that day. You can print one or all of the assignments by clicking on the printer icons.

### Email a teacher



email teacher

Click the email icon beside the teacher's name to open your email program. (Not all teachers have opted for a yourhomework.com email address.)

### View a teacher's web page



teacher website

Click the web site icon beside the teacher's name. (Not all teachers maintain a yourhomework.com website.)



### School Calendar Events

Click the Calendar Events icon to display the events that have been entered for this student's school.



### Homework Help

Each teacher has the opportunity to maintain a list of 'Favorite Sites', which a student will see as 'Homework Help'. Clicking this icon will display the favorites list for the teachers of their assigned courses. Click the teacher's name to display the list.



Nobody is in favor of helicopter parenting. Millennials are often resistant to close oversight or supervision. That doesn't mean they never want or need parental support though. One of the very best online technologies ever developed for supporting K-12 students is *YourHomework.com*.

With over a million subscribers and almost 10 years, this is a proven solution. It's a free online service that encourages collaborative support between teachers, students and parents. It very effectively keeps parents in the loop but off their kids backs. Once signed up, teachers can keep parents abreast of assignments, tests and projects via e-mail.

No more finding out about homework that was due at breakfast the day it's supposed to be turned in. *YourHomework.com* cuts down on report card shock while helping build better study habits and discipline. Parents, teachers and even students have embraced *YourHomework.com* as a collaboration technology that really works. See more at *YourHomework.com*.

Sponsorships are available for businesses interested in supporting grassroots education. Contact us directly for further details at 1.360.830.6692



# Understanding the Millennial Mind: A Menace or Amazing?

Scott Degraffenreid

Even their own parents often don't understand Millennials! Discover the *real* reasons they act, think and work like they are on a different wavelength than any previous generation, *why they question absolutely everything* and how they are the key resource that can propel your company into higher productivity, profits and innovation.

## You'll Learn...

- ✍ What forces created the Millennial Generation's unique characteristics and behavior patterns?
- ✍ What motivates them?
- ✍ Have we reached a cultural and business "crisis point"?
- ✍ Why is employee turnover so high with Millennials and what can you do?
- ✍ How can strategies for dealing with Millennial Issues increase profitability and productivity, while making your company a "best places to work" culture for all your employees?
- ✍ How can these same strategies work in family and educational environments?
- ✍ Is it true that Millennials are "immune" to traditional marketing channels?
- ✍ What can you integrate into your marketing strategy to reach them?

## Testimonials

*"Millennials were so aggravating to me until I learned how to create winnable games for all of us!"* Cheri Knowles, VP Sales

*"Scott has the inside track on Millennials. He is keenly aware of their brand of brilliance and gives all of us (adults) new eyes to see how to cultivate the best in them. Scott's advocacy for Millennials in the workplace is a saving grace. He is a valued advisor for our positive youth development program, Envision Your Future."* Dr. Patty O'Sullivan, [www.envisionyourfuture.org](http://www.envisionyourfuture.org)

*"I shared this material with my two 'young adult' children. It has helped us to bond in ways I would have never imagined. I could not hold back the tears when I shared your views with them and let them know 'I get it now'. I am a better father because of this research."* Mark Lacasses

*"I hated the way my boss treated me at work, like I was retarded. Now I understand his perspective and it's much easier to find solutions that work for both of us!"* Brittany, a college graduate

N2Millennials Dallas, TX  
<http://N2Millennials.com>



Scott Degraffenreid is a researcher, consultant and Social Network Analyst. His work on Referral Marketing is based on complex mathematical analysis of behavior patterns translated into practical, effective and field proven models that produce measurable results.

More information and additional courses and materials can be found at: **N2Millennials Dallas, TX**  
<http://N2Millennials.com>



Coming Soon:

*"Authentic Trust - How Acknowledgment, Integrity and Collaboration Can Revolutionize Your Company or Organization"*

Promotional eBook "Understanding the Millennial Mind: A Menace Or Amazing?"

More free eBooks are available at:

