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Problems with millennials? Pshaw!

All the criticisms are overblown

I'm an entrepreneur and baby boomer. I recently partnered with my millennial son to open The Boulder Field, a rock climbing and fitness gym in Sacramento. Every member of our staff is a millennial.

My peers ask, "How do you work with 'them?'" And I say, "Our team is spectacular by the only measure we care about: delivering the results we expect in a high integrity manner." And I think, "In every criticism one has of millennials, there lies a boomer envy, regret, resentment, or ignorance."

Let's take a look at the critiques of millennials:

They are entitled.

We raised them to have strong minds and opinions and included them in our decisions. We treated them like adults. So, yes, they feel entitled to that. That's what I want. I don't want a generation of weak people standing around waiting to be led by us, the generation as responsible as any for our current state.

They don't work hard.

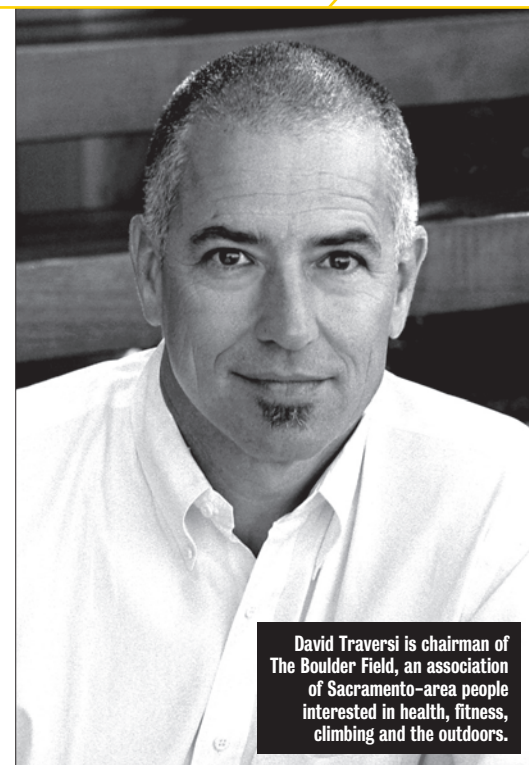
Give them a feel for the purpose served by their efforts, your expectations, some faith they can do the job, some gentle mentoring, some reasonable flexibility—and they deliver results.

They crave praise.

What they want is timely and honest feedback. Given that's good leadership, we should absolutely do that.

They are social media addicts.

I don't see them any more addicted to social media than our generation is to phone calls, emails and crappy television. This is the way they communicate.



David Traversi is chairman of The Boulder Field, an association of Sacramento-area people interested in health, fitness, climbing and the outdoors.

They don't want to own homes.

They have seen the American dream of home ownership was a grand illusion. What's really going on is they are marrying later, having kids later and taking more time to decide where and how they want to settle down.

They don't want to marry.

They'd just like to do it with better odds than we demonstrated. They'd rather date longer, live together, negotiate an equitable financial deal and then get married if motivated by their hearts and souls.

They don't care about politics.

While possible as to today's politics, this is absolutely untrue as to caring how our democracy delivers the guarantees of the Constitution. This generation knows what's needed and how to get it done and is waiting for us to die off so they can clean up the mess we created.

Bottom line, millennials are living the life many boomers wish we had.

We wish we went to work late so we could climb a few rocks or cycle a few miles first. We wish we had more purpose in our work. We wish we had expressed our opinions more, and had more people care about them. We wish we hadn't had religion crammed down our throats. We wish we were as community-oriented as them. We wish we had waited longer till we married, had kids, and bought homes.

And we wish we had the power that is rising among millennials to save this world. Pshaw to the naysayers!

Bottom line, millennials are living the life many boomers wish we had.