How to Love People
IN EVERY GENERATION

Lisa Anderson, Director of Young Adults at Focus on the Family

Want to connect with those outside your generation? Want to learn from their wisdom or be inspired by their energy and new ideas? A great way to start is by understanding what makes them tick.

**Silent**
1927-1945
- Listen to them.
- Spend uninterrupted time with them.
- Get off your devices and look them in the eye.
- Be patient.
- Help them navigate tech and current cultural systems (healthcare, housing, etc.).
- Take their advice.
- Don’t disregard history and its lessons.
- Respect authority and tradition.
- Read a book with them and discuss it.
- Talk in facts and statistics.
- Value absolutes.
- Send written notes.
- Don’t argue with every one of their opinions.
- Invite them over for dinner, weekends, parties and holidays. Enfold them into your life.

**Boomer**
1946-1964
- Don’t call them “old” – 70 is the new 40.
- Prioritize family time.
- Text them photos of what you’re up to.
- Let them brag about you.
- Brag about them.
- Ask their opinion and actually consider it.
- Set healthy boundaries and expectations.
- Keep your commitments.
- Thank them for all they do (and have done) for you.
- Invite them somewhere and pay for it.
- Join them in a cause they are passionate about.

**Gen-Xer**
1965-1980
- Talk about personal growth and professional development.
- Ask them about their hobbies or travel goals.
- Invite them to a game night.
- Ask them for a favorite playlist.
- Get to know their friends and mentors.
- Invite them to lead something.
- Brainstorm ideas for adding value and flexibility to their life and schedule.
- Give them space and autonomy.

**Millennial**
1981-1996
- Give them feedback…often.
- Value their experiences and emotions.
- Talk in stories, not statistics.
- Invite them over for food you have cooked (share the recipe).
- Let them fail (even epically) but be there as a shoulder to cry on.
- Teach them stuff, preferably by doing (budget, cooking, car maintenance, other life skills).
- Tell them why they matter…beyond their accomplishments.
- Help them rest.

**Gen-Z**
1997-2012
- Text them; don’t call.
- Talk hopefully about the future.
- Let them share their fears with you.
- Ask them about their passions.
- Invite them to collaborate with you on something.
- When they express an opinion, don’t shut them down or disagree. Respond with, “Interesting. Tell me more. How did you come to that conclusion?”
- Model how to have real relationships and conversations.
- Help them prioritize their mental health.

Questions to consider:
1. What’s one thing you need from another generation, and one thing you can offer?
2. Decide one generation outside of your own that you will reach out to. Find someone in that generation and exchange info. Plan to get together for dinner or coffee and see where the conversation goes!