
Why I Find You Irritating: Navigating Generational Friction at Work

Chris De Santis

NDA 2023



**REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR
THINKING ABOUT
DOCKETING!**



“We don't see things as **they are**,
we see things as **we are.**”

Anais Nin

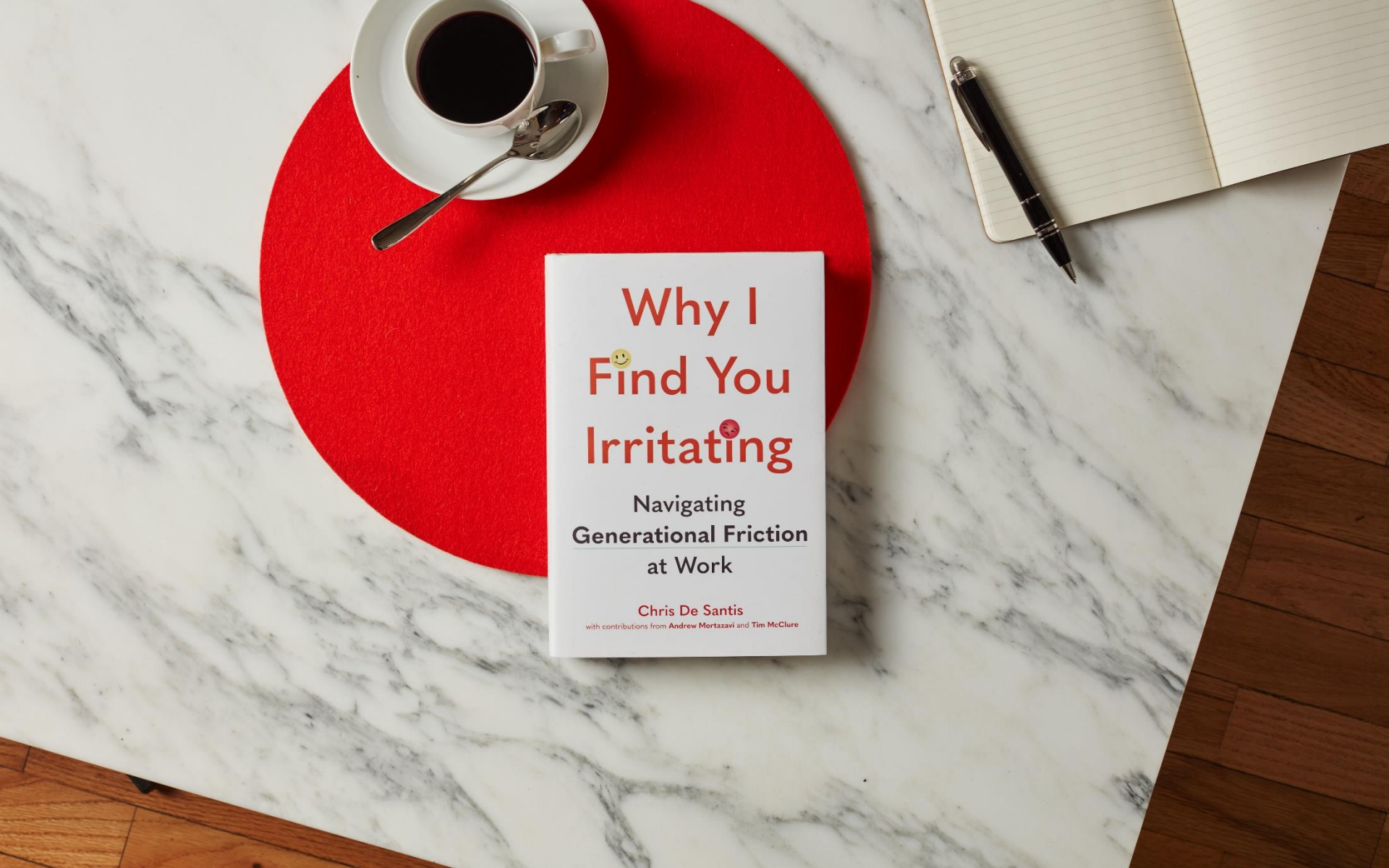


Florida man trapped in unlocked closet for two days



Millennials are Killing the Napkin Industry

Business Insider Retail



Why I
Find You
Irritating

Navigating
Generational Friction
at Work

Chris De Santis

with contributions from Andrew Mortazavi and Tim McClure



Perceptions, Biases and **Generalizations**

- The **Dunbar Number**: We are tribal and designed to detect threats
- The Process: Deletions, Distortions, and Generalizations
- Heuristics, **Confirmation Bias**, and the Salience effect
- Conversational Coordination and **Fundamental Attribution Error**



Additional Generational Caveats

- Chronological birth not as important as our narrative and the perception of where we belong
- Generational distinctiveness is unique to a culture and derived from and appropriate to non-traditional societies
- Generational differences not the same as stages of life



Life's Hurdles and the **Emerging Adult**

- **Completing school**
- **Becoming financially independent**
- **Leaving home**
- **Marrying**

1960	2010
77% of women	13% of women
65% of men	10% of men
- **Having a child**

Scott Hess

Tru insights consulting



Generational Waves and **Cusp Babies**

Traditionalists

1923-1943

Boomers

1944 - 1964

Gen X

1965 - 1981

Millennials

1982 - 1996

Gen Z

1997 - 2012

Gen Alpha

2012-?



“Each generation foretells the downfall of civilization as seen in the rise of the next generation. They are a constant source of disappointment, until they are not.”

Anonymous



Coming of Age

Boomers

1944-1964

Hippies

Gen X

1965-1981

Slackers

Millennials

1982-1996

Entitled

Gen Z

1997- 2012

(Fragile?)



Incongruence at Work

Boomers

1944-1964

Permissive
Authoritarianism

Gen X

1965-1981

Millennials

1982-1996

Gen Z

1997- 2012



Incongruence at Work

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Natural

Growth

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Incongruence at Work

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1965-1981

Natural

Growth

Millennials

1982-1996

Concerted

Cultivation

Gen Z

1997- 2012



Incongruence at Work

Boomers

1944-1964

Permissive

Authoritarianism 1965-1981

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Natural
Growth

Millennials
1982-1996
Concerted
Cultivation

Gen Z

1997- 2012

**Autonomy-
Supportive**



The Context

As a **child** of 6 to 8, when you began to notice the world around you, you started to develop a **lens** through which you interpreted events, situations, and the motives of others. This was reinforced by what you heard in the house and by your peers. Each generational **“cohort”** group in large part, shares common **beliefs** and interpretations of **values**.



Contributing Factors Influencing Your **Generational Lens**

- Life Cycle Effects: **Where you are**
- Period Effects: **What happened**
- Cohort Effects: **What's important**



Boomers: 1944 - 1964

Events

- Post war boom
- GI Bill
- **Wealth Effect**
- Relatively Permissive Parenting
- The Cold War
- Women's Rights
- Civil Rights
- Crowded Classrooms
- Camelot
- Disco

What's Important

- **Joining**
- Optimism
- Competition
- Loyalty: sacrifice and deference
- The long good day work ethic
- Being present
- **Climbing the ladder**
- Faith in the covenant
- The mythic hero
- A "Gut" feeling



Generation X: 1965 - 1981

Events

- Stagflation
- Downsizing
- Working parents
- Latch key kids
- Natural growth parenting
- Vietnam
- Nixon
- **Milk cartons**
- The first technologists
- The computer in isolation
- The erosion of trust

What's Important

- **Free ranging**
- Self reliance
- The habit of privacy
- The unvarnished truth
- Personal security
- Independence
- Work/Life accommodation
- The really long, busy, and private work day
- Transactional relationships and schmooze free
- **Realist: inspiration-free zone (at work)**



Millennials: 1982 - 1996

Events

- The Berlin Wall
- The Dot Com
- Globalization
- The Internet: the connected computer
- Digital diffusion
- Tethering
- **Trophies**
- The culture of immediacy
- The family vacation
- Homework: an act of love
- Play dates and vetting
- Concerted Cultivation Parenting
- 9/11

What's Important

- The bubble of love
- Dialog
- The habit of engagement/distraction
- Optimism
- Diversity and social responsibility
- Collaboration and competition
- Constant contact and sharing
- Interdependent
- Being scheduled
- The Discerning Consumer
- Time and place agnostic
- **Poise and the dinner table**



Gen Z: 1997 - 2012

Events

- iPhone
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Standardized testing
- School shootings and code red drills
- The Great Recession 2008
- Reality TV
- Play dates

What's Important

- The Outboard brain
- FOMO
- Security/Safety
- A Livelihood
- Time to work alone
- Constant availability
- Face to Face
- The Rules
- **The Side Hustle**
- Flexibility and Customization
- Health
- Fairness and equity
- Diversity and Inclusion
- The Curated self
- Being “straight up” with the truth



The **Path** Forward

- The **only absolute truth** is what is true for you personally, anything else is fodder for conversation.
- **Start a dialogue** recognizing there may be different perspectives in terms of priorities and interpretations of values.
- Ultimately, know we have **more in common** than we have differences between us.

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