

My whole life I've had an emphasis on family. It's a thing I was taught to value greatly; it's makes us who we are. After looking into this, I came to the idea of generations: a concept we are all put into, regardless of being aware of it. Generations have a lot to say about who we are, and how our loved ones, society, and we define ourselves. The goal of this paper is to show why we are characterized into those generations and why those generations were made, not to degrade the idea of generations but to emphasize the meaning of it. A "generation" is a group of people born in the same year and have lived through the same historical events.

What is the importance of having generations and why? They define who we are as a whole, as a society and as a family. But my focus is on defining generations beyond what the general public knows; how they are marked, the stages, what influence they bring to the individual and if there will ever be a point of ending past a family scale. All is relative to America, as I will focus on five generations of Americans.

What's the meaning of a generation? We all have different interpretations of it, so it could be that there are many meanings for it, but some stand out more than others. According to *The Random House Dictionary of The English Language*, it means to be in a group of people that are born and living within the same time periods and with an equal amount of time between when their parents were born, as well as their children. Also, there is the meaning of a group having the same way of thinking as well as an attitude to match. All of this amounts to the same meaning as a sociological concept: it means the belonging to a "cluster" of cohorts and or generations that define the temporal and historical events of that social life lived. Generation-making dates back to the time of the Ancient Greek and Egyptians. They defined generations through a vast amount of creatures and spirits through which the history of their civilization was told (What is Generation Y?). They were meant to be historical and human, and we followed those guidelines as we have let them influence the way we form our paradigms of our generations and our lineage, including the idea of family trees and youthful generations.

Generations come and go all usually within the span of 20 to 22 years in which the four turning cycle happens. That cycle marks the start and end of a generation. And within that cycle, moods and "historical events shape generations in childhood and young adulthood; then a parents and leaders in midlife and old age generations in turn shape history (Strauss)." The Fourth Turning cycle consist of four stages.

First there is the "High" stage. This is the post-Crisis era where institutions are strong and a person on his own is weak (Howe). The most recent event in this stage is post World War II. The Second turn, the "Wakening," is the most recent and came with the Consciousness Revolution, which "gave rise to feminist, environmental, and black power movements—and to a steep rise in violent crime and family breakup" (Consciousness Revolution). In this turn, society is scaling to its higher tide of public progress, but people suddenly find the need to regain their sense of personal authenticity (Howe). The Third turn, the "Unraveling," is where the one was or had become strong and self-flourishing, for example in the most recent event of the Long Boom and Culture War, when "People felt optimistic about their personal lives, but pessimistic about the country" (Lifecourse Associates). And last is the "Crisis," which occurred in the recent stock market crash of 1929 happening at the end of World War II when Hitler invaded Poland in September 1939 after saying he wouldn't; it was a moment to redefine the national American identity or, in other words it was another point in time where there

was chance for new “Founding Moments” (Howe). A time for new change where people were able to start fresh.

The Fourth Turning has its influence on Americans because that is when they are generalized into one of the four generational archetypes. The archetypes are defined depending on the stage in the fourth turning in which you are born in. There are Prophet, Nomad, Hero, and Artist (Howe).

The Prophet is born towards the ending of a Crisis, and has the strong focus on morals and principles. When they reach midlife as emerging leaders of another crisis, they are remembered for their words. The Nomad is born during the Awakening, the time of social ideals and spiritual agendas; they are remembered for their “adrift, alienated” rising-adult years and the years of midlife for their “pragmatic” leadership (Howe). The Hero is born after and awakening time into the “individual pragmatism and self reliance” (Howe). They aged into political elders who are attacked by another Awakening, and are remembered for their military triumphs as teens (Howe). The Artists who were born during the Crisis are over-protected by their elders, as they grow as socialized and conformist teens in a post crisis world, and remembered for the quiet years in their rising adulthood and the years of flexible leadership building in their midlife (Howe).

As generations come, the old help shape the new generations with the influence that comes from the generational archetypes, although no generation is completely like another because everyone is born differently. All we keep in common is the time period you were born into depending on the Fourth Turning cycle. It also depends on what kind of person you are and the morals you follow or create can be passed down and potentially creates a new way of thinking within your generation. There are more differences between generations than similarities, but some similarities could be, for example, the resemblance between the millennial generation and the G.I. generation by way of rising civic engagement, improving behavior and collective confidence. But at the end of the day there will never be generations so alike. It’s like new people, and new thoughts; everything changes.

There are many generations to follow up on, all shaped by their people and history. The Depression Era was a generation; you belonged to this generation if you were born between the 1912 and 1921 (Generations X,Y, Z). These people were turned into conservative, responsible, respectful, patriotic, and work-oriented people since the Depression brought the end to a lot of work. They were the type to leave a legacy to their children (Generations X,Y, Z). The Post-War Cohort who were born between 1928 and 1945. Through this time the people experienced discomfort and uncertainty so they had a great value for security, comfort, and family (Generations X,Y, Z). The Baby Boomers or Boomers I, were born between 1946 and 1954 (Generations X,Y, Z). They alone made the generation big. Hard-headed, they all had different attitudes, behaviors, and societies as well. They were the ones to protest, so optimistic along with the fact they had great economic opportunities (Generations X,Y, Z).

More current generations are my generation and the one prior to it. Generation X from 1966 to 1976 was the “Lost Generation” or the “Latchkey” generation. They were the first kids to be exposed to a vast amount of divorces and daycares. This is the generation my mother was born into, but none of this was true to her; she grew up in a home with two parents who were always working so her and her brothers took care of themselves. The most current generation, mine, which holds most truth to what I live in

and live by. Generation Y, Echo Boomers or Millennials, born from 1977 to 1994, to a world of new technology and diversity. We are the first generation to grow up with technology so available, which has made us want more and more, to the point where we are now seen as weak links to marketing; we see something, and we want it. We are one of the most open to anything generations. We are in constant flexible change, as we have grown up with either a single parent or with both. I can say this all pertains to the way I live but although I want what I see I don't get it. I am always changing myself in and out – From my looks to the way I act, as well as being practically raised by a single mother who has given me more than I need.

As time has passed, Americans have become more materialistic. We have a need to move forward and this is more common in the now, Generation Y, which is targeted as a weak consumer generation. We are depended on as the ones that will get what we want, what we see. We can be so materialistic to the point where we have only started caring about the aesthetics of things and we don't care about true meaning; not only of things, but about life and what it means to be in this world.

The brainstorming for the new generation has begun, all being made by the academics and the marketers; they've come up with names like "mosaics," "adaptive," and "culturals." In this case I think society shaped us into being this way; if it weren't for all the new technology or inventions we would never be the way we are. We would never listen to the media telling us what is right and what is wrong. But then again it is in our hands to let that get to us and actually follow that. So there is no blame on the marketers it's in us for listening and letting society create this whole new generation of makers and consumers.

Generations shape us by shaping our society, which shapes the world -Something like a chain reaction. It all works by influence. The influence we get is twisted with the new things we learn. So I don't believe in generations being wrong by condemning people into them, but what I don't find right is the names they are given and the way they are characterized; it could be that half the people, even if they are born into that generation, don't fit in with those characteristics. It seems to me that generational family is what's more important because you're connecting with people that have the same bloodline as you, which is far more important than anything. You have more deeply rooted you meaning in life because of them.

Within my family the concept of generations was never discussed and no one ever bothered talking about anyone past my great grandparents. Could it be that that they aren't educated about generations or they just don't care? This triggered me to ask my mom if she knew anything about past generations in my family.

Now due to the inquiry, I know on my mom's side my grandma was the only child of a father who was shot long before she was able to learn about life and how to live it; and she as well was child of a mother that was never spoken about, all dating back to the late 1920's through the World War II generation. On the flip side, I always knew a bit more about my dad's mom because I was lucky enough to meet my great grandma, even if the memories aren't vivid, I met her. Her lineage came from Spain in the late 1880's, which puts her in the ranks of a Lost Generation kid. Is it that people start forgetting about their past generations when theirs is about to be over? Or is it difficult to speak about it? Either way, I'd like to know about it since I'm strongly family oriented and would like to know how to answer all these questions when I'm asked about them in life.

I have and want that need to be able to pass down a legacy and a moral value of what it means to really be a family so that it never turns into a distant family. Generations back to back, I want them to be as close as possible.

In conclusion, the belief in generations, both blood and not blood related, shaping us is true, because if we aren't the creators of those generations we are members of it. As we make our history, we leave legacies, morals, creations, and mistakes that help create a whole new group of people. The meaning of having generations is putting us in groups of people who have been parts of new movements starting with their birth up to their death. It adds on to our rich history, which we should be proud of. And so I think people should try and grasp the meaning of a generation and how to better them so that we all are happy with what we are labeled as in a massive scale.

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