Ref HC 110.C6 M545

A M E R I C A N GENERATIONS

Who they are. How they live. What they think



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> New Strategist Publications, Inc. Ithaca, New York

Table 2.3 Opinion of Other People, 2000

"Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?"

"Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair?"

"Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly just looking out for themselves?"

(percent of people aged 18 or older responding by age and generation, 2000)

	can be trusted	you can't be too careful	try to be fair	would try to take advantage	try to be heipful	look out for themseives
Total people	35%	58%	52%	38%	46%	45%
Aged 18 to 24	25	72	33	53	26	64
Aged 25 to 34	30	63	47	43	44	48
Aged 35 to 44	38	55	51	39	44	47
Aged 45 to 54	39	52	59	31	52	38
Aged 55 to 64	40	56	57	34	52	42
Aged 65 or older	37	57	60	30	54	37
Millennial	24	72	34	49	26	62
Generation X	31	63	45	45	43	49
Baby Boom	38	54	55	35	47	43
Swing	40	55	58	34	52	41
World War II	36	57	59	30	54	37

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because "don't know" and "depends" (a volunteered response) are not

Source: 2000 General Social Survey, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago; calculations by the author

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Younger Generations Are Less Trusting

Regardless of age, however, most people do not think others can be trusted.

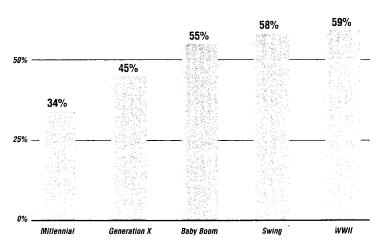
The younger the person, the more likely he or she is to be wary of the motives of other people. The Millennial generation is more likely than others to believe you can't be too careful when dealing with other people (72 percent) and that most of the time people are just looking out for themselves (62 percent). Millennials and Generation Xers are more likely than older generations to think most people will take advantage of them if they have the chance (49 and 45 percent, respectively).

Although younger generations are more likely to be wary of others, the majority of people, regardless of age, think you can't be too careful when dealing with others. But most people aged 35 or older believe others try to be fair, and the majority of those aged 45 or older think people try to be helpful. Whether or not younger adults will become more trusting as they get older remains to be seen.

■ Corporate crime, church scandals, Internet scams, and the like are making everyone more likely to think badly of others.

The youngest adults are the most wary

(percent who think other people try to be fair, by generation, 2000)



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