

Geeks and geezers assignment

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Leadership and Ethics Prof. Barnett 11 November 2009 Geeks and Geezers Interviews with men and women who are leaders of both large and small companies demonstrated that the similarities between these apparently disparate groups (Gen X and Gen Y) offer significant insight into the qualities of leadership that transcend generational differences. Bennis and Thomas discovery is that successful leaders among both geeks and geezers possess the quality of “ neoteny,” a certain youthful inquisitiveness and enjoy life that makes each of them want to learn constantly and explore new possibilities both in their business and personal lives.

Leaders from both generations have “ adaptive capacity,” the ability to adjust their course when difficulties and challenges were presented. The ability to be adaptive was frequently put to the test early in these leaders’ careers, when each went through some kind of defining experience in their careers that tested their ability to overcome obstacles. There are four stages of adaptability: Hardiness, which is boldness and a capability to learn in all circumstances, including failures, and to let go of old ways of doing things.

First-class noticers who are being remarkably open to seeing and hearing new things. Egoless learners who are not being invested in who you are in such a way that you can’t learn something else. And Transcending limits which is learning new things and new ways of doing things that take you to new heights. The authors call this experience the “ crucible” in which values are tested and people learn not merely to persevere but also to pursue their goals in spite of seemingly insurmountable challenges.

Crucibles are “ intense, transformational experiences” from which a leader changes dramatically and emerges much wiser. Crucibles are “ often opportunities,” says Bennis. The key distinction between crucibles is not whether they are considered negative or positive but whether the leader “ Both types of crucibles involve important learning and a degree of stress. ” Experience is critical in learning to lead. The question is, “ What experience? ” Crucible experiences are what matter.

Crucible experiences create leadership lessons from first hand personal experience. Crucible experiences combine the formative experiences with specific personal experiences and factors that cause individuals to derive meaning from their experiences. The outcome is leadership capabilities. Crucible experiences often involve struggle, making decisions, and learning from mistakes. They often relate to personal and emotional and life-changing events.

Bennis and Thomas hypothesized that era has an underestimated impact on the type of leaders who emerge. Geezers, for example, grew up in an era that included World War II, the Cold War, the birth of television as a social influence, the battle over civil rights, and strong public trust in government. The “ organization man,” who often spent his entire career serving a single company, was the standard in the business world, and the Great Depression left indelible memories of worry and financial fragility in all workers born around 1925.

This “ Era of Limits” (1945 - 1954), say Bennis and Thomas, led leaders to embrace a command-and-control style that often mimicked the military

organizations in which many workers had served; a rigid work ethic and a great need for security; and general acceptance of the “one-life, one-career” concept. Geezers have had only one to three jobs in their careers. Consider their work a vital part of their “social identity”. Have not generally recognized the value of diversity until late in their careers. Consider “paying your dues” essential. Learn in traditional ways such as reading and classrooms.

Are unfamiliar with the pressures of two-career families. Geeks, on the other hand, matured in the “Era of Options” (1991-2000), which included MTV, AIDS, terrorism, globalization, the end of the Cold War, weapons of mass destruction, high public distrust of government, and influential special interest groups. The organization man disappeared as competitive speed and innovation led to flatter, more nimble organizational structures. Dot-com companies came out of nowhere and the Internet has a lot to do with this. Geeks are committed to making a life, not just a living.

View team-building, engagement, and partnerships as essential to leadership. Recognize that with diversity come new perspectives, ideas, and insights. Desire and believe that they can better the world. Are experimental and entrepreneurial, less loyal to employers. Learn through both traditional and experiential means. Are more secure with insecurity and change. Have multiple careers, thanks in part to longer life expectancy. Interview. After conducting an interview with my former Chef, Franck Deletrain (age 47) I found many interesting findings.

One of them was the fact that leaders actually feel overwhelmed sometimes, but it is their capacity to solve situations and confidence in themselves that can overcome that feeling of overwhelming. This is something I also noticed from a few facts laid out by Bennis and Thomas in their book. Also, I noticed that all of the success of Chef Deletrain comes from his passion for cooking and his passion for doing things the right way while believing in the philosophy of the company he works for.

This is also true with geezers like Ned Regan and geeks like Wendy Kopp, both of them believe strongly in a cause and their company's philosophies as well as being passionate enough to carry their carriers and life all the way to success. This assignment helped me realize that leaders are actually regular people that at some point in their lives they start reaching higher achievements due to their experience, knowledge and the passion who drive them to success.

This was very good, because I thought that any person with the right characteristics, knowledge and doing what it is considered best to the organization can achieve big things. Also, by the reading of Geeks and Geezers, I learnt a lot of the different circumstances diverse leaders go through, building unique skills and capabilities which lead them one way or another to success in their carriers as well as in the personal lives.