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# Whatever Happened to the Generation Gap?

By Ted Landphair

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You don't hear about a generation gap much anymore. Here in the office, we were speculating why that may be. One person said it is just the term that has gone out of style, much as Americans rarely say things are swell or groovy these days.

Or has the generation gap itself all but disappeared?



Young people so annoyed, perplexed or even angered

Young people so annoyed, perplexed or even angered many of their elders in the 1960s and early '70s that the generation gap widened

There was a lot of talk about such a gap in the 1960s, which was a decade of drug-smoking hippies and violent street protests against racism and war. At the time, some young people's radical tastes in politics, music, and culture diverted wildly from those of their elders.

Old-fashioned values swept back into favor in the 1970s and beyond, when young Gen, or generation X'ers ushered in a conservative wave and American style capitalism became fashionable again. That seemed to narrow the generation gap.

And today? Some people argue that the generation gap is just about gone, or even that the cultural balance has swung in young people's favor. They, by and large, are more facile on the computer and other technological devices than are older Americans. The influence of provocative music styles such as rap and heavy metal permeates just about every form of popular music. And young people's casual attitude toward attire has spilled into corporate workplaces.

The *Wall Street Journal* has written that even grandparents want to be thought of as young. There's no gramps or granny role for many of them. They are on a first-name basis with their children and grandkids.

The old authoritarian approach to discipline of children, such as a starchy 'Because I said so, that's why,' is giving way to a new egalitarianism' between old and young, the *Christian Science Monitor* added in another story.

The message is that these days, young and old are friends and colleagues, partners in a difficult world. Of course, that makes it harder to discipline the younger generation.

Why? Because I said so, that's why!

Read more of Ted's personal reflections and stories from the road on his blog, [Ted Landphair's America](#).

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