

# **CROSS GENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION**

**Implications in the Barbershop  
Harmony Experience.**

# Learning Objectives

- ✱ Identify four generations in your barbershop chapter, and define them by experiences and events.
- ✱ Compare and contrast the values and the potential outcomes of generational interaction.
- ✱ Consider and identify potential problems for an organization when people from different generations fail to communicate effectively.
- ✱ Compare and identify differing feedback styles and their impact.
- ✱ Offer strategies for effective cross generational communication.

# Diversity a Broad Scope

- ✦ Diversity is sometimes defined as differences between individuals
- ✦ Part of our focus in a given situation or interaction depends on who we are
- ✦ Generational differences are one aspect of diversity

# Why Learn About The Generations?

- ✴ Changing demographics
- ✴ Better understand it's impact on our communications
- ✴ Increase personal competency in communication and leadership
- ✴ Promote teamwork



# Generations at Work

- ✦ Events and conditions we experience during our formative years help define who we are and how we view the world.
- ✦ The generation we grow up in is just one of the influences on adult behavior.



# The *real* differences in generations

## HIGH SCHOOL SWEETHEARTS IN "THE BIG STEP"

LET'S GET  
MARRIED  
FIRST



1950

LET'S GET  
STONED  
FIRST



1970

LET'S GET  
TESTED  
FIRST



1990

LET'S DO  
NATIONAL  
SERVICE  
FIRST



2010

# Did You Know?

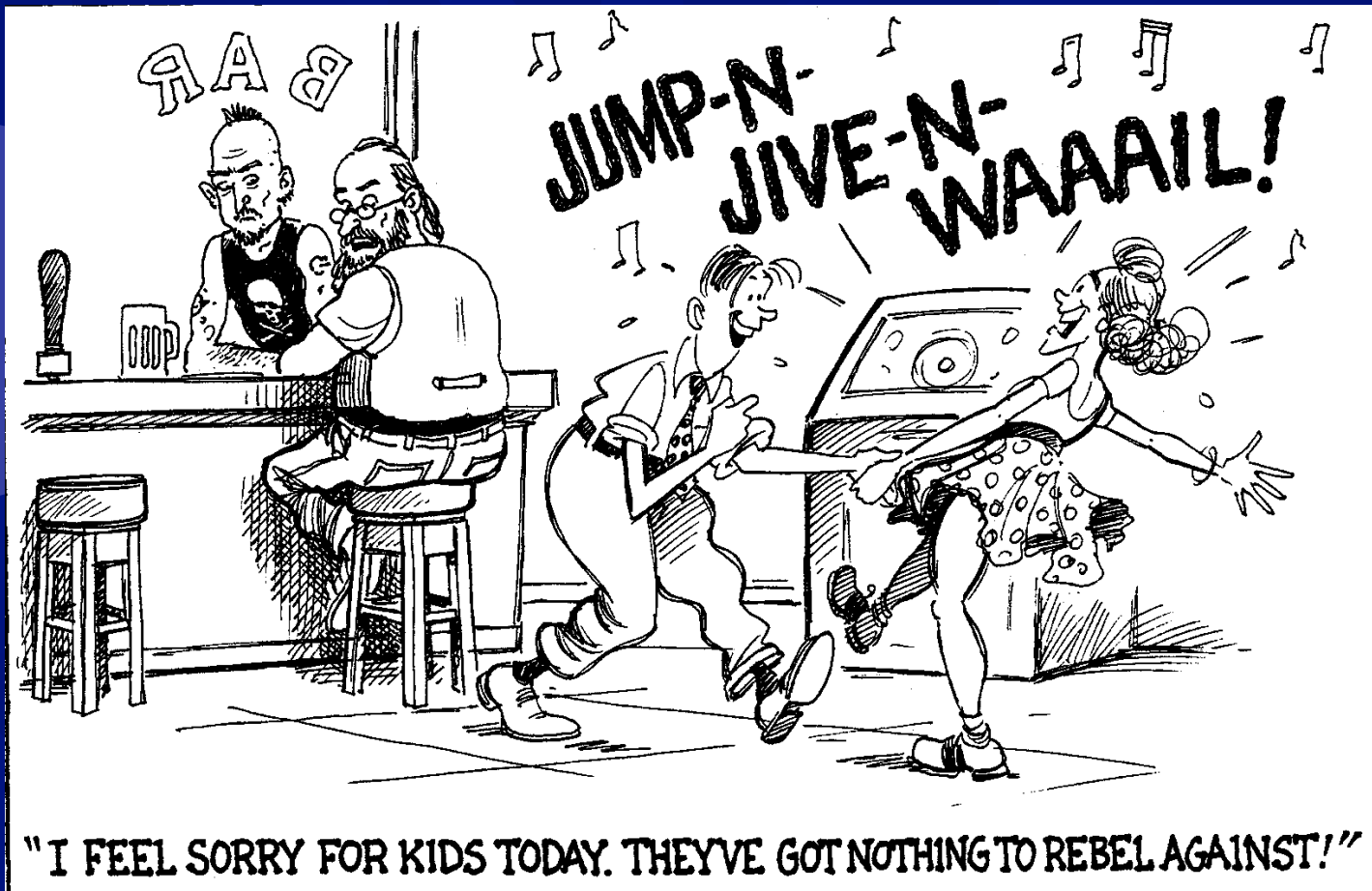
- 98.5% of Americans are too young to remember women voting for the first time;
- 86% don't remember the ending of World War II (in fact, 77% of Americans were born after 1945);
- 79% cannot recollect the 1954 Supreme Court ruling that began to outlaw racial segregation;
- 73% of Americans are too young to recall Russia's launching of Sputnik, the first manmade satellite;
- 68% cannot recall the assassination of President Kennedy;
- 48% cannot remember the 1974 Arab oil embargo against the U.S.; and
- 45% are too young to recollect the nation's Bicentennial (in fact, slightly less than one-third of Americans were born since that anniversary).

# Four Generations At Work

- ✱ Traditionalists (born 1922-1943)
- ✱ Baby Boomers (born 1943-1960)
- ✱ Generation X (born 1960-1980)
- ✱ Millennials (born 1980-2000)



# The importance of defining events



# Generational research – words of caution

- ✱ Lumping individuals into whole groups – risks of stereotyping
- ✱ Danger of “psychoanalyzing” whole generations
- ✱ Some of the differences – who cares!

# Events and Experiences

## Traditionalists:

- ✱ Great Depression
- ✱ New Deal
- ✱ World War II
- ✱ Korean War

## Boomers:

- ✱ Civil Rights
- ✱ Sexual Revolution
- ✱ Cold War
- ✱ Space travel
- ✱ Assassinations

# Events and Experiences

## Xers:

- ✱ Fall of Berlin Wall
- ✱ Watergate
- ✱ Women's Liberation
- ✱ Desert Storm
- ✱ Energy Crisis

## Millennials:

- ✱ School shootings
- ✱ Oklahoma City
- ✱ Technology
- ✱ Child focused world
- ✱ Clinton / Lewinsky

# Traditionalists 1922-1943

## Core values

- ✱ Keepers of the grail
- ✱ Dedication/sacrifice
- ✱ Hard work
- ✱ Conformity
- ✱ Law and order
- ✱ Honor
- ✱ Respect for Authority
- ✱ Patience
- ✱ Delayed reward
- ✱ Duty before pleasure
- ✱ Adherence to rules





# Boomers 1943-1960

“God knows many of them are fools  
and most of them will be sellouts, but  
they’ re a better generation than we  
are”

Lillian Hellman

# Boomers – core values

- ✱ Optimism
- ✱ Team orientation
- ✱ Personal gratification
- ✱ Health and wellness
- ✱ Personal growth
- ✱ Youth
- ✱ Work
- ✱ Involvement

# Gen-Xers 1960-1980

“It’s no wonder Xers are angst-ridden and rudderless. They feel America’s greatness has passed. They got to the cocktail party twenty minutes too late, and all that is left are those little wieners and a half-empty bottle of Zima”

From: Dennis Miller, *Rants*

# Gen-Xers – Core values

- ✱ Diversity
- ✱ Thinking globally
- ✱ Balance
- ✱ Technoliteracy
- ✱ Fun
- ✱ Informality
- ✱ Self-reliance
- ✱ Pragmatism



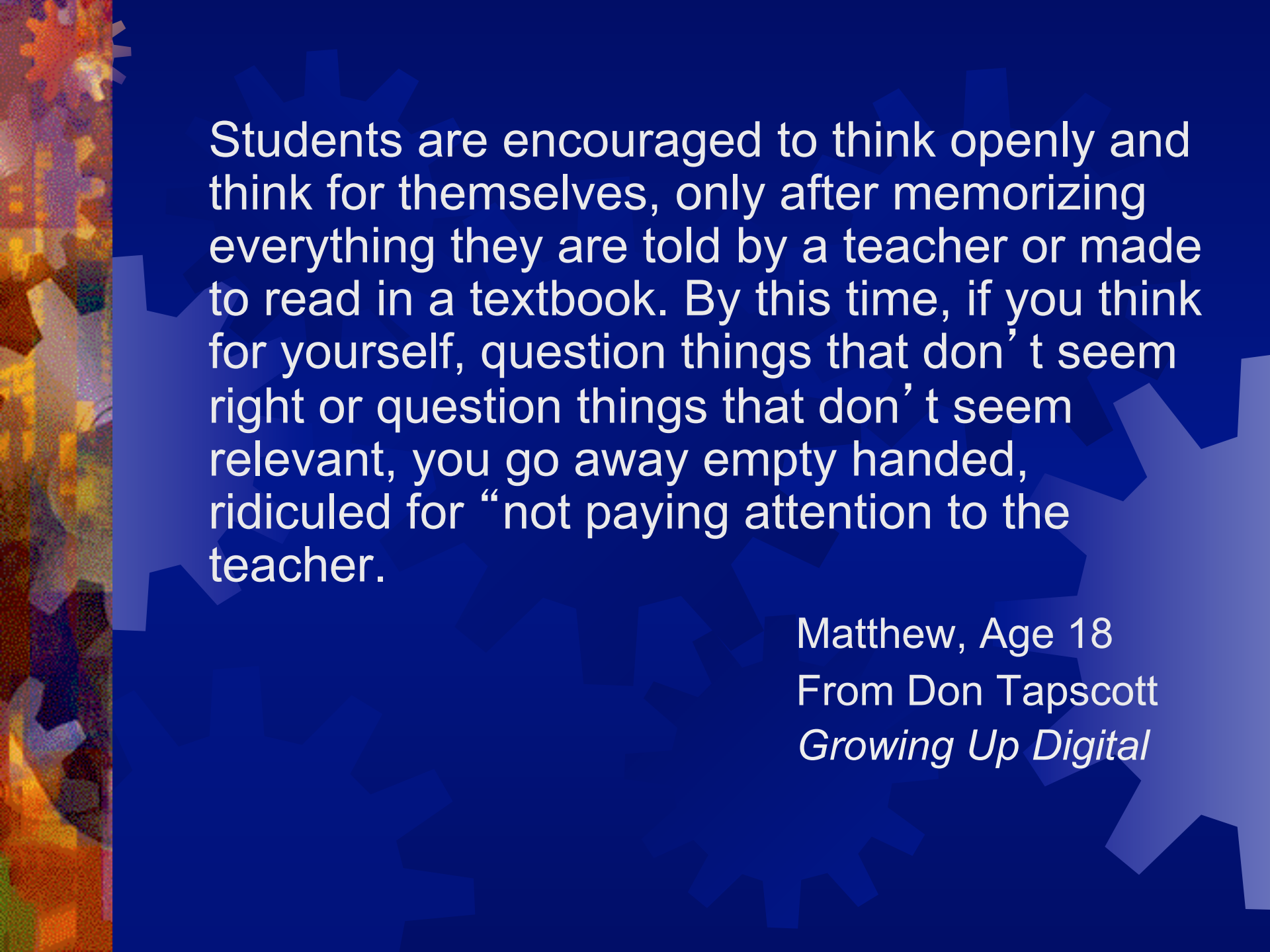
# Millennials 1980 - 2002

“Tech stuff is natural for me, it takes me a minute to set up a computer. It takes my parents an hour”

Ten year old

From Don Tapscott:  
*Growing Up Digital*





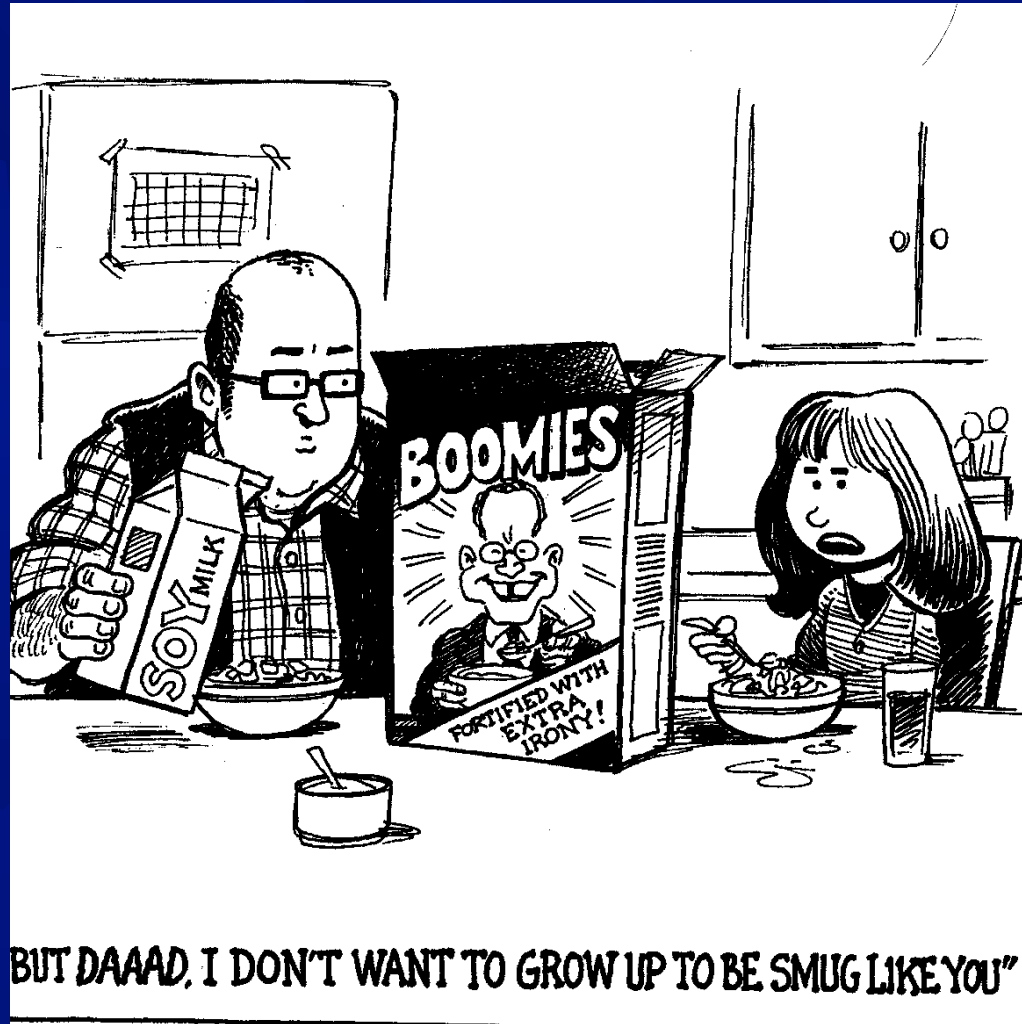
Students are encouraged to think openly and think for themselves, only after memorizing everything they are told by a teacher or made to read in a textbook. By this time, if you think for yourself, question things that don't seem right or question things that don't seem relevant, you go away empty handed, ridiculed for "not paying attention to the teacher."

Matthew, Age 18  
From Don Tapscott  
*Growing Up Digital*

# Millennials – Core values

- ✱ Optimism
- ✱ Civic duty
- ✱ Confidence
- ✱ Achievement
- ✱ Sociability
- ✱ Morality
- ✱ Street smarts
- ✱ Diversity

# Working across generational differences



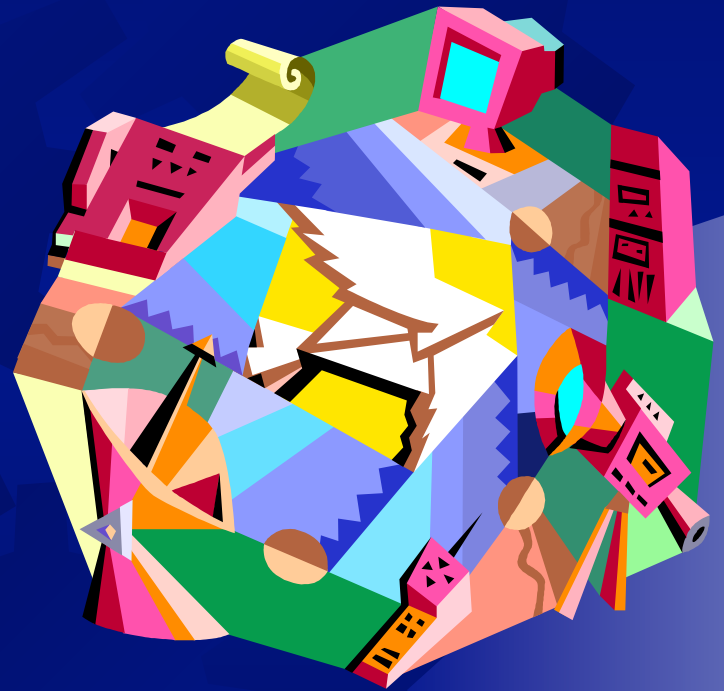
# Generational Interaction: An Example



Traditionalists and Boomers may have a tendency not to question or challenge authority or the status quo. This may cause confusion and resentment among the Xers and Millennials who have been taught to speak up.

# Generational Interaction: An Example

Xers and Millennials who have had different life experiences and communicate with people differently, may fail to actively listen to Boomers and Traditionalists thereby missing valuable information and guidance.





# When Generations Fail To Communicate

- ✱ May impact the ability to learn new music
- ✱ May impact the development of show planning
- ✱ May impact personal interactions
- ✱ May impact membership





# **Generational Feedback**

**Feedback style and form can be impacted by generational differences.**

# Generational Feedback

- ✱ Traditionalists – “No news is good news.”
- ✱ Boomers – “Feedback once a year and lots of documentation.”
- ✱ Xers – “Sorry to interrupt but how am I doing?”
- ✱ Millenials – “Feedback whenever I want it at the push of a button.”



# Feedback Style and Impact

Feedback styles that may appear informative and helpful to one generation might seem formal and “preachy” to another.

Feedback an Xer thinks is immediate and honest can seem hasty or even inappropriate to other generations.

Some older generations have been told that there is a time and place for feedback. Younger generations haven’t necessarily been taught this “rule.”

# Generational Meaning of Feedback

- ✱ Traditionalist seek no applause but appreciate a subtle acknowledgement that they have made a difference.
- ✱ Boomers are often giving feedback to others but seldom receiving, especially positive feedback.
- ✱ Xers need positive feedback to let them know they're on the right track.
- ✱ Millennials are use to praise and may mistake silence for disapproval. They need to know what they're doing right and what they're doing wrong.





# Valuing Differences

Information flows in all directions in a learning organization. The most successful leaders find a way to let every generation be heard. They recognize that no one has all the answers. This appreciation of diversity allows each group to contribute and be a part of the growth of a department or organization.

# Quiz

1. The events and conditions each of us experience during our formative years help define who we are and how we view the world.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
2. Which of the following most accurately identifies the four generations in the workplace?
  - a. Traditionalists, Boomers, Xers and Generationalsists.
  - b. Boomers, Traditionalists, Millennials and Socialists.
  - c. Traditionalists, Boomers, Xers and Millennials.
  - d. None of the above.
  
3. Communication across the generations has no impact on membership issues.
  - a. True
  - b. False

# Quiz

4. Feedback styles are fairly consistent from one generation to the next.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
5. Which of the following would you consider an accurate statement in leading an intergenerational chapter.
  - a. The most successful leaders find ways of letting different generations be heard.
  - b. Actively listening to members that represent different generations causes confusion and is unproductive.
  - c. Managing generational differences means avoiding conflict by controlling the way people speak out.
  - d. None of the above.

*( See following slides for correct answers )*

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# References

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