

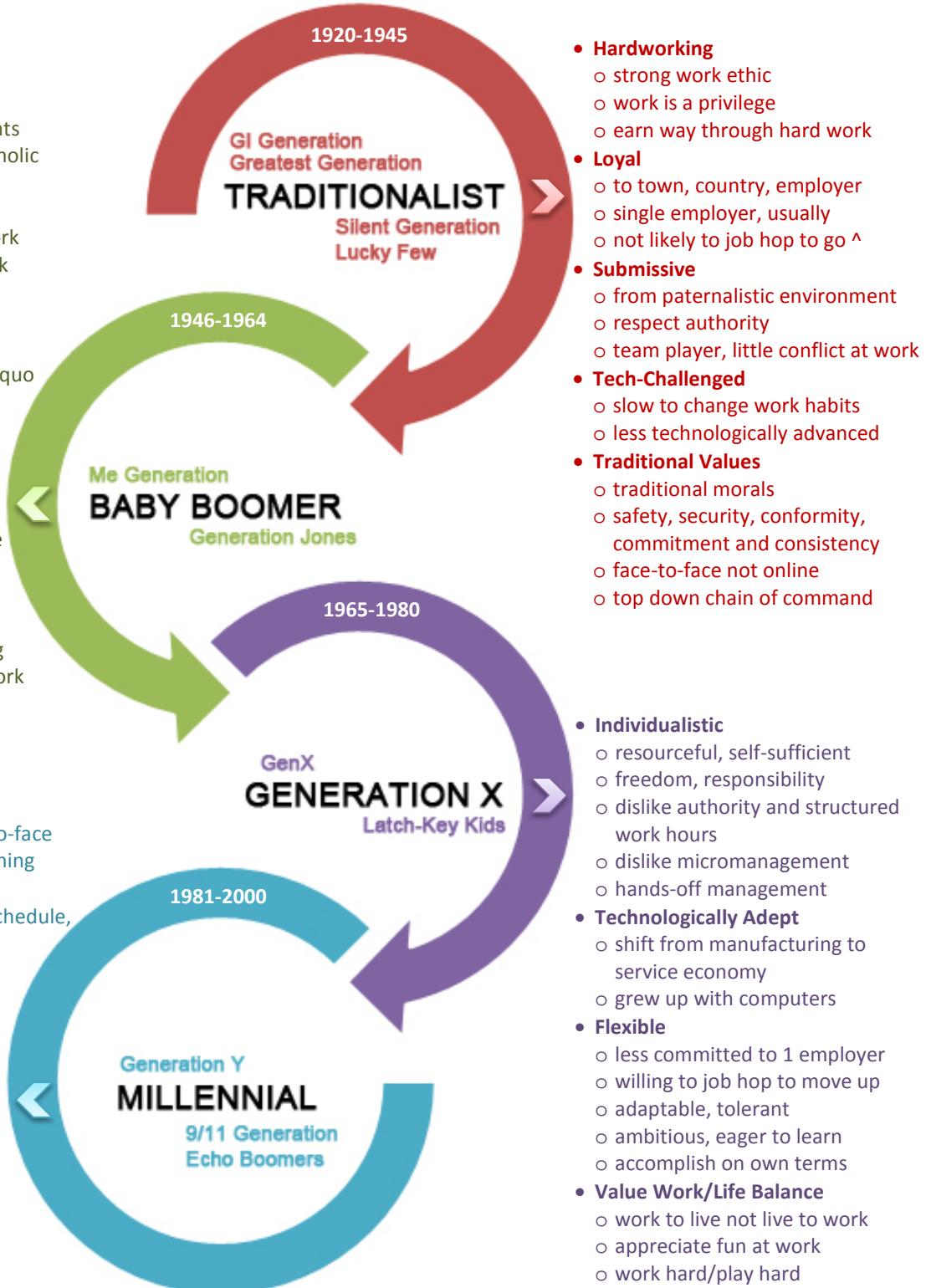


Generations at Work

A project of The Coaching Program, Bureau of the Fiscal Service, U.S. Treasury

Jennifer Johnston Crow

- **Work-Centric**
 - hardworking
 - position, perks, prestige
 - defined by accomplishments
 - sacrifice for career, workaholic
 - others need to pay dues, conform to overwork
 - may criticize for lack of work ethic, commitment to work
- **Independent**
 - confident, self-reliant
 - we can change the world
 - question authority, status quo
 - willing to challenge
- **Goal Oriented**
 - achievements are goals
 - dedicated, career-focused
 - seek fun, challenging tasks
 - strive to make a difference
- **Competitive**
 - clever, resources, win
 - hierarchy and rankism
 - flexibility trends are vexing
 - face to face not remote work
- **Tech Savvy**
 - plugged in 24/7
 - E-mail and text, not face-to-face
 - Online not traditional learning
- **Family-Centric**
 - trade \$ for time, flexible schedule, balanced lives
 - family 1st, work 2nd
- **Achievement Oriented**
 - confident, ambitious
 - expect much of employers
 - seek challenges
 - question authority
 - want meaningful work, solid learning curve
 - unsure what work means
- **Team Oriented**
 - Groups and teams rule
- **Attention Craving**
 - craves feedback, guidance
 - want kept in loop
 - need praise, reassurance





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There are two sub-sets of the Baby Boomer Generation:

1. save-the-world revolutionaries ('60s and '70s); and
2. party-hearty Yuppie career climbers ('70s/'80s).

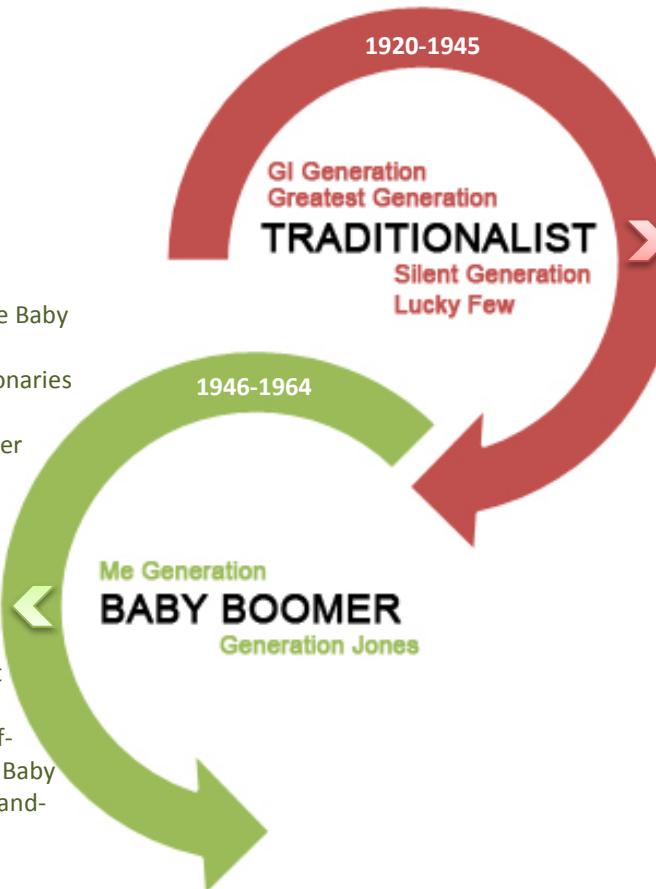
One of the largest generations (77 million), this "rock and roll generation" ushered in free love and societal non-violent protests that actually triggered violence. Often self-righteous and self-centered, Baby Boomers have a buy-it-now-and-use-credit mentality.

They're too busy for neighborly involvement yet they want to reset the common values for the good of all.

Even though their mothers were generally housewives, responsible for child rearing, boomer women began working outside the home in record numbers. It was the first generation with kids raised in two-income households where mom was not omnipresent.

The boomers were the first TV generation; the first divorce generation (divorce began to be accepted); and the first to begin accepting gays. They're optimistic, driven, and team-oriented, and see technology and innovation as requiring a learning process. Boomers are generally more positive about authority, hierachal structure, and tradition.

As they age, boomers are changing society almost incomprehensibly; it's the first generation to see "retirement" as enjoying life after the kids leave home. So, instead of sitting in a rocking chair, they skydive, exercise, and find hobbies, which add to their longevity. The American Youth Culture that began with them is now ending with them and their activism is beginning to re-emerge.



There aren't many traditionalists left at work now, but their stamp is all over it.

Traditionalists went through their formative years during an era of suffocating conformity, but also during the postwar happiness phase of peace, jobs, suburbs, TV, rock 'n' roll, cars, Playboy Magazine!

This Korean and Vietnam War generation also heard the first murmurs of civil rights.

It was the generation of pre-feminism. Women stayed home with the children and, if they worked, it was only in jobs as teachers, nurses or secretaries.

Men pledged their loyalty to the corporation. Once they got that job, they generally kept it for life. Traditionalists felt work was a privilege and that they earned their way through hard work. They weren't likely to job hop to move up in the business world.

Marriage was for life, and divorce or having children out of wedlock was unacceptable. The generation of traditional morals, they favored safety, security, commitment, consistency, and conformity. Theirs was a generation of common values and nearly absolute truths.

In grade school, the worst teacher complaints were about passing notes and chewing gum in class.

Traditionalists remain avid readers, especially newspapers. Emerging from the Big Band and swing music era, this generation is still disciplined, self-sacrificing, and cautious.

Although "retirement" to Traditionalists may mean spending their final days in peace in rocking chairs, this generation also has the richest, most free-spending retirees in history.



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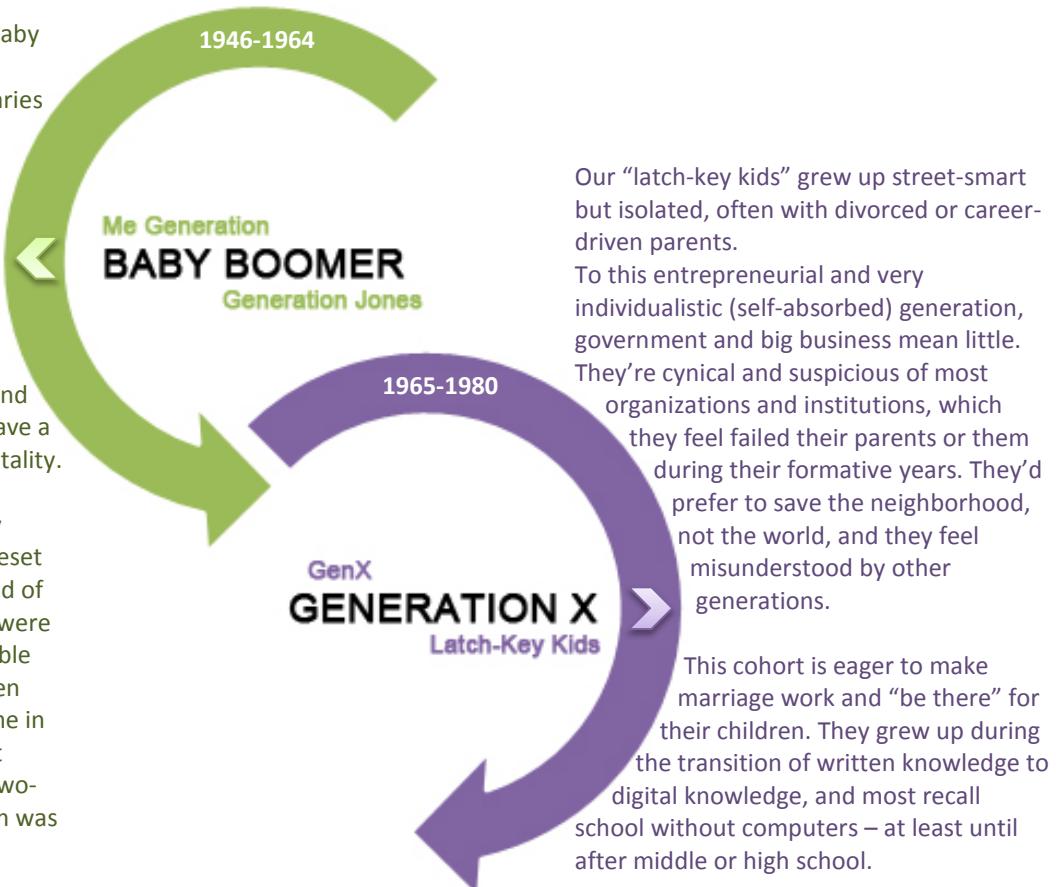
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Gen X wants a chance to learn, explore and make a contribution, and it tends to commit to self rather than an organization or career, changing careers 7 times on average. Normal is NOT working for a company their whole lives.

Generation X sees society and individuals as disposable, defined as they were by the AIDS crisis and the beginning of the obsession of individual rights over the common good (especially as applicable to any type of minority group).

Generation X was reared by career- and money-conscious Boomers amidst the societal disappointment over governmental authority and the Vietnam war, and problems in school were about drugs. Gen X is late to marry (after cohabitation) and quick to divorce – there are many single parents in this cohort. They're into labels and brand names and they want what they want and want it now ... but they struggle to buy, and most are deeply in credit card debt.

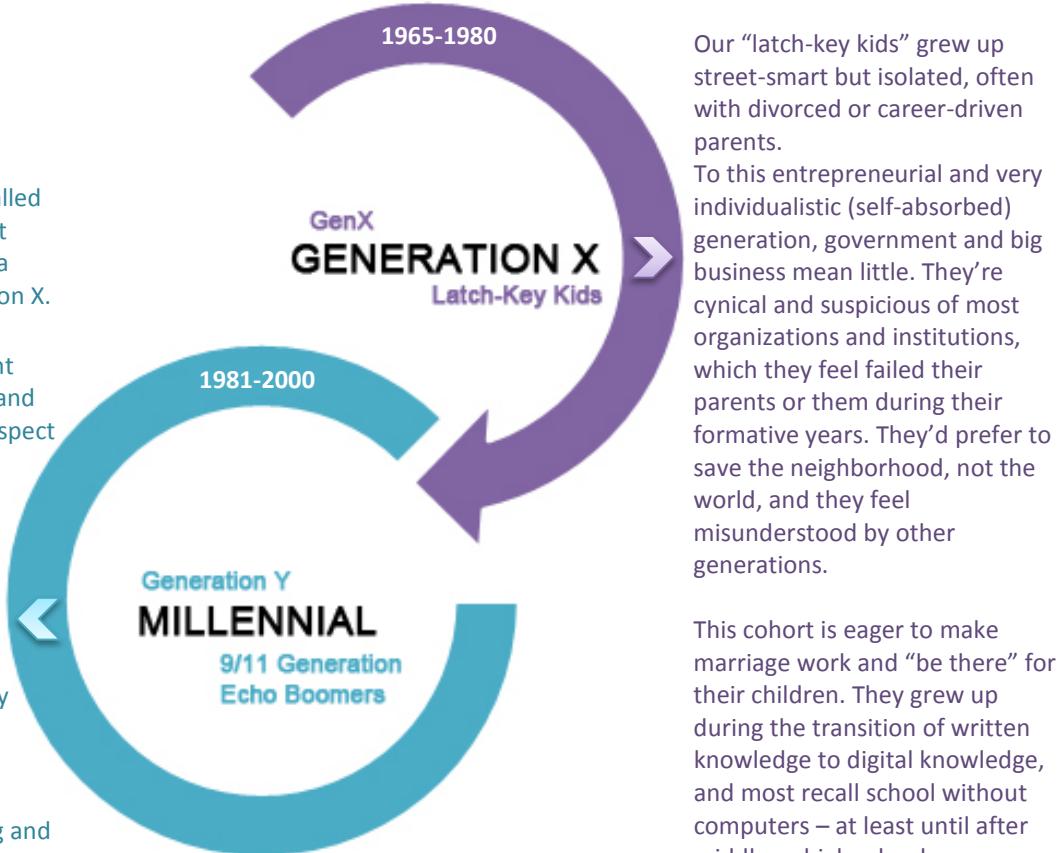
There is some concern that Generation X members are conversationally shallow because relating consists of shared time watching videos instead of previous generations.

Short on loyalty and wary of commitment, all values are relative to the Gen X: we must tolerate all peoples. This cohort is often cautious, skeptical, unimpressed with authority, and self-reliant.



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"The 9/11 Generation," also called the "Echo Boomers," is the next great generation, and it brings a sharp departure from Generation X.

They're nurtured by omnipresent parents and they're optimistic and focused. Consequently, they respect authority.

With this generation, crime rates are falling, as are teen pregnancy rates. But with school safety problems, they live with the thought they might be shot at school. So they learned very quickly that the world is not a safe place.

Millennials schedule everything and feel enormous academic pressure. Unlike Gen-Xers, Millennials actually feel like a generation and have great expectations for themselves.

This cohort prefers digital literacy – after all, they grew up in a digital environment and have never known a world without computers. They get all their information and most of their socialization from the Internet. This unlimited access to information leads to fairly assertive people with strong views. In fact, because they are so technologically savvy, they see the world as a 24/7 kind of place and want fast and immediate processing as a result.

They've been told over and over again that they're special, and as a result, they expect the world to treat them that way.

Millennials don't live to work; they prefer a more relaxed work environment with a lot of hand-holding and accolades. In fact, this generation is a little unsure about what "work" really is. But whatever it is, this group prefers working in teams, unlike the individual focus of the Generation X.

Our "latch-key kids" grew up street-smart but isolated, often with divorced or career-driven parents.

To this entrepreneurial and very individualistic (self-absorbed) generation, government and big business mean little. They're cynical and suspicious of most organizations and institutions, which they feel failed their parents or them during their formative years. They'd prefer to save the neighborhood, not the world, and they feel misunderstood by other generations.

This cohort is eager to make marriage work and "be there" for their children. They grew up during the transition of written knowledge to digital knowledge, and most recall school without computers – at least until after middle or high school.

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