

The Process of Connecting our Generations

As we work with our members, potential members, and others in our community outreach, we mostly likely will be working with people of all generations. The following profile of each generation may provide much-needed insight in better understanding, valuing, recruiting and working with others to accomplish our mutual goals through the idealism of youth, our shared passions, and the wisdom of seniors.

This resource can be used as a conversation piece within the branch to: (1) discuss the opportunities and challenges of connecting with people in each of the three life stages; and (2) identify strategies leaders can use in leveraging the strengths of members and prospective members to create and maintain a dynamic, collaborative organization to energize our branch, state, and national initiatives.

Early Adulthood (20s & 30s)

Characteristics:

- Healthiest Time of Life
- Transition from home to self-sufficiency
- Choosing a life's work/partner
- Loneliest, disorganized period of life span
- Line between childhood & adulthood if fuzzier

Societal Impact:

- Technology; Social Networking
- Ethnic and Multicultural America
- Oversexualization of Women

Strengths:

- Technology Skills
- Mentoring/Connecting with Other Women
- Global World View
- Problem Solvers; Calculated Risk Takers

Critical Perceptions:

- Big Ambition: No Perseverance
- Unable to Handle Criticism; "Just Quit"
- Naïve about Gender Barriers
- Don't Dress for Success
- Demand Flexibility

Mid Life Stage (40s & 50s)

Characteristics:

- Family Changes (Empty Nest, Aging Parents)
- Reassessing Roles (Traditional vs. Career)
- Menopause

Societal Impact:

- Title IX
- Landmark Law Suits
- "The Mommy Track" and Opting Out" late 80s)

Strengths:

- Diplomacy
- Assertive
- Comfortable in their own skin

Critical Perceptions:

- Separate themselves from trailblazing older sisters
- Reluctant to Lead Change
- Believe they're smarter, Savvier than older sisters
- Questions Authority
- Adventurous; Risk Takers

Mature Adulthood (60s – 80s)

Characteristics:

- Seeds Planted in earlier stages of life come to fruition
- Key to successful aging – capacity to give back
- Nurturing/caring for future generations
- Teaching, Referring, Coaching and Mentoring

Societal Impact:

- The Civil Rights Movement
- The Women’s Movement
- The Pill and Roe. Vs. Wade
- World War II

Strengths:

- Dress to Impress
- Sense of Sisterhood
- Desire to Give Back
- Desire Responsibility
- Cautious

Critical Perceptions:

- Not Team Players
- Too Tough
- Not Supportive of Work/Life Balance
- Sacrifice/Hard Work/Save

(1) ATTRACT ----- (2) JOIN ----- (3) ENGAGE ----- (4) TRANSITION (Who?) (Why?) (How?) (When?)
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- 1. Pick one of the four steps above, and discuss the opportunities/challenges of connecting with wo/men that are in one of the three life stages.**
- 2. Identify the strategies AAUW leaders could use in leveraging the strengths of their current and prospective members to create and maintain a dynamic, collaborative organization.**