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# Stigmas and Stereotypes Surrounding the Post-Grad Millennial

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My thesis is a memoir-istic piece titled “Stigmas and Stereotypes Surrounding the Post-Grad Millennial.” Specifically, a post-grad Millennial is an individual, most likely in their twenties at this moment, who has already graduated from a traditional four-year university, and is now working as a professional, or studying as a graduate student. My thesis consists of five separate topics that pertain to the post-grad Millennial, and how post-grad Millennials perceive these topics as compared to their Generation X or Baby Boomer counterparts.

I’ve written significantly on the topics of independence (or, lack thereof) in Millennial culture, education and human capital within Millennial culture, Millennial dating culture, digital media usage by Millennials, and the overall lifestyle of the post-grad Millennial. I’ve also touched upon other subjects, such as the way Millennials perceive money and finances. I’ve chosen these topics for the sole reason that they seem to prevalent to all Millennials, and play a significant role in how Millennials live their lives. These topics also seem to be a little controversial with older generations, such as their parents’ or grandparents’ generations, as they view these matters in a different light. Previous generations define independence differently than Millennials, or had an altered concept on how money should be saved or spent.

The memoir-istic format I chose to write in gave me the opportunity to share my own experiences, and supplement them with research material, as well as personal interviews and firsthand accounts of my peers. I used information from academic journals and United States government documents, in addition to articles from *Forbes* and *The New York Times*, amongst others. In regards to the personal accounts, I was able to retrieve information that either validated my own experiences, or refuted them, which allowed me to further understand, from various perspectives, the topics at-hand. I was also able to interview individuals from the Baby Boomer

and Gen X generations, who, again, either validated how Millennials are perceived by their elder counterparts, or refuted it.

As a whole, I found that most of my research validated the stigmas and stereotypes surrounding the post-grad Millennial. However, it took those what are often seen as negative stereotypes, and conformed them into positive characteristics of the Millennial generation. For example, Millennials are viewed as narcissistic, and for a large portion of the older generations, this is a negative trait, as this can mean that individuals are self-centered, and careless of others. However, in this case, instead of showcasing the negative, there's a positive spin of the narcissism in Millennial culture. This negative-to-positive transformation appeared to take place, as well, when speaking about the job culture and professional attitude of Millennials. Many Millennials have resisted the 9-5, 40-hour a week job. Instead, they choose to work from home. While this may put a strain on the workplace environment, this also means that Millennials are flexible, and willing to work outside of what has been seen as common. While these are only a few examples, this kind of negative-to-positive conversion seems to be the norm of my thesis.

Though my thesis focuses on these five topics extensively, my conclusion seems, to me, the most intriguing part of it all. Through all of my research and interviews of different subject matter, I made one general conclusion that does not seem to be discussed, in great detail, online or in texts: Millennials are noncommittal. Very little is said about this publicly, but all research lends its hand, so to speak, to this conclusion. Financially speaking, Millennials like to lease items, whether it's a home, a vehicle, or a phone. They tend to job-hop, much more often than their Baby Boomer parents, and they typically enjoy moving to larger cities frequently, where there is more of a Millennial population. Though these are only a few examples, many more reside within my thesis. It is this conclusion that I wish to showcase at the Graduate Symposium.

Kirsten Mikesell graduated from Purdue University with a degree in English Education in 2013. After graduation, Kirsten spent two years taking graduate classes through Purdue, obtaining her license to teach ESL, and teaching high school English. She started at Valparaiso University in May 2015, and is set to graduate in May 2016 with a Master's degree in English Studies and Communication. Kirsten is very passionate about her thesis, as she is a Millennial herself.