

A Little More Tolerance, Please. . .

By Linda S. Thompson

“While researching mounds of material, I read page after page about the corporate brain drain (Boomers who are choosing to retire), and the lack of competent young people to replace them. We are being bombarded with news about the Boomers and retirement. On the other hand we’re also hearing all about Generation Y (those ‘kids’) who have no sense of work ethic, no respect for their elders, no sense of appropriate dress, and certainly no loyalty to their employers.



Perhaps it’s because I’m a Boomer who never really grew up, but I understand both sides of this picture. Generation Y, who in numbers almost rival the Boomers, are looking at the Boomers and Xers and saying, “My career will not be what defines me. I want to work, but as a means to live, not the other way around.”

Generation Ys have been told repeatedly by their parents that they can be anything they want and that they will be good at it. They see no rational justification for office hours being 8 AM to 5 PM, or crop pants and flip flops being inappropriate dress. Tattoos and nose rings are as normal to them as granny glasses and love beads were to their parents. Give them a Blackberry and a laptop and they’ll get the job done – but it may be while sitting on the beach or at the local Starbucks.

The disconnect, I believe, begins as each generation gets older and eventually replaces the one it follows. At some point, we all become our elders, i.e. our parents. Yes, it may hurt to read this, but don’t you Boomers remember your parents and their friends saying how the world would never be the same (and most certainly not better) because of protests, sit-ins, Woodstock? Aren’t you saying pretty much the same thing about the youth of today?

We elders just need to step back, remember what our lives were like when we were that age and have faith that it will all work out. These kids are different, and trust me, they aren’t about to conform to age-old societal expectations. They are marching to a different beat and that’s not going to change any time soon. Technology has offered them new choices – choices that we couldn’t even imagine at that age – and they are taking advantage of all that’s offered. But they will get the job done and if we’re not careful, we Boomers just might learn something from them. Now that’s a scary thought, isn’t it?

Linda Thompson is the author of *Planning for Tomorrow, Your Passport to a Confident Future*, a common sense approach to life planning; and *A Caregiver’s Journey, You Are Not Alone*, a survival guide for working caregivers. *Every Generation Needs a New Revolution, How Six Generations Across Nine Decades can Find Harmony and Peaceful Coexistence*, is Linda’s most recent book. Linda can be contacted through her web site at www.LifePathSolutions.biz .