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There are encompassing names given to entire generations: The Lost Generation (1895-1920) The Silent Generation (1925-1945), "Baby Boomers" (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980). I believe the generation born after 1980, should be given the name of "None of My Business Generation."

Unfortunately, we have raised one of the most self-centered generations that has ever existed. The "none-of-my-business" attitude is rampant. No one really cares for anybody. No one actually expects anything from anybody. Brothers, sisters, relatives, "best friends," are living up to a fraction of their potential, or downright destroying themselves. You party with them, you have fun with them, and you get together with them. But when it comes to their life? You say: "That's none of my business." Through my job, I befriended a 32 year old ("young") Russian scientist. At one point -upon noticing he was in a bad mood- I sent him an email, which lead to the following exchange:

>>"You do not seem to be in a good mood"

"No I am not, I have some problems"

>>"Is there anything I can do for you? Do you want to tell me?"

....to which came the shocking reply:...

"I like to be happy with my friends! Why would you listen to my problems? I'll solve them sooner or later!"

This is the generation we have produced. It is more than sad; it is tragic. I had a fair share of my friends chewing me up for things they deemed as not up and up, and I did the same with them. We always felt that it was "my business" if I saw a close friend or relative doing something not right. But, in this (now age 20-30) generation, "it's none-of-my-business," let's have fun. This "None of My Business" generation has even invented a very comforting theory to cover the core problem of no one really cares about anyone: *"Don't be judgmental."* Isn't it convenient? Now, under the heading of "I am not judging you," we all can have fun, then you can go home and die in a heroin overdose.

This trend generated by the liberal "we understand you", "we don't judge you", "all you need to do is to do your best" philosophy has been greatly assisted by new technology platforms and services.

I have, since day one been saying that the TV - videogame - computer game- sms -facebook - tweet (and upcoming other) media and communication platforms and technologies are (while establishing "communication") killing all "interaction" skills in our children's generation. This "evolution" (should it not be called "devolution" or "retardation?") bridge spans from the early age of SONY Walkman to today's advanced digital age which has gotten so ridiculous that you can buy a digital fishing pole, you can do "virtual fishing" and there are "virtual villages" where you can do "virtual living;" in the meantime, you are still living and breathing.

This "historical bridge" in its entirety has been serving one purpose: to generate more human isolation. If there was ever built a "bridge to nowhere" this one is it. There are a great number of studies on how these digital platforms isolate people from one another. The "fast life," the "I need information quickly" behavior model created a generation that exclusively concentrates on the information, leaving completely out the person where the information is coming from. I argue that in the created information avalanche, it is impossible to maintain sufficient mental bandwidth for the

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information and its source (the person). This is what any generation before the "None of My Business (born between 1980-2000)" one used to call "conversation," "discussion" or "talk it through." This new communication model has created hundreds of millions of discrete points (people) all interested in getting and processing the information flow with no regards to where (whom) the information is coming from. Pre-digital-platform times, the information was coming from a person, ninety percent of the time over a personal conversation. The digital platforms have largely separated the information from the source, stripped all (or at least: most) human ingredients and converted the "human society" into a cluster of discrete points.

It is a regular scene to see six young girls and boys at McDonalds or Starbucks; all of them are on their small communication gear typing. There is no conversation going on. None. I had lunch in a very nice Mexican restaurant in Houston and observed a young, well-dressed couple (seemingly on a date); they ordered food, then both of them took their iPhones out, and started to type. They did not say a word to each other the entire time I was eating and observing them. Sadly, this is a global phenomenon.

The picture below was taken in Liverpool, UK in December 2011. I was observing this group for more than ten minutes.



The two young ladies were typing on their respective iPhones, the young man (with his back to the camera) was typing on his, and the other young man (with the cap on) was watching the other three, seemingly, bored out of his mind. Not a word was spoken. Is this what the new generation calls "getting together," "meeting," or "having a conversation?"

The picture below was taken in Dallas. Mother and daughter are having lunch.....



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Not long ago, I observed a young (probably 27-29 years of age) mother playing ping-pong with her son in the gym. She was playing ping-pong with one hand and texting with the other. Not a word was spoken between mother and son.

I am sure that -just as I- everybody can recall hundreds or thousands of scenes from the past six to eight years in the family, friends' families, in restaurants, on subways, in libraries and other places; a wide spectrum of life settings where the younger people of the company are participating in the "discussion" while having their iPhone in their hand or in front of them on the table, and they look at it in every 15 seconds. They pick it up in every ninety seconds and type something on it with the "I just need to quickly answer this," or "just give me one second" announcement, if the "conversation" involves them in that moment. Or the conversation stops and a number of people in the company are sitting there quietly watching how this person is typing. If the person is not involved in that second, the "conversation" is going around the table while this person is typing and obviously not listening. The other version of this scene is when the person keeps talking about the subject at hand while also typing on the iPhone.

When I discussed this with the members of the "None of My Business" generation, their defense was; "I can listen while I type," and "I can multi-task." Beyond the obvious lunacy of this statement, it accurately portrays how shallow this entire generation has become. They actually and seriously think, that a "conversation's" depth only involves this level of thinking, listening and consideration. There is an exponentially growing number of studies contradicting the stated myth invented by members of the "None of My Business" generation.

Emphatic Listening

"..Give the person you are connecting with your full attention. Remember that the person in front of you is your sole focus at this singular moment in time. Multitasking, is a great thing, but not appropriate when working empathically with another person, particularly when practicing empathic listening. Their problem is in your hands, so your understanding and your time are reversely in theirs....." (www.emphaticperspectives.com)

Listening

"Listening is one of the most important skills you can have. How well you listen has a major impact on your job effectiveness, and on the quality of your relationships with others.

We listen to obtain information.

We listen to understand.

We listen for enjoyment.

We listen to learn.

Given all this listening we do, you would think we'd be good at it! In fact most of us are not. Depending on the study being quoted, we remember between 25% and 50% of what we hear. That means that when you talk to your boss, colleagues, customers or spouse for 10 minutes, they pay attention to less than half of the conversation. This is dismal! Turn it around and it reveals that when you are receiving directions or being presented with information, you aren't hearing the whole message either. You hope the important parts are captured in your 25-50%, but what if they're not? Clearly, listening is a skill that we can all benefit from improving. By becoming a better listener, you will improve your productivity, as well as your ability to influence, persuade and negotiate. What's more, you'll avoid conflict and misunderstandings. All of these are necessary for workplace success!" (www.emphaticperspectives.com)

"Empathic Approach, Listening Skills"

"The Panama Canal may serve as an adequate analogy for the role of effective listening skills. As a youth, I traveled the canal several times as we sailed in a freight ship from the port of Valparaiso, in Chile, to New York. Massive lock gates are utilized to manage the water levels in the canal, so that ships can move from one direction to another. The water level behind one set of closed locks can be much higher than that of the next compartment through which a ship will travel. We can compare this scene to the state of mind of an individual suffering from deep emotional wounds, or involved in a serious interpersonal conflict. With disparate water levels there is a buildup of pressure behind the closed locks. If one were to open these lock gates, the flow would be mostly unidirectional. Likewise, a party who is holding in his/her emotions needs a release. Such an individual is unlikely to (1) think clearly about the challenge or (2) be receptive to outside input from another. The role of the listener or helper is to allow such an individual to open the lock gates. When he does, the water gushes out. During this venting process, there is still too much pressure for a person to consider other perspectives. Only when the water level has leveled off between the two compartments, does the water begin to flow evenly back and forth. The role of the listener is to help empty the large reservoirs of emotion, anger, stress, frustration and other negative feelings until the individual can see more clearly.

Not until then, can a party consider the needs of the other. Perhaps we can think of it as listening first aid.....I was informed that the pre-caucus would be quite brief, as the person I was about to listen to was not a man of many words. Yet this individual spoke to me for almost two hours. By the time we finished, he felt understood and had gained confidence. During the joint session, this same employee was able to laugh when it was appropriate. I have found that these "silent types" will often open up when there is someone who will truly listen.....The process of listening so others will talk is called *empathic listening*. Empathy, according to some dictionary definitions, means to put oneself in a position to understand another person. Certainly, this is an aspect of empathy....We spend a large portion of our waking hours conversing and listening. When two friends or colleagues have an engaging dialogue, they will often compete to speak and share ideas. Certainly, listening skills play

an important role is such stimulating exchanges. When it comes to empathic listening, we do not vie to be heard, nor do we take turns speaking. Rather, we are there to motivate and cheer the other person on.Empathic listening is incompatible with being in a hurry, or with the fast paced world around us. Such careful listening requires that we, at least for the moment, place time on slow motion and suspend our own thoughts and needs. Clearly, there are no shortcuts to empathic listening.....One of the best steps, in terms of body language, is to invite someone to take a seat, if he/she has not done so already. By offering a seat we let him/her know that we are willing to listen and ready to take the time to do so. That we are not going to ration out the time. Persons who are very interested in what another is saying may, from time to time, lean toward the speaker, and their interest is reflected in their faces, body language, and tone of voice. We can signal with our head movement that we are listening....If we are truly interested in listening, our body language shows it...." (*Gregorio Billikopf, at the University of California at Berkley*).

The Elmhurst College Learning Center's study states:

"Listening and hearing are **not** the same. Hearing is the first stage of listening. Hearing occurs when your ears pick up sound waves which are then transported to your brain. This stage is your *sense of hearing*. Listening is a communication process and, to be successful, is an active process. In other words, you must be an *active participant* in this communication process. In active listening, meaning and evaluation of a message must take place before a listener can respond to a speaker. Therefore, the listener is actively

working while the speaker is talking."

Poor Listeners

"Many people are poor listeners, even in everyday life. They tend to listen and think about something else at the same time. This happens even more frequently when people are in conflict. Rather than carefully attending to what the other person has said, many people think about their response while the other person is talking... Such poor listening makes good communication almost impossible. No matter how much care one person or group takes to communicate their concerns, values, interests, or needs in a fair, clear, unthreatening way, if the listener is not willing to receive that information in that way, the communication will fail...." (*Conflict Research Consortium at the University of Colorado*)

The sad and frustrating part that all studies, I have read, are stating the most obvious, most common sense facts: "if you talk with somebody, pay attention, look the speaker in the eye, and concentrate on what the speaker is saying." Think about sitting in a small restaurant, discussing an issue with your friend, when a beautiful woman comes in and walks by. Your eyes follow her, your attention is diverted; it takes 4-5 seconds to get back to the conversation. Now multiply this scenario with a

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constant diversion of your attention: to think when the next message comes; to read it; think about it, and reply to it or not.....then onto the next "watching message" cycle. And you are telling me that you are concentrating on the conversation that you are having around the table (??).

Unfortunately, and thanks to the growing number of digital platforms the "None of My Business" generation has gone very far from the "please look into my eyes when we talk" concept. But they are correct in their own right: if you are only interested in receiving data from another source by completely disregarding the source's profile, and your interest is in very shallow snippets and a bumper sticker-depth verbal exchange (I cannot call it a "conversation"), then you are right: at that level, "multi tasking" is possible.

I would also like to offer another consideration: the "technology boom," that killed human interaction, also proved that the need of "communication" is a strong, gene level, built-in requisite of human nature. If it was not, people would not hang on to their communication gear most of the day. If we agree that the "need for communication" is there, then there is a choice to satisfy this need either via "communication-by-interaction" or eliminating the interaction part altogether. We –sadly- chose the latter. If the liberal crowd (in their search for the lowest common denominator) wanted to do something useful (in creating a reasonable common denominator); then they should make a "human interaction" mandatory, starting in the first grade. They pushed math quality (and everything else) below sub-zero instead. In any case, the generation that did not have a high-level interaction capability to begin with received a tool that took the little interaction need that was left, away. I argue that this rampant none-of-my-business mentality is a derivative consequence of the isolation we have been letting our children sink into. It is beyond me why we are so surprised that the generation we thought to disregard the "information source" (the other human being) developed the "none-of-my-business" attitude. These are the two sides of the very same coin. This generation's communication rarely contains useful information, (in the interest of "fun" content), so why bother?