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Introduction

A generation gap is commonly perceived to refer to differences between generations that cause conflict and complicate communication, creating a "gap."

Word maven William Safire provides this more positive definition: "Generation gap can be a frustrating lack of communication between young and old or a useful stretch of time that separates cultures within a society, allowing them to develop their own character."

From their position in the family, and with more life experience than younger family members, grandparents are uniquely poised to see that differences between generations can be positive for all those concerned.

Although there have always been differences between the generations, the drastic differences that the term implies were not much in evidence until the twentieth century. Before that time, society was not very mobile. Young people typically lived near their extended families, worshiped in their childhood churches, and often worked on the family farm or in a family business.

With the advent of television and movies, young people were exposed to cultural influences alien to their own families and cultures. Performers like Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, and James Dean won adulation from the younger generation but were often met with derogation from the older generation. Then came the 1960s, and civil rights and the Vietnam War a more serious chasm between young and old.

The generation gap that was so in evidence during the 60s has resurfaced, but it is not the disruptive force that it was during the Vietnam era, a 2009 study suggests. The Pew Research Center study found that 79% of Americans see major differences between younger and older adults in the way they look at the world. In 1969, a Gallup Poll found that a smaller percentage, 74%, perceived major differences.

Today, however, although more Americans see generational differences, most do not see them as divisive. That is partly because of the areas of difference. The top areas of

disagreement between young and old, according to the Pew Research Study, are the use of technology and taste in music. Grandparents are likely to have observed these differences in their grandchildren who are tweens, teens, and young adults.

Slightly behind these areas of difference are listed the following:

- Work ethic
- Moral values
- Respect for others
- Political views

Reasons for generation gap

1. Effect of Technology

The growing technology can also be thought to affect family relationship and could be the major reasons for conflicts. Internet has attracted a lot of attention which has raised several questions like inequality, access, the

quality of the content, the implication of internet and new technology on children's educational and social development. It has been seen over many debates and policies that in management and distribution of internet, children and youngsters are regarded with ambivalence. Being considered both as the "digital generation" in online competencies but also very vulnerable and potentially at risk. It has been observed that the older generation also seem to share this quality of ambivalence especially as their children get more expert with handling new technologies and internet. So, overall parents are positive about the educational prospects

provided through new technologies but are at the same time concerned about the negative prospects of technologies and internet. Though many of these new technologies which come with both opportunities

or risks are not new to the society but its effect is more widespread and immediate, especially for teenagers and younger generations.

2. Different Perceptions of Relationships

It is evident that parents and their teenage children may evaluate their relationship with each other in different ways. Through some studies we may be able to account for the reasons behind this. A study was done which investigated and compared the perceptions of intergenerational solidarity among 2590 adult child/older parent dyads from the national survey of families and households. This study indicated that there is a high degree of disagreement on how parents and their children view their relationship. It was observed that parents usually reported better relationship quality whereas the children reported better contact and exchanges of assistance, but not as positive relationship quality as stated by their parents. The variables found to influence the correspondence between the two generations were age, child's marital status, gender and residential proximity.

1. Lack of communication

The study showed that lack of communication is one of the major reasons for generation gap. Parents are highly pressurized to strike a balance between work and family, though they do it to earn a better living for their children but they forget that this costs them the time with their children. Most of their time is spent on heavy work load and stress in the work place. On the other hand, children do not share their school life and everyday events with their parents, which on the whole leads to parents making huge sacrifices to earn a living but the children are being neglected at the same time, this causes communication barriers in the family and adds to generation gap.

Conclusion

How to Bridge the Gap?

As we all know there is no stronger bond than that of a kid and his parents. Thus, we must understand its importance and handle it with care. Nowadays, it is very disheartening to see that these precious relationships are getting strained due to a generation gap.

In other words, just because there is a difference of opinion does not mean that people give up on relationships. It is high time both parties understand that no one is completely right or wrong. They can both reach a middle ground and sort it out. Acceptance and understanding are the keys here.

Moreover, there must be a friendly relationship between parents and kids. The kids must be given the space to express themselves freely without the fear of traditional thinking. Likewise, the children must trust their parents enough to indulge them in their lives.

Most importantly, there is a need to set boundaries between the two parties. Instead of debating, it is better to understand the point of view. This will result in great communication and both will be happy irrespective of the generation gap.

In short, a generation gap happens due to the constant changes in the world. While we may not stop the evolvement of the world, we can strengthen the bond and bridge the gap it creates. Each person must respect everyone for their individuality rather than fitting them into a box they believe to be right.

The key to preventing generational tension is remembering that everyone wants to feel valued.

List of sources

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