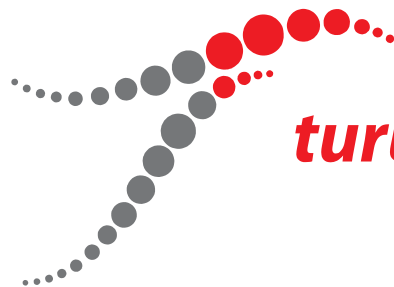**Joel A. DiGirolamo,** BSEE, MBA, MS Psychology

Connecting with the Millennials

A Study in Human Behavior

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Elements

The Millennial Paradigm

Human Personality Traits

Human Mammalian Traits

Mindfulness

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The Context

Nature vs. Nurture, Trait vs. State

Traits (Nature)

- Personality, Temperament
  - Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism
  - Thinking, Feeling, Reflective
- Physical Abilities
- Intelligence

State (Nurture)

- Effects of Culture, Family
- Effects of Experiences—Positive and Negative

In General, Neither Overpowers, However Trauma can Debilitate

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The Millennial Paradigm

Born Early 1980s to Early 2000s (10-30 Years Old Today)

Self-Esteem Preservation

- e.g. Basketball Score Differential
- Minimize Pain

Born with a Prolific Number of Ways to Distract Attention

- Smart Phones, Game Machines, Computers, Tablets

Distracted Attention vs. Flow

- Distractions are Tempting, Flow Becomes Difficult to Achieve

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Examples

1) What do you feel are the three greatest accomplishments in your life?

2) Who or what inspires you the most?

3) What is your age?

4) May I use this information and a photo of you as an example to small business owners?

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Amber B. Age 30

Bachelors Degree Debt-Free.
Owned a House at Age 21.
Finished a ½ Ironman.
Inspired by Susan Bradley Cox—
Mid-70s and Still "Kicks Her Butt,"
Completed Over 200 Triathlons.

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Alex E. Age 26

Bachelors Degree at Age 20.
Graduated Med. School Age 24.
Inspired by her bosses and anyone
doing difficult or kind things.

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Jessi M. Age 19

Solo Travel to NZ for 5 Months.

Solo Travel to Oz for 1 Month.

Inspired by Being a Part of the

Great Mystery of Life.

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Where Are These People Now?

Attended Woodstock

Burned Their Bra in the '60s
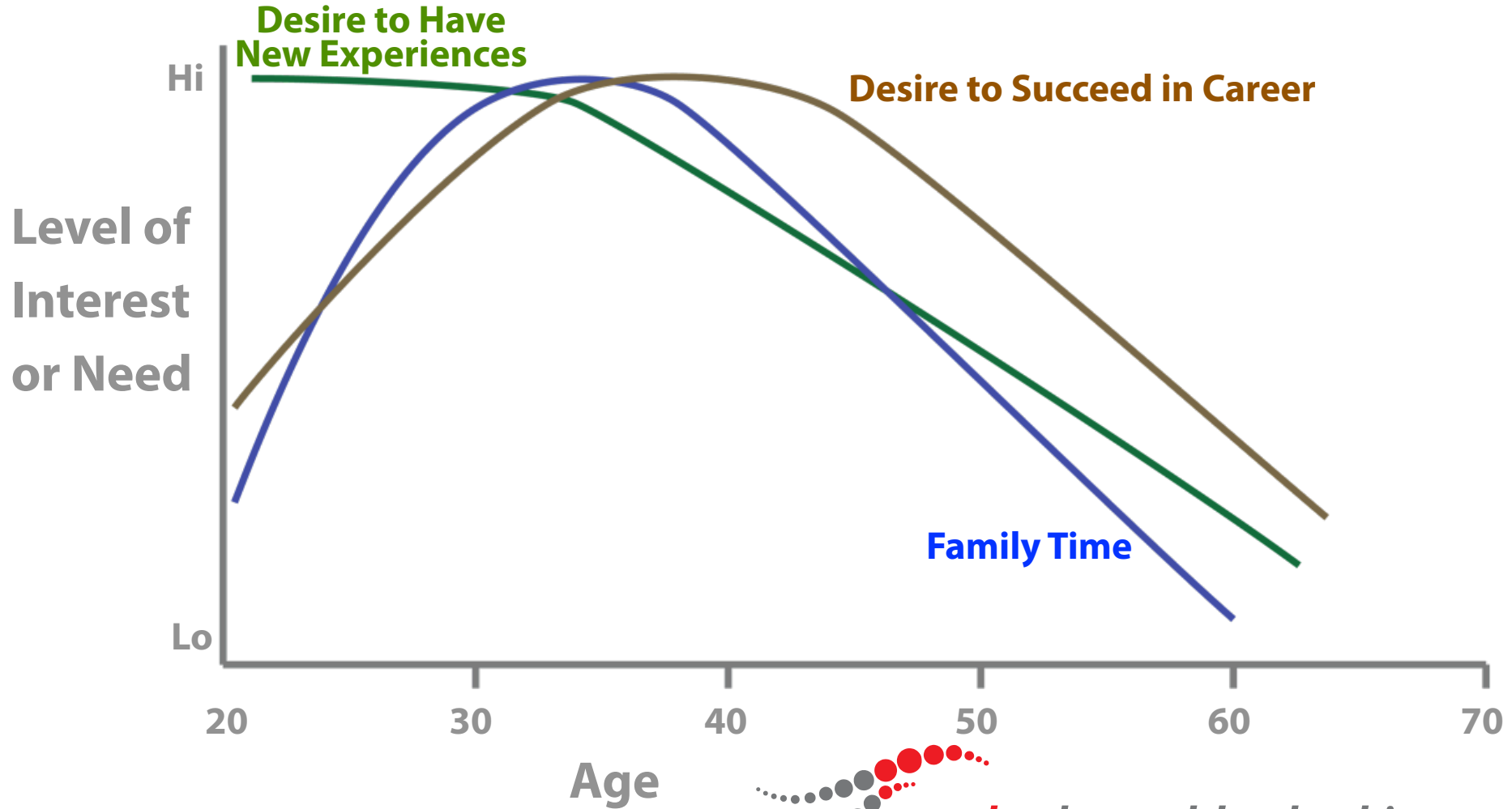
Attended a Sit-In Protest for the Vietnam War

Lived in Haight-Ashbury in the '60s

Drove a VW Micro-Bus Across the US

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Human Personality Traits: I

Openness to Experience

- Seeking and Tolerating New Experiences, Comfort with Unfamiliarity

Conscientiousness

- Motivation & Persistence Toward Goals

Extraversion

- Energy from Interaction

Five Factor Model

or

Big Five

Agreeableness

- Attitude Toward Other People

Neuroticism

- Emotional Stability

Source: Costa & McCrae 1987, 1992, 1995,

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Human Personality Traits: II

Humans Respond to Pain

- It's How We Learn

- How Do You Learn Good Judgment?

Humans are:

- Intrinsically Motivated

- Extrinsically Motivated

- Amotivated

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Mammalian Traits

Social Nature

- Use Social Connections to Gather Resources

- Use Social Connections to Protect Resources

Between-Group Competition

- In-Group vs. Out-Group

c.f. Crosier, Webster, Dillon 2012 and
Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood & Sherif 1961

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Social Connections

On Hunting Expeditions
On Gathering Expeditions

Around the
Campfire

In Coffee
Shops

On Social
Media

???
???

Time

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The Medium, Speed, Reach Has Changed

Verbal

Stone Etchings

Papyrus

Vellum

Cellulose or Cotton

Digital Virtual Media

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Mindfulness

Observing

- Noticing or Attending to Internal and External Experiences
  - Sensations, Emotions, Cognitions, Sounds, Sights, Smells

Describing

- Labeling Observed Experiences with Words

Acting with Awareness

- Remaining Present in the Moment Rather than on Automatic Pilot

Nonjudging

- Not Evaluating Emotions and Thoughts
  - Accepting Thoughts and Emotions as they Arise

Nonreactivity

- Allowing Thoughts and Feelings to Arise Without Being Swept Away or Consumed by Reactions to Them

Source: Baer, Samuel, Lykins 2011

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Mindfulness Enhances Relationships

Being "Present" for the Other Person

- Cell Phones on the Table

Engaging with the Other Person

- Active Listening

- Reflective Conversations

Sharing Emotions Productively

- Putting the Emotions into Words

- Reacting Appropriately to Emotions

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Generation Research

"Results from this study found few meaningful quantitative differences between generations. Millennial workers were more similar than different from other generations in their work beliefs, job values, and gender beliefs. Differences elicited in focus groups were more likely the result of experience, position, or age than generation."

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Generation Research

Jennifer Deal in *Retiring the Generation Gap*:

- "1. Fundamentally people want the same things, no matter what generation they are from."

- "2. You can work with (or manage) people from all generations effectively without becoming a contortionist, selling your soul on eBay, or pulling your hair out on a daily basis."

- "Most intergenerational conflict shares a common point of origin: the issue of clout-who has it, who wants it."

Source: Deal 2007; Winchell 2007

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Generation Research

"...older people (mostly Boomers) complain that younger people (mostly Millennials) are difficult to interact with, entitled, and overly service-focused... In fact, Boomers were described in remarkably similar terms when they were the same age... Older people today perceive younger people as using too much slang, having poor communication skills, and being difficult, entitled, and service focused. When these now older people were the age of Millennials today, previous generations used the same descriptors to characterize them. In short, there is a growing body of research indicating that the beliefs about whichever younger generation is entering the workforce has remained remarkably stable over the past 40 years."

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Generation Research

"...what you do not see in the literature is evidence of the types of sweeping differences in attitudes, orientations, and work ethic that populate the popular press. Are there generational differences in work attitudes? Probably, but the differences are not large enough to give us any confidence that the work environment is fundamentally affected by such differences."

"Millennials use technology differently than previous generations (as does every generation when compared with the previous generation)."

"Stereotypes in the popular press about differences in the work ethic of different generations (as measured by number of hours worked and work patterns) are not supported by the data."

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Generation Research

"While we may see generational differences crop up from time to time, there is more variability within a generation than there is between generations."

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Generation Research

"...this study provides real-life data and support for de-bunking some of the generational stereotypes created in the literature around individual preferences and motivational drivers. However, based on the results observed, two patterns do emerge that may be worth taking note of. First, the pattern of results suggests that managers may need to be prepared to manage a group of increasingly negative and possibly cynical employees, with each generation reporting themselves as less optimistic than the previous generation... Second, when managing a younger generation of employees, it may also be worth ensuring that their preferences for a cooperative and affiliative workplace are met. Irrespective of whether it relates to generational or age differences, the need to provide younger workers with challenges remains important."

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Generation Research

"While the results of the present study support the general hypothesis that there are generational differences in personality and motivational drivers among the generations, these differences are typically not in line with popular belief. In practical interpretation terms, these differences are almost negligible. More importantly, even where differences exist (even where there are moderate to large effect sizes), the direction of the differences is often contrary to the differences suggested in popular management literature."

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Generation Research

Motivation at Work is More About Managerial Level Than Generation

- Deal, Stawiski, Graves, Gentry, Weber, Ruderman 2013

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Putting This Together

Differences Due to Ubiquitous Technology (State)

Half of the Population Gathers Energy From Human Interaction

- The Other Half Still Wants to be Connected
- Ubiquitous Communication Devices are Tempting

Human Personality Traits:

- Openness → Learning, Gathering Information
- Have New Tools at Our Disposal

Maturity Brings Wisdom

Everyone Wants the Same Thing

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Why Text When 10' Away?

Don't Want to Engage Verbally

- Longer Conversation Verbally

- More Effort to Have a Long Conversation Via Text

Don't respect the person

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What You Can Do

Listen, Be Mindful, Engage

Find Each Person's Passion and Engage it in Your Workplace

- Build a Rapport

Provide Challenging Assignments

Illustrate the Growth Path in Your Organization

Emphasize Common Goals and Desires

- Shared Vision

Respect Everyone

Seek Clarity

Remember, Charismatic Leadership is...

- Building a Bond

- Sharing a Vision

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Types of Power

Reward Power

- Power to Give Rewards

Coercive Power

- Power to Mete Out a Punishment

Legitimate Power

- e.g., Accepting that the Man is the Ruler of Household

Reference Power

- Identification of Someone as having Power

Expert Power

- Perception of Knowledge or Expertise

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