

Episode 103: Is there a 'generational gap'?

There are lots of different ways to divide up the people you work with. According to a great presentation and book I read recently, generations is one too. The book was 'Unlocking Generational Codes' by Anna Liotta published by AVIVA.

1. The Generations

The book outlines 6 generations although not all may be in your workplace.

- Born between 1900 and 1926 are the GIs
- Born between 1927 and 1945 are the traditionalists
- Born between 1946 and 1963 are the Baby Boomers
- Born between 1964 and 1979 are Generation X's
- Born between 1980 and 1999 are the Millennials or the Gen Y
- Born after 2000 are the Nexters

Each of these generations has different experiences and these guide their approach.

For some it was WWII, some are the kids of 'free love' and others grew up post 9/11.

Whatever it is, Liotta argues these events and others form and mold the era. Cusp babies may be a bit of both.

2. What are the CODES?

CODES is an pneumatic for the framework we use to make decisions.

That's: Communication, orientation, discipline, environment and success. To understand a generation you combine these.

There are no right and wrong approaches here – just different.

- ♦ Traditionalists look for historical facts and experiences, to repeat what has worked
- ♦ Boomers - the first MBAs will want analysis, they like data and respect process
- ♦ Gen Xers quickly want a solution that is clear and concise and then get on with it
- ♦ Millennials will want to know the latest and greatest, which is fun, and they can share.

3. Why does it matter?

The subtitle of the book - "Understanding what makes the generations tick and what ticks them off."

As we know, if you do not understand someone it can be hard to influence them.

His or her generation may be one key to unlocking someone you are struggling with.

My experience is that this is particularly important if you are skipping a generation.

Bottom line: You may think the approach of a different generation is wrong or even stupid but if you want to influence it, you often have to understand it first.

