

GENERATIONS

STRUGGLING TOWARD A CONSTANCY TO PURPOSE

By: JAMES LADD

Life Coach

One of the unfortunate realities of our time is the tendency we have of allowing other persons and society define the meaning of success in our lives. In doing so we absolve ourselves from any meaningful internal dialogue and true understanding of who we are and why we were meant to be here or our purpose/mission in life.

Those who regularly read my bulletins know that I have some pretty strong opinions about how we all should live our lives. This statement seems contradictory to my opening remarks but stay with me and I will explain.

I thought it would be interesting for us to examine how four different generations might view success based upon what we have come to know about them and what they value. The

four generations we will have a look at are;

Matures (65 years +)

Baby Boomers (46 to 64 years)

Generation X (31 to 45 years)

Millennials (30 years & younger)

SNAPSHOT OF THE GENERATIONS

Taken from: Mackenzie University;

Connecting Across the Generations by

Cam Marston, President, Generational

Insight

Matures (1909 – 1946)

They represent 13.7% of the Canadian population and have an average income of \$32000. They came of age during the Great Depression and World War II. They are driven by the ideals of duty, sacrifice, loyalty and place great faith in institutions. They are also known to value quality over speed and efficiency.

Baby Boomers (1947 – 1966)

They represent 28% of the Canadian population and have an average income of \$46000. They are considered the original 'Me' generation. They came of age during postwar prosperity, the Cold War and the 60's. Boomers have a focus on prosperity, on being in charge. They define work ethic by the time devoted to work. They are workaholics and competitive. They are committed to 'Team.' They seek services that help them regain control of their time and are concerned with status and individuality. **Continued next page**

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What Makes an Effective Team

Player

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If you are interested in investigating the possibility of having your own personal coach, please contact me for a one hour exploratory session at no charge!

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or 489-9534



Generation X (1967 – 1979)

They represent 21% of the Canadian population and have an average income of \$43500. They were raised as their parents' friends. They question authority and institutions and dislike hierarchy, have a shorter time horizon, are a bit cynical, skeptical and suspicious. They believe in seizing the day (*Carp Diem*), efficiency, open communication, loyalty to people but not to companies. They are a tough sell, can spot a phony a mile away and embrace technology.



Millennials (1980 – 2000)

They represent 27% of the Canadian population and have an average income of \$24000. They have grown up coddled and protected from birth. Also were raised as their parents' friends. They have a strong sense of individuality and are optimistic. They now face economic uncertainty after living their entire lives in a growing economy. They are extremely 'tech-savvy' and team oriented. They gravitate to people who can help them achieve their goals. They seek open and constant communication. They are torn between a desire for individuality and the need to fit in. They want to be like their peers – but with a twist.

They are loyal and altruistic customers and consider the global impact of their decisions.

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So what can we extrapolate from these snapshots.

Matures

Because of the hardships that this generation had to face they grew to value duty, sacrifice and loyalty and trust in their institutions, after all they went to war to defend them. My own parents fell into this generation and naturally I saw first hand how they chose to live out their lives, lives which had a profound effect on me and how I live today as a part of the baby boom generation. Thanks mom and dad!

Roles were clearly defined in this generation; father was the primary if not the sole breadwinner and mom kept the home fires burning. Both were willing to make significant sacrifices for their kids. Because of their experiences with the depression and war they needed to create a secure and controlled if not controlling environment for themselves and their families. They did not want their kids to experience the same kinds of hardships they did so tried to give their kids as much as possible, in many cases too much! They were likely to define their success according to their ability to 'provide' in their respective roles relative to their families. Provide might translate into an education, a

home, never wanting for anything and other related opportunities.

Baby Boomers

My generation compared to my parents is considerably more self-absorbed, values the accumulation of wealth, are status seeking, and defined by their jobs. We like to think of ourselves as individuals. That's questionable? With the exception of a fringe group who grew up in the 60's and chose to drop out and live what could only be described as a bohemian lifestyle, boomers success hinges so much on status, their job, the accumulation of wealth and/or position in the community. Our success could actually be defined this way;

"We buy things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't like."
Kim Foss

Generation X

This is the generation that is coming into power, taking charge of our institutions, corporations and governments. To a certain degree we do not know yet how they will define success for themselves, so I will have to make a few assumptions based on what we know about their values. Their success will somehow involve technology either directly or as a support for what they are trying to accomplish. Success for them is going to involve rebuilding and reorganizing our hierarchical institutions to provide more openness and support



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for positive inclusive communication. In many cases this will take the form of empowered teams and movement away from the classic boss-subordinate relationships. Honesty and integrity will be increasingly prevalent.

Millennials

I have two children who are a part of Generation X and one who is part of the Millennials. Of course my two older children are well on their way but my youngest is certainly challenging his baby boomer mother and father on all fronts. For this generation being successful means to be able to communicate utilizing all the latest technology. They are conscious of the environment and what we are doing to it so will want to be able to have a positive impact on its recovery. They will generally want what their friends have and define part of their success by comparing but will somehow want to be just a bit different. They were well cared for so will want all the creature comforts as part of their definition of success.

Measuring ourselves against others has been an all too common practice between the generations and society in general, and given way to much importance in defining what each of us believes we must do or be in order to be successful.
James Ladd



My Work as a Life Coach

So what can be said then about what it is that defines success for all of us? What do we learn from the generations?

"I'm here to suggest that we cannot learn anything from the generations about success until we first know ourselves!"

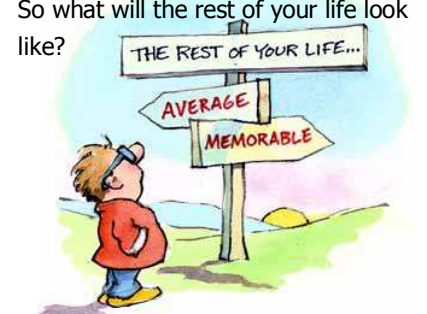
In my work with clients as a Life & Business Coach, I put a particular emphasis on supporting and guiding them toward the identification of their life purpose or mission, their particular reason for being here. I have found based upon my own life/work experiences and a continuous interest and study of the human condition that finding a way through life that is congruent with who you are in terms of; values, needs, interests and personality is crucial to that sense or feeling of self-worth and by extension acceptance of others. This is a first step to ensuring that your actions after that are strategic!

Think about this for a minute in terms of a definition of success. If you can look at your life and feel a sense of connectedness with everything that you are doing both in your personal and professional life could that actually be a definition of success?

Could it all be that simple and yet that complicated. What today's society does to us is take us further and further away from the very essence of who we are.

We become what James Hillman has been saying for a long time; "I think we are miserable partly because we have only one god and that is economics. Economics is a slave driver. No one has free time; no one has any leisure. The whole culture is under terrible pressure and fraught with worry. It's hard to get out of that box. That's the dominant situation all over the world."

So what will the rest of your life look like?



ACCORDING TO WHO OR WHAT?

Coach Ladd





Head Coach Jason Blasko

ACROSS THE WORLD TO FIND A MISSING PIECE

By: Jason Blasko

I remember walking down a grey cobblestone street, rain coming down slightly, holding my mother's hand, looking for a toy store in the absence of any neon lit signs or much color at all for that matter. The year was 1980, in the town of Ruzumberok, communist Czechoslovakia. A different time, a different world but a place which would be greatly responsible for what I would become many years later.

My father relocated our family to Czechoslovakia for reasons related to a work project, or more or less, his own courage to break away from the norm or the expected and follow a road less traveled. Funny enough, it was this foreign land that would spark my interest in football, sandlot football, played amongst boys much older and larger than my seven year old self. I developed a knack for tackling during

those early years, a fearlessness of thrusting my unprotected shoulder into oncoming boys carrying the football. So when our family returned to Winnipeg in the summer of 1981, I immediately registered for six man football. Then a Peace Gardens football camp in America the following year. Nine man football turned into twelve man football. By the age of fifteen I was deeply embedded into the sport and was addicted to weightlifting, a subculture of its own.



Today, I believe that this combination of being devoted to football and the constant battle to enlarge my physical self may have been connected to an internal complex of low self-esteem and shyness. The football field was a stage and I could hide behind the helmet to become some version of my perceived self. The strength and new muscle I acquired would overcompensate for a lack of confidence and assertiveness I felt among my peers. However, regardless of over analysis or psycho babble, football was what I was about. As a

teenager, I felt no affiliation to my high school or connection to a teacher. My attention was directed and devoted to the St. Vital Mustang Football Club. From 1987 to 1989, three consecutive championships, numerous lessons learned related to life and sport, an appreciation for discipline, commitment and sacrifice. Some of the best years of my life remembered like it was yesterday.

From the outside it would look as if this path of strong loyalty would ultimately lead to success in whatever field chosen. But the road of life presents many alternate routes. In 1992, I had just been a part of a successful provincial championship with the St. Vital Junior Football Program. I was enrolled at the University of Manitoba, and planned on playing one more year with the Mustangs before hopefully going on to play four years with the University team. That was the plan anyway. In 1993, I was drug tested and failed. Scandal started the press. Shame and a questioned character, embarrassment for both my family and the Mustang football family in which both my brother and father were also highly committed to. Questions would be raised as to if my own success was attributed to drug use from the beginning. I was suspended from any involvement in sport in Canada for four years. Football was over. I simply vanished from the football scene, trying not to be noticed as I walked into the stands to watch my



younger brother play his games. At that time, being 22 years old, I failed to look inward for reasons of why this had happened. I looked outward, looking to blame others. Anger and resentment followed. Responsibility for a specific outcome was a strong and important lesson to be learned. When would it be learned?

Fast forward four years later. I had fallen into the career of private investigator. It was an interesting enough career choice. I spent my days on surveillance following fraudulent insurance claimants and trying to video their every move. It was a new title and role for myself that carried with it many captivating antidotes. At least I felt I was giving back to the community by saving citizens tax dollars.

Then the call came from an old teammate in the Mustang football organization. Many of my former teammates were coaching the Mustang Major Program and wanted me to join as soon as my suspension was up to the day. To this day I always will appreciate that the Mustang family would welcome me back. All involved in this endeavor would go on to win five consecutive championships. I believe we were so successful because of two factors. We used football to install characteristics of commitment, discipline and accountability into these young men as our number one objective. The second being unity. We as a staff were unified

from years of cooperating together on the field and we led our teams to find their own unity from within. Most important to myself, the opportunity presented, helped me discover my true inner purpose. Coaching, leading or teaching others from my own mistakes. Internally, I knew there was passion and unfulfilled dreams which would lead me on new journeys. The only question was when and how?



After those five championships were attained I believe that the staff split up due to the natural life occurrences and family responsibilities that many of us were building. Well, that's what was openly stated but deep down we all knew that those five years couldn't be topped. Any thought of coaching without such a unified support staff seemed too much like work. After all, volunteering in a coaching situation with such great emotion and passion is hard to come by.

I continued plodding along in my investigation career, soon becoming disgruntled, unsatisfied and depressed. Income became volatile, working hours always long and spontaneous, availability became the norm to please the clients. At one point it became so bad I had to move back home with my

parents after six prosperous years of investigation work. It was at this period of my life that the heart was sending me a loud and clear message. The path had to be changed. To be honest, it took almost two years to gather the courage to drop everything and start a new journey but maybe more important was the ability to be receptive. Observe and realize that only you are responsible for the position you hold in life, remembering responsibility for a specific outcome. I was starting to look inward instead of outward in response to my current situation.

My father mentioned to me one day that he heard on the radio that China was in need of English teachers to prepare their citizens for the Olympic games. A rather random and mundane statement which led me to look into the situation more closely. I then attended a free seminar discussing the



opportunities available in teaching English. Most of the people present were in their early twenties and early fifties. An interesting demographic which might suggest something about how we are conditioned to remain within our comfort zone, not



take risks when stability dominates over true internal gratification or the pursuit thereof.

Eventually, I equipped myself with a brief course in TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) and began searching on the internet for opportunities that would bring me back to somewhere I had always wanted to return to, Eastern Europe.

In 2004 I walked off a plane in the city of Poznan, Poland. Not knowing a soul or any word of the language. The smell was the one thing that was familiar, burnt coal in the air. It took me straight back to 1980, Ruzumberok, Slovakia. I was picked up by my employer, for I had landed a job via internet in an English language school in the town of Leszno, Poland. I would spend 365 days here before visiting Canada again, that was the only certainty, everything else would be new and foreign.



That first year was extremely important to me. I was really learned what was meaningful to me in life. I was not in isolation at work like in the past, I was working directly with people, helping them achieve their

goals. Poland had just entered the European Union, so English was in high demand for their development as a contributing nation. I definitely can say that I learned to live life slower as well, but most important it was here I met the most loving and honest woman I had ever come to know and we were married in 2005.



In 2007, still in Poland, being in the right place at the right time may be said. American football had just started and I was the most qualified coach in the nation. Needless to say, many offers were received but I settled on a Head coach position, with salary, in the city of Wroclaw. I maintain my own English teaching company while leading the Wroclaw Crew American football team. My objective, to lead and reform. The young men in Poland really have never had the opportunities to reap the benefits of affiliation from a fun and challenging endeavor. American football will provide them with the life lessons of commitment, discipline and accountability and I will ensure they receive it. In doing so, another championship is soon to follow. It also helps that I have been

connected with a team that shares the same goals as I as well as the help of two former NFL players an assistant American coach and several enthusiastic Polish coaches.

Regardless of what the future brings, I know now to be receptive to taking on new paths and new journeys. To look inward for why things haven't worked the way I thought they should have and most importantly, not settling for stability over real internal satisfaction. At 38 years of age I feel like I'm just getting started.

JASON GLEN BLASKO

38 yrs, born WPG, Canada

Business: English teacher/Head Coach

"The Crew" Wroclaw, Poland

Personal Achievements:

10 Amateur Canadian football championships; 5 as a player, 5 as a coach.

(St. Vital Mustangs Football Club 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1992, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001)

12 years experience in the investigation industry

Owner/operator Business English consulting company in Wroclaw, Poland.

Head Coach of American Football Team Wroclaw Devils 2008, 2009

Head Coach of American Football Team The Crew, Wroclaw, Poland, 2010.

