

Generational happiness

Some old sayings are old for a reason — they're true. Take "money can't buy happiness." Every generation puts family, friends and health far above money and wealth when discussing happiness. And while what drives individual happiness naturally varies from person to person, there are common themes of happiness within each generation. Have you ever wondered why your parents or grandparents value a long-standing relationship and loyalty while your children or grandchildren may put cool experiences above all? Or why Baby Boomers are so optimistic but refuse to relax? At the end of the day, if money can't buy happiness, what does provide happiness for each generation?

Traditionalist: born before 1946

Traditionalists have demonstrated fierce devotion in every facet of their lives: family, country and even beloved brands. They grew up in the aftermath of the Great Depression and are no strangers to sacrifice. Fiercely adhering to the "waste not, want not" mentality of the era, this generation often made do with very little. Once they began to prosper in the post-war economy, this generation stayed loyal to brands and companies they believed in. To this day, Traditionalists remain fiercely faithful to companies. They are not swayed by the gimmicky or latest and greatest products and gadgets.

What makes Traditionalists happy? — Loyalty

Relationships worth investing in: For Traditionalists, happiness means cultivating long-lasting, loyal relationships that will stand the test of time. They've spent a lifetime nourishing connections with friends and family, and continue to look for opportunities to impart their wisdom and values through stories, delighting in that unbreakable bond between their loved ones. As they enter their twilight years, they are devoting time to family and leaving their loved ones with a legacy of loyalty for generations to come. Traditionalists have proven that loyalty remains an essential fiber of their character; they happily give it and expect it in return. Take time to build relationships with this incredibly faithful generation. Not only will the Traditionalists in your life welcome it, but you may learn a thing or two along the way.



The Great Depression

While many Traditionalists did not live through the Great Depression, it made a deep impact on their lives. The economic hardships taught them how to squeeze the value out of every penny as their families adhered to the "waste not, want not" mentality.



Automobiles

Traditionalists came from an era when a family's loyalty identified with a car brand, being either a Ford family or a Chevy family.

Baby Boomer: 1946 – 1964

Boomers rode a roller coaster of change during their youth, witnessing the Vietnam War, the moon landing and the civil rights movement from their living room television set. Despite the dramatic ups and downs during their formative years, Boomers set out to create an impactful change of their own, pushing back against the status quo and raising their voices by protesting the war, picketing for peace and advocating for women's rights. Recognizing the value brought by their steadfast activism, Boomers forged on with an optimistic view of the future, and the change they could effect.

What makes Boomers happy? – Impact

We can (and will) change the world: For Baby Boomers, the key to fulfillment lies in making an impact. Boomers are setting aside money for their children's and grandchildren's futures. Donating to charities and important causes is another outlet that feeds Boomer spirits. Many are excitedly embracing the new trend of global "voluntourism" trips, which blends giving back with traveling the world. Either way, it seems Boomers' happiness meters are at their highest when they know they're leaving their stamp on the world.



Women's rights movement

The women's rights movement broke down barriers in workplace inequality and shed light on topics like sexuality and reproductive rights. Under the leadership of Gloria Steinem and Germaine Greer, Boomers were determined to make changes in everyday life.



Civil rights movement

Actions from Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks and the March on Washington showed how this generation pushed for and gained racial equality. In their youth, Boomers witnessed the impact they could make and they want to continue putting their stamp on the world.

Generation X: 1965 – 1979

As a generation that grew up when the divorce rate tripled and moms went to work en masse, Gen Xers were brought up to fend for themselves and became independent at a very young age. Lifelong proponents of "If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself," their independent spirit became an important part of the Xer adult identity. They also grew up in a time when trusted institutions were falling apart. Amidst 24-hour news coverage, Xers watched scandal after scandal unfold - Watergate, Iran-Contra, the Savings & Loan crisis. As a result, they became leery of institutions and armed themselves with a protective shield of skepticism, self-reliance and independence.



24-hour media

Founded in 1980, CNN was the first television channel to provide 24-hour news coverage. Xers watched live as many institutions were called into question by 24-hour news.

What makes Gen Xers happy? — Autonomy

I do what I want: Autonomy is the Xer sweet spot - it is most authentic, natural and gratifying for this generation to thrive in self-sufficiency. Whether it's in the workplace, at home or anywhere in between, the last thing Xers want to feel is trapped by anything or anyone. The ultimate happiness is gained in autonomy. It's found by carving out the freedom to do whatever they choose with their time, whether that means spending time with their children, hanging out with friends, or pursuing personal hobbies. The next time the Xer in your life insists on researching how to fix the faucet instead of calling a plumber, realize their independent nature is calling. Remember to give them the freedom they crave or better yet, join them on the ride.



Latchkey kids

Xers earned this nickname by coming home after school to an empty house. They became independent, learning how to manage their own time – doing homework, watching TV and cooking their dinner. Today, Xers continue to appreciate the autonomy they grew up with.

Millennial: 1980 – 1995

For Millennial kids born in the 80s and early 90s, some of the most beloved after-school activities included spending hours avoiding typhoid fever in *The Oregon Trail* or chatting in acronyms on AOL Instant Messenger. But technology didn't stop there. It has become an ever-evolving fixture in the lives of Millennials. For instance, social media has given Millennials a unique real-time view of their friend's lives and experiences, giving them an insatiable hunger for new adventures. What's more, access to the rest of the world is literally in the palm of their hands via smartphones.

What makes Millennials happy? — Experiences

Forget Prada, bring on Peru: For Millennials, happiness and experiences go hand-in-hand. Whether it's a local music festival or a global, multicultural excursion, Millennials are believers in the "experience economy." They gain satisfaction through experiences, rather than things. Their #YOLO (You Only Live Once) motto inspires them to make the most of today, and that doesn't mean a fancy car, but doing something interesting. As Millennials enter their prime earning years, their insatiable craving to find happiness through the experiential doesn't show any signs of slowing down. While it's easy to think of this generation as a bunch of kids who just want to have fun, embrace and inquire about their love of experiences - and don't expect them to slow down just because they're growing up.



Computer games

Originally designed to teach school children about pioneer life, *The Oregon Trail* became a favorite computer game among Millennials. They were the first generation to receive virtual education from an early age.



Social media

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Generation Edge: born after 1995

Gen Edgers are young and under the researcher's eye; it isn't certain what will define their happiness. Observations indicate they are self-reliant, resourceful and enjoy learning how to conquer new things.

What appears to make Gen Edgers happy? — Learning

Seventy percent of Gen Edgers watch more than two hours of YouTube content each day¹, making it the favorite website for this generation.² What are they watching? They're filling those hours with DIY content, personal video blogs and social commentary. In fact, many Edgers are taking advantage of free online content to teach themselves how to write code, how to change a car's oil and everything in between. So, the next time you see Edgers staring at a screen, don't assume they're just watching a funny cat video, they may be doing what seems to make them happy - learning.



Video-sharing

YouTube is the largest video sharing service and #1 social media platform among Edgers.¹ From web series to DIY tutorials, resourceful and self-reliant Edgers are taking advantage of free online content to teach themselves everything from a new language to how to change a tire.



Social media

Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Spotify - Gen Edgers live in a 24/7 social media world, and it's shaping every aspect of their lives. They use social media platforms to keep in touch with family and friends, gather information, share what is important to them and to connect with friends from around the globe.

While money certainly doesn't equate to happiness, for each generation, it represents a way to invest in the things that matter most. Loyalty. Impact. Autonomy. Experiences. Learning. As the generations move through different life stages, they will continue defining their parameters for what living a joyful, happy life looks like.

GENLINKSM

For each generation, there are unique events and conditions that form a generational personality. This difference in personality can lead to a generation gap when two age groups see the world from significantly different perspectives. GenLink, a program offered by Ivy Investments, is designed to BRIDGE THE GAPSM between the generations and provide helpful tools for you to use in conversations with family members, friends and colleagues.

¹ Market Wired. (2015, March 30). Deep Focus' Cassandra Report: Gen Z Uncovers Massive Attitude Shift Toward Money, Work and Communication Preferences. [Press release].

² eMarketer. (2014, February 24). Teens Press Play on YouTube.

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