



# INSIDE JOBS

COACHING COMPANY

Focusing on Your Success

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Welcome to *FOCUSING ON YOUR SUCCESS*, the newsletter for [Inside Jobs Coaching Company](#)

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### Favorite Quotes

"Every generation laughs at the "old fashion", but follows religiously the new." – Henry David Thoreau

"If you want happiness for a lifetime, help the next generation." Chinese Proverb

"Every generation needs a new revolution." Thomas Jefferson

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### What Generation Gap?

Mike, the owner of a small company, is frustrated with Josh, their IT person. Josh's job is to maintain the company's website and do their social networking, which is a big part of their marketing. Mike says that Josh is a 35-year-old single father who does his job well, but is always late for work and finds many excuses to leave the office during the day.

Josh often has to take his son to sports practice, or go get him at school when he's not feeling well. He also seems to find other reasons to be out of the office, and it's driving Mike crazy. Mike has had repeated conversations with Josh about his tardiness and absences, and is angry that he doesn't seem to respect the work hours the rest of the staff follows.

It occurred to me that what might be happening here is an example of the generation gap. I mentioned this to Mike, who wasn't familiar with the concept, so I explained that America's workforce is currently made up of three groups:

- The **Baby Boomer** generation is the largest of these groups, and consists of people born between 1946 and 1964, so most are at least 50 years old.

- **Generation X** is the smallest group, and these people were born between 1965 and 1980. Gen Xers are between 31 and 47 years old.
- **Millennials/Generation Y** people were born after 1980 and are in their twenties.

Each generation has its own culture, values and beliefs, which can cause problems in the workplace if the situation isn't identified and addressed for what it is.

At 61, Mike is a **Baby Boomer**. He was born in 1955 and raised by parents who lived through the Great Depression and World War II. When Mike was a child, value was put on getting and keeping a good job, and showing loyalty to the employer in return for the employer's loyalty to the worker. The goal was to have a good, long-term job that would provide income for the family, so employees often worked 60+ hours a week. Emphasis was placed on status, advancement, titles and money.

Members of **Generation X**, on the other hand, watched their parents spend all their time and energy at work, often sacrificing time they could have spent with loved ones or on self-care. They watched their parents deal with work stress, health issues from lack of taking care of themselves, and absence from family events. As a result, Gen Xers are more focused on creating a work/life balance. They will work hard and do a good job, but not at the expense of their quality of life. They've decided that the 60-hour workweek is unhealthy and not much fun, so they don't want to do it. However, they are willing to work hard, do a good job, and give their all for 40 or fewer hours a week. They also want flexible hours, and are happiest if they have a job that can be done away from the office and at odd hours of the day. They will work hard for their employer and get the job done well, in their own way.

Finally, **Millennial** folks are more technology savvy and focused on instant gratification than the other two. They use technology (email, texting) to carry on relationships, so feel less of a need to physically see or hear each other. Gen Y doesn't understand the Baby Boomer emphasis on face-to-face interaction. This group also wants very flexible work schedules, life balance and the best in technology.

As we talked Mike began to see that Josh's attitude isn't about being contrary or fighting for control. Rather, Josh is a typical Gen Xer, who is willing to do a good job, but wants to do it in a time frame and at a location that works for him and his family.

Fortunately, Josh's job is mostly technology based, so it's possible for him to do it anywhere he has his laptop computer. Mike realized that it isn't really necessary for Josh to be in his office from 8:30 – 5:00 every day. As long as he comes in when they have meetings or his physical presence is required, he can be just as effective working late in the evening at home.

As Mike thought about the generational differences he was able to identify other Gen Xers, including his own children, who exemplify their generation's attitudes and behaviors. He mentioned that his son was offered two jobs, and took the one that paid less but offered

more flexible hours. And Mike recalled that his niece, a grant writer, works from her home office and does her best work after her kids have gone to bed.

Understanding Josh's values and behavior gave Mike a new perspective on the situation. He realized that Josh isn't being disrespectful or trying to skip out on his work. He is actually a good employee who just approaches his job differently than Mike expected.

With this new awareness Mike is now able to work with Josh on creating a schedule that meets both their needs.

It's something to think about.

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### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS – Let It Be

In the past couple of months several people I love have had to deal with some thing major in their lives. Some are experiencing fun, good things, while others are confronted with huge challenges. All of these dramas are slowly unfolding.

Since I'm such a caretaker, my first inclination is to jump into these situations and start organizing or fixing them. Taking charge to move things along in the way I think it should be handled.

However, the reality is that none of these situations are mine to solve. They do not directly impact my life, and I have no authority, responsibility or right to do anything more than be a support person. Also, the people involved are all very capable and competent folks, who do fine at running their own lives.

I was chomping at the bit about my inability to get in the middle of each person's drama, when I heard the Beatles song, **Let It Be**. I really listened to the words, and realized it was speaking to me.

The wisdom of the song is to sit still, leave things alone and allow them to unfold in their own way and time. As it says, "there will be an answer". Since I'm not part of the answer there is nothing for me to do. I have to just "let it be."

I welcome any and all comments and suggestions. You can contact me to comment on this newsletter, or for information on Coaching for yourself or your staff, by emailing us at [sandy@insidejobscoach.com](mailto:sandy@insidejobscoach.com) or calling us at 1-541-772-3470. You may also visit our website at [www.insidejobscoach.com](http://www.insidejobscoach.com) for more information.

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