

Episode 3: Gentelligence with Dr. Megan Gerhardt

Overview:

In this episode, Chris talks with Dr. Megan Gerhardt, the author of a new book called *Gentelligence: The Revolutionary Approach to Leading an Intergenerational Workforce*. They discuss the importance of understanding generational diversity and how people of all ages can learn from one another.

Key Points:

Gentelligence is made up of four basic practices. The first two are all about breaking down assumptions and making sure that we don't have tension or miscommunication about how different generations think. But the second two are really about how we create and leverage the potential of having those different voices at the table.

1. The first practice that you put into place is resist assumptions.
2. The second practice that is connected to gentelligence is called adjust the lens - is there another way to see?
3. The third is building trust that their perspective is valued and necessary and needed.
4. The final step is to think about expanding the pie. Giving others a voice doesn't take away from ourselves.

Quotes:

- "It wouldn't be socially acceptable or morally acceptable to be really locking into an us versus them conflict with kinds of difference around gender identity or racial identity or any other kind. We're aware that that's unproductive and unhealthy and we work very hard to try to

navigate away from that. But when it comes to age and generation, and we talk about those not interchangeably, but certainly as being importantly connected, we seem to have given that a pass." ~ Dr. Gerhardt

- "Gentelligence is just looking at generational differences as an opportunity rather than a threat." ~ Dr. Gerhardt
- "I think I use gentelligence in my work, not only as a faculty member, but in my administrative role, because students are one of our most important stakeholders. And while they are there to learn from us, we seem to sometimes forget that it is just as important that we learn from them." ~ Dr. Gerhardt
- "Gen Zs and millennials have the hardest time doing remote work... because they need connection. They need social interaction. They want face-to-face contact, with people their own age, with their mentors. People that are older sort of already have those networks. We've already sort of established our social and professional networks. Our career identity is relatively established, but for people starting a job who never got to step into an office or in our world, freshmen that never got to set foot on campus, we're seeing the melt of students who don't feel like part of our university because they never got to be physically there." ~ Dr. Gerhardt
- "If they perceive that we're just putting them at a table to check a box or for optics, that we want to say we had students involved in this committee, but we're not really listening to that, that's not going to work. That's fake. And so they really are going to want to know and believe that the time

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they're putting in is going to make a difference. That's a very gen Z, you know, that mission driven and purpose and all of those great things." ~ Dr. Gerhardt

- "They might think you understand something and are ignoring it as opposed to that never occurred to us as being a hindrance." ~ Dr. Gerhardt
- "The question is where are we making assumptions about what an entirely different age group might need or want or how they would respond to something or what would be effective for them?" ~ Dr. Gerhardt
- "Growing up in a different time is a very valid source of different perspective and we don't want to ignore it. We want to embrace it and we want to benefit from it. I think any way that you can think to apply that in the work that you're doing, I think is going to be beneficial." ~ Dr. Gerhardt
- "If we can shift our perspective that somehow letting the students have a strong voice or have a substantial, meaningful impact, that makes

us stronger, that doesn't make us soft... Giving power to someone younger or someone older than me, sharing power and decision-making, doesn't make me less important. It doesn't make me less respected. It makes me more respected." ~ Dr. Gerhardt

- "There are really great and interesting generational differences and the book, of course, dives into those, but there's also universal needs and all generations want to feel respected. They want to feel connected and they want to feel they have voice or autonomy or agency." ~ Dr. Gerhardt

Resources:

Why I Love Millennials (and You Should Too) | Megan Gerhardt | TEDxMiamiUniversity

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQMt343pMak>

Gentelligence Lunch and Learn with Dr. Megan Gerhardt

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCr77K5TpxM>

<https://profgerhardt.com>