

Gen Trends

October 2008

Catching the Wave of the Generations to Come!

Creative Discipline Always Works Better

In rifling through some newspaper clippings the other day, I came across a story about Bruce Janu, a Chicago high school teacher who has come up with an interesting way to administer discipline. You see, Bruce is a big Frank Sinatra fan and figured that since he has to serve detention when he assigns it to students, he might as well listen to something he likes. The students are forced to listen to Sinatra recordings including *My Way*, *I've Got the World on a String*, *Love and Marriage* and *Mack the Knife*. No talking, no homework, no texting. Nothing but pure Sinatra. "The students just hate it," he says. The students are allowed to sing along, but no one has.

In a world where young people are growing up hearing that one thoughtless mistake or misdeed can devastate a college admission or career, it is refreshing to see that there are still people willing to approach discipline in a way that is both meaningful and not-so-serious. The kids hate Sinatra detention, but they also appreciate creativity when they see it and understand the intent. Besides, who would you rather have for a teacher than someone with a sense of humor?

Look around your environment, whether you're a manager, a teacher or a parent. What can you do to encourage better behavior creatively while still getting the message across? Don't be afraid of the potential consequences for taking a light-hearted risk. Don't allow yourself to

be programmed by anomalies reported in the media that only describe the one teacher, manager or parent in a million who used poor judgment. Those around you will appreciate the effort.

By the way, if it ever gets to a point where the threat of Sinatra wears off, Bruce Janu has two other weapons in his arsenal: Tony Bennett and Mel Torme.

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Is Group Dating Back?

Group dating has returned among Millennials in America. Groups meet in restaurants or other public places where attendees bring a couple of eligible single friends for an outing together. Sites such as Ignighter.com and Teamdating.com were created by and cater to Millennials who are disheartened by bars, false online profiles and blind dates and who also crave the sociability of groups. Young people embrace the idea as safer and more fun than going on "random" dates.

"GenTistics"

75% of college freshmen and seniors said that they almost always took their parents' advice.

-National Survey of Student Engagement

Check out [Bob's blog](#).



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Boomers' Retirement Gone Bust

In September, the AARP completed a study to understand how recent changes in the economy have effected the retirement security of employees who are at least 45 years old. They concluded that people are significantly changing their behavior around their preparations for retirement.

The survey discovered that more people have been pulling money out of their retirement funds prematurely. One-fifth of workers polled stopped contributing to their pension plans altogether within the last year. Even before the study, 25% of workers over the age of 45 felt that their amount in savings was not large enough for a comfortable retirement. People with incomes less than \$30,000 a year, along with Hispanics and women were most likely to have stopped contributing.

What does this mean for employers? Employer-provided retirement plans now have a greater affect as a retention tool. Study respondents with pension benefits indicated they were more likely to stay with employers that help them add to their nest eggs, while those without retirement benefits will consider looking for job that does so.

Additionally, workforce transition strategies will play a more important role in organizational planning. Research increasingly indicates that Boomers, as a generation, will postpone retirement. As Xers continue to advance and Millennials enter the workplace, a stagnation of opportunities is likely to occur. In order to retain top talent, employers will need to be more creative. This will include the use of job rotations, cross-training, and other enrichment strategies to maintain morale and job tenure.

Case Study Corner

As a nurse, I have worked in cardiac care units for more than 20 years. While those around me are mostly devoted souls who do what it takes, I'm seeing a troubling trend among our young nurses. They seem so detached. They seem to punch the clock. If asked to do something outside of normal duties, they comply, if begrudgingly. Is this what we should expect from the next generation of nurses? How do we motivate them to put their hearts into the job?

I applaud your commitment to nursing. You are truly making a difference. But many young nurses would argue that they are as committed as you are. They just want to maintain a balance in their lives. "If those older nurses want to work those hours," they think, "that's their option." Of course, many veteran nurses work those long hours out of a sense of obligation that younger nurses don't share.

There are several factors that have contributed to the collective detachment that young nurses display on the job. To begin with, there's history. Rather than coming of age hearing that nursing is a noble profession, they've been exposed to endless media chatter about over-worked medical personnel, rising healthcare costs, and deadly hospital mistakes. Sure, they enjoy the science, the interaction with patients, and the sense of contribution. Besides, the money is pretty good. But there is a limit to all of this. If it means working 60 hours a week in a largely thankless job and missing family time, the trade-off is just not worth it.

Then there is the influence of growing up among age peers who believe that a job is a contract, not a calling. If it doesn't work out, it's not the end of the world. If the hours are too much, switch jobs. If a better opportunity comes along, pack your bags. This is one of the main reasons why young nurses sometimes appear so detached. They're not looking

for long-term social relationships. That's something you do with family and friends. Besides, who wants to invest in close friendships when you could be off to another job next month?

So how do you and your veteran colleagues find ways to bridge this cross-generational frustration? Begin by taking stock of these differences. There is no one to blame. You are all products of your experience. Then communicate. If you have concerns, state them. If you have questions, ask them. As difficult as it is sometimes, avoid judging the behavior of younger nurses. Consider the role your beliefs play in your own actions and sense of obligation. Young nurses may appear detached to you. At the same time, you and your peers may appear overly concerned to them. Talk about it. Learn from it and be careful about over-analyzing it. After all, it is only a job.

Hey! Let's Jump Into Anybody's Pool

The *Centralian Advocate* recently reported on a global trend among tech-savvy teenagers. Teens worldwide are using Google Earth images to identify homes in their areas that have large outdoor pools. Once found, they use social networking sites such as Facebook to meet other teens for impromptu parties.

Homeowners have awakened in the middle of the night or arrived home to un-welcomed guests on their property. In order to avoid arrest, party-goers show up in bathing suits with a bicycle so they can make a clean getaway. Is this an evolution of what teenagers do to satiate their boredom despite the consequences? What are the implications of an emerging generation that acts on their what's-yours-is-mine mentality?