

Kasia Szczerbinski

*Damn Millennials*



We've all heard the rants before. Those darn millennials – obsessed with their phones, easily distracted, unmotivated. But we know the truth – we were born into a brave, ever-changing new world and are just trying to do the best that we can. Other generations can laugh or write us off, but I truly believe that our generation has something that the others don't: the ability to adapt. And it's not just once that we adapt. We do it time and time again, constantly ebbing and flowing to keep up with our world.

Because we've grown up having to constantly learn new technology, new trends, new everything, we know that our lives are a continual learning process. It makes us more able and ready to change things up when things don't work anymore. We all gave up dial up and love our fancy Wi-Fi now. We all moved on from our Razr phase and grew to love iPhones (except me, I'm a die-hard Droid fan, but that's not really relevant here). What we need to do is harness that power and apply it to the way we do business, and while we may get knocked down, we'll always find a way to get back up.

This is our secret power. We are told that we cannot hold our attention to one thing, but overly focusing on one thing – anything, really – can only get you so far before you hit a road bump like a change in market, a change in what your customers need, or whatever else. Too much focus means that when it comes time to switch gears, some are just unable to pull themselves out of their rut because this is the way they've "always done things" and if it worked before, gosh darn it, it'll work now. We all know that you can't squeeze a

square peg into a round hole. Not that it keeps us all from trying from time to time.

We are told we stretch ourselves too thin. It couldn't be possible to be able to do so many different things at once, right? Again, the millennial spirit proves that the haters are just hating – we just have to tap into the right mindset to harness this ability to juggle so many new things at once. We need to see ourselves as not only creatives but also as innovators. Think Walt Disney. He was constantly moving forward, experimenting, trying new things, failing, and trying again. If we can operate four TV remotes, two iPads, and a cell phone, we can take those skills and translate them to our business.

When a problem arises, try to identify what the root of the problem is. Okay, so a product isn't selling as well as it used to. What really caused this problem? Then, brainstorm how to fix it. Don't limit yourself with only the most practical ideas. Think outside the box. Think about a crazy way to fix it. It's in the crazy ideas that we have the most potential to find something new and exciting as a solution. Take advantage of all the different hats that you wear and think about how differently a mother, student, photographer, and an accountant would all try to fix the problem.

We are told that we need to be decisive and focus on only ourselves when building our business.

Millennials are a social people, though, and we know the true value of asking for help when we need it. We know that it takes a village. Going back to Walt

Disney, when the idea of the Haunted Mansion was first presented to him, he was not super happy about the idea of a run-down, crumbling manor in his picturesque park. But he chose to trust in his Imagineers – he hired them for their skills and innovative ideas. Instead of killing the project, Disney allowed himself to get caught up in the magic of the idea of the Haunted Mansion and even found his own inspirations for the mansion. He knew the value of not only managing his team, but in allowing them to guide him. They worked as a team, and you must too if you want to go far. Trust your friends who are experts in their fields. Trust the people you've employed to actually be able to successfully nail task after task that you give them. Become the head of your own group of Imagineers and watch the creative solutions to your problems flow.

My father has always told me that my greatest strength is my ability to adapt when I need to. He usually told me this in the context of my school work and how I was able to easily adjust my work to better conform to my teacher's preferences. Adapting is more than just changing things up, though – it's having the ability to recognize that while something you're doing isn't necessarily wrong, it isn't working for you at the moment. It's being able to see that your business is not just about you, it's about the people that you serve. And it's being able to know when to stop and the strength to then move forward.

So, what should you do now to shake things up and really take control of your millennial self? Stay curious and stay creative. Think about insane, ideal ways to

address your problems and then try to see if you can practically achieve the same result through different means. Stop being an island and reach out to others when you are stuck or lost. And, as always, don't let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game. You may not win this inning, but you still have the rest of the game to figure things out. Take the time to reflect, focus on the problem areas, regroup, and try, try again.

There is no reason to be afraid. Don't fear your millennial status. Own it. Embrace it. Learn how to make it yours, and your successes will continue as you grow and adapt.