

# Tim Elmore

**Tim Elmore:** [00:00:00] "The builder generation was a generation of caution. The baby boomer generation, a generation of confidence. Xers, back to caution. Millennials, back to confidence. Gen Z, back to caution. It's like a pendulum swinging back and forth on the grandfather clock of history. "

**Tim Spiker:** Have you ever thought about how major historical events and trends influence the perspectives of those you lead and, therefore, Impact the best ways to lead them.

I'm your host, Tim Spiker, and this is the Be Worth\* Following podcast. On this show, we talk with exceptional leaders, thinkers, and researchers about what actually drives effective leadership across the globe and over time. You just heard from Dr. Tim Elmore, founder and CEO of Growing Leaders; an organization dedicated to developing young emerging leaders.

Dr. Elmore has written 35 books. That's right. 35. Including his well-known series called [00:01:00] *Habitudes*. Which utilizes captivating and meaningful pictures to teach timeless truths about leadership. He is known across the United States and has traveled to locations around the world, sharing his insights. On top of all of that, he has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, USA Today, and Psychology Today.

And he's also been featured on TV interviews on CNN and Fox. On a personal note, I've had the privilege of knowing Dr. Elmore for 20 years. He has an amazing combination of knowledge, humility, and encouragement that has blessed me personally and professionally. As you listen to him, know that he is not only knowledgeable, he is also a practitioner of leadership.

He applies the very principles he shares with others. But before we get into Dr. Elmore's wisdom and the details of his most recent book, we get a chance to hear about those who have influenced him, which includes a faked illness that put him in front of a crowd for the very first time, and a 20-year stint working [00:02:00] directly for a giant in the world of leadership development.

**Tim Elmore:** Mom and dad were huge. I have equal DNA from my mother and my father. That was kind of cool because I think I got some good stuff from both. But I would say, Tim, one of the early influences that people may or may not know is a guy named Sean Mitchell. Sean was the chaplain for the San Diego Chargers.

I met him when I was a teenager in high school. He was in his twenties, and this would have been, oh my gosh. 50 years ago, maybe not 50 years ago, 45 years ago. So, I'm old, I'm a dinosaur, but Sean was made a huge impression on me with his passion. I didn't meet anybody with the same level of passion, and it was magnetic to me as a teen.

Tim, he's the one I think I've told you about that got me up in front of a crowd speaking at 17 years old before I thought I was ready. And I found out later He faked laryngitis in order to get me up in front of [00:03:00] this crowd, and of course, I want to hit him, you know, when I, when I remember that story, but it was so cool that his value that night when I spoke was not get the best speaker up.

If that was the goal, he would have been up. It was, I see this young guy and I want to start grooming him for what I see inside a communication skills and leadership skills. It was not only my first time up, but from that point on, he hugged me afterwards. He was a big old football player. And he said, Tim, from now on, we'll rotate.

I'll be on one week. You'll be on the next. So, on a regular basis, since I was 17 years old, I've been communicating. The other one I would mention real quick here is John Maxwell. I went on staff with John Maxwell right out of college. So, it was the early eighties. John wasn't yet really famous. So I had lots of just personal time.

He was in his thirties. I was in my twenties and I just cannot calculate how valuable that was. He wasn't [00:04:00] perfect, but he nailed what it meant to lead well. And I got that in me, gosh, in my twenties and I'm in my early sixties now.

Many of our listeners are familiar with John and his work. And just imagine here is one of the most well-known and accomplished developer of leaders on the planet.

**Tim Spiker:** And in your twenties, you started a 20-year tutelage underneath him. And I appreciate what you're saying. He's not perfect. Nobody is, but what a, what a, what an unexpected gift. I, you know, I didn't know that when you said, yes, I'm going to join in here with John Maxwell.

**Tim Elmore:** I didn't in fact people ask that question all the time i didn't know i just knew he had a level of charisma for sure he's always had that and he took a keen interest in me which every mentee will say well the reason he mentored

me is cuz he was interested in me but i mean he took me under his wing and i made mistakes and he didn't fire [00:05:00] me.

And so, by the time I get to midlife, I start this nonprofit, Growing Leaders, which really was repurposing John's leadership development for adults. I want to do it for the next gen. So young adults and teenagers. So, it was I always tell him every time I'm with him, I hug him, and I go, you got stock and all the work I'm doing right now.

And he smiles and says, all right, I'll take it, you know.

How special it is. I mean, if there's this kind of classic moment where people get a chance, you hear the story all the time. They get a chance to meet their hero and it's a disappointment. They get a chance to be closer to the person they've been observing from afar.

**Tim Spiker:** And it's, it's not a fulfilling and encouraging thing. And here you're telling the story about somebody who writes and speaks about leadership at a very high level. And you are the example of him living it out behind the scenes, which is so much more encouraging than the classic story of, of I was disappointed when I met that person.

[00:06:00] So that's really, that's wonderful.

**Tim Elmore:** Well, it was and is. In fact, we're now merging. John approached me in 2021 and said, what do you think about reconnecting our two organizations? So, we're in the process of doing that. And that was an honor, of course to be the next gen arm of of the Maxwell enterprise. Which is a wonderful.

**Tim Spiker:** segue into we want to spend some time talking about today. Now you heard in the intro that Tim has written 17, 422 books. And today, today we're going to talk about just one of them. We're going to focus in. It's just a touch of hyperbole there, but, but, but not that much. I mean, my friend, you have cranked out so much content over the year, but there is this word that has gotten a lot of attention recently, this word diversity.

And you've written a book, A New Kind of Diversity. And so, let's dig into this because I think it's going to be helpful. You're [00:07:00] coming at an angle here that not a lot of people talk about. And so, let's just start out before we get into the content of the book. What inspired you to write it? Why did you want to dig into this material?

**Tim Elmore:** Yeah, it's it is a good question i feel like the real impetus was i was seeing an elephant in the room in every organization, company school i went to. We do talk about ethnic diversity gender diversity income diversity those are all very real and we need to keep discussing them and positively changing. However, the elephant in the room was the diversity of generations that are in an organization that we don't know how to talk about, except in sarcasm or stereotypes. You know, we meet at the water cooler and say, Millennials, can't live with them, can't live with them, you know, or something like that. Kids today, have we not said kids today for millenniums.

Socrates said, kids in my day are disrespectful to the adults. And I'm going, Oh my gosh, that could have been written [00:08:00] last week. Well, anyway, I wrote this book to be sort of an encyclopedia where a leader or really anyone, a team member an uncle in a family reunion could say, I understand the builder generation, understand the boomers, the Xers, the millennials, Gen Z, and now the new kids on the block are the alpha generation.

These are the children, middle school and under that are gracing planet earth. And I'm thinking with seven generations that are alive right now, we better pay attention to this topic.

**Tim Spiker:** Well, I'm glad that you wrote it and I'm glad that we get to talk about it today so that we can shine a light on it and think about both the challenges and the opportunities that come along with this, with this multi-generational workforce.

And I say workforce, it applies to businesses, but it applies to nonprofits and schools and athletics and everything else as well. So, let's dig into the content here a little bit. You in the book, you say this. The generation gap, which was first noticed in the 1960s, has widened today, [00:09:00] making collaboration and synergy on a team more challenging than ever.

Yeah. So, say a little bit more. Unpack that idea for us a little bit as we begin to dig into this this idea around diversity of age and generations.

**Tim Elmore:** Well, the reason I made that statement in the book, the gap's gotten wider today, we noticed it way back in the 60s when the baby boomers were the new kids on the block, and it was those older folk that can't understand these hippies, you know, whatever, kids today, but here's why I believe the gap has gotten wider, probably many reasons, but here's one.

The screens in our life went from public to private, so we had one screen in our house when I was a child growing up. It was a black and white TV, but we all gathered around that screen and watch together, laugh together, talked about it together. Today we all have our own individual screen in our hands.

And I can live in a silo, in a niche, if you will, very different from [00:10:00] my parents or my children. So, you know, I don't need to elaborate on this, but I'll say this, a parent may have a teenager who, and they know she has an Instagram account, but they have no idea she has five Finsta accounts, fake Instagram, where she's developed personas and she is posing to be this and in touch with who knows.

God knows who. So, I'm just saying, it's just so easy now to be in different worlds. And so, the gap just keeps getting bigger and bigger because we're not together like we used to be.

**Tim Spiker:** That's really interesting. Just over this weekend. You know that I am. Have a history around college athletics. And so, I get sucked into all the documentaries and I got sucked into a couple of this past weekend.

So, I ended up binge watching Swamp Kings on Netflix, but right after that, and related to what you're talking about, I got sucked into the untold story around Manti Teo and the catfishing situation that he went through. And as I, as I watched [00:11:00] that story, I mean, it was heartbreaking story to watch in so many different ways.

Talk about going. You know, generationally, you don't have to go back very far. And everybody's like, what, what the heck is catfishing? What, what on earth is, I mean, there, there's no context for that. And so your point is really well, well taken. These individual screens really have an impact on how we interact with the world outside of us, how we interact with the people around us, how we interact with ourselves.

So boy, I think, I think I can't imagine anybody listening would disagree with the impact of these individual screens.

**Tim Elmore:** Well and Tim the number one thing that happens if we're not careful as we just get frustrated at these huge differences that make colliding easier than collaborating at work so here's what my goal is in a simple phrase you know I'm kind of cheesy but here's my phrase I want to turn your frustration into fascination with the other generations how do they bring a value

that i did not have until that twenty two year old showed [00:12:00] up so that's really the goal it's not just you know oh my gosh now i kind of understand that.

You know, Martian that just came on our team. It's more. Oh, my gosh. Thank God for that. Martian. He knows tick talk, and we can monetize that for marketing here.

**Tim Spiker:** So, well, I think your frustration. Fascination comment is so important because it aligns perfectly with the core leadership principle of being curious.

Ultimately, yes, this is something that we all as leaders need to be more of. It's in fact, in our work with our clients, it's the first thing we start with and the reason that we start with it is because I have never met a leader at any level of an organization who has said, I wouldn't benefit from being more curious.

Every, every single one recognizes that the speed at which they're having to make decisions and they know they're making it with imperfect information. We're never going to get to, you know, Full knowledge, because that just is not possible. However, they would all say, and they all do say, [00:13:00] I could be more curious.

Let's work on being more curious. And so, when I get a chance to encounter a generation of people that I do not understand for a variety of reasons. This is a wonderful turn of phrase to focus us on being curious. In this case, let me be fascinated without judgment instead of just going to that place of frustration.

So, I think that's a, a wonderful phrase. You might say it's cheesy. I'm going to say it's memorable. And that's good.

**Tim Elmore:** It's a far better word and it helps my self-esteem when you say that. So, so Tim, let me volley back really quick with some research. When I was interviewing representatives from all five of the generations that are still at work, I asked these reps from each generation.

What do you want most from other generations when they interact with you? Well, we got a truckload of answers. You can imagine from Gen Z to boomers and builders. But three answers came up in every generation. Number one, [00:14:00] they said, would you approach me with humility, which communicates I don't know everything I could probably pick up something here.

22-year-old or 62 year old as I interface with you. So, humility was number one. Number two is predictable, but it's the word respect. I think far too often my older generation says to young team members, well, you got to earn my respect, Sonny, you know, and they're begging. For respect when they start don't make me earn it make me glad you hired me by believing me so one of our core values at our office at our team is begin with belief.

As I interact I'm gonna start by believing you even before you may have earned it but that's probably gonna foster you earning it so okay, so word number one is humility word number two is believe but the third word you're gonna love. Curiosity. They all said, would you approach me curious about who I am and what I might [00:15:00] say or do that could benefit everybody?

Well, that's just screaming for esteem, really. And I don't know. I'm not a psychologist. My doctorate's in leadership, but oh, my gosh. Think about a workplace, humility, respect, and curiosity with all interchanges, all time. That would be fascinating.

**Tim Spiker:** That would be a remarkable place to be, and I can't think of one of us that wouldn't want to be at a place like that.

I cannot think of one of us.

**Tim Elmore:** Since we've yet to define the generations here in this conversation, I think question one ought to be listeners find out their story. The reason different generations respond differently is not just we're different ages. That does affect us. Yeah. I get a little more tired quicker, now, than I did 40 years ago. But we are shaped in the first couple of decades of our life, the 20 to 25 years of our life. In fact, our brains develop a little bit like wet cement. Our [00:16:00] neural pathways are very pliable, very plastic in the first 20 years of our life. And then it's not that they're hardened, later, and you cannot change it 30 or 35, but change becomes measurably harder later. In other words, it's easy to change as a 16-year-old, a little bit harder as a 46 year old. Because of that, I remember being shaped in the 60s and 70s by the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, the OPEC gas crisis, the tensions that were in the air.

My mom and dad, my gosh, Great Depression kids, World War II kids. My dad was born in 1930. He's a builder generation guy. They were called builders because they built so much out of so little. The first decade of his life was the Great Depression. The next five years, World War II. So, he's frugal, resourceful, grateful, oh, my gosh. So, the whole mantra there [00:17:00] was just be grateful you have a job. The mantra of my generation was it was Boomer

X'er and it was just so, so, so different because it was post World War II. The builder generation would be born 1930 to 1945, 1929 and 1945. Started with the stock market crash and the Great Depression all the way to the end of World War II.

Those were the markers, and they were called the builders because they built so much out of so little right after World War Two, a new generation starts. Baby Boomer was the name of the new generation because the boom of babies started nine months after World War II was over. And that lasted for, for you know, 18 years, 1946 to 64.

The end of the Boomer generation happened with the public introduction of the birth control pill. Right around the mid 1960s, the Baby Buster generation started. It was a bust, not a boom. They were eventually called Generation X [00:18:00] because of their demand. The times were just different than, than the big post World War II.

We're the most awesome country in the world. Then in the eighties and nineties, you have the millennial generation. We have been throwing them under the bus for 15 years now, but eighties and nineties kids would be my own kids, Bethany, and Jonathan. Bethany is 35. Jonathan's 31 now. They're both millennials.

And by the way, the millennials are called that title because they'll spend their entire adult life in the new millennium. The twenty first century they were born in the twentieth, but will it be no enjoy mostly the twenty first century and then right around the turn of the century. Comes the generation z following generation y or the millennials and they really only remember the last twenty plus years.

Where life has been a little darker. It started with, in many ways, the dot com era bubble bursting, so we thought the internet would be [00:19:00] awesome forever. Well, then we saw the not so awesome parts, right? And then there was September 11th, 2001. We've never seen anything like that, and they, they don't remember that, but they're in the aftermath of that, where we're all a little more anxious, a little more scared, maybe we're not so invincible.

And then you have the introduction of the smartphone, you have the first black president elected, change is in the air, but there have been more mass shootings this year than we've had days in the year. So, I mean, we've had, if we were at the end of the year, there would be more mass shootings than days in the year.



So, think about being a teenager today. They're soon to be hired, full time in the job, about four, you know, whenever they turn 22. But I'm telling you it's been a little more anxious, a little bit more depression. We hear about mental health issues all the time, do we not? It's been so fascinating to do the social science on these five generations.

Each [00:20:00] one of them doesn't represent psychology. There's introverts and extroverts, pessimists, and optimists in every generation. But there's a tone to culture. It's sociology. The builder generation was a generation of caution. The baby boomer generation, a generation of confidence. Xers back to caution. Millennials back to confidence. Gen Z back to caution. It's like a pendulum swinging back and forth on the grandfather clock of history. And it's all tone. So you got a really cool, goofy Gen Zer. young man or young woman, it's a percolating crock pot or coffee pot of angst and uncertainty and you know, God knows what's gonna happen next.

And that's kind of how the tone of culture is right now.

**Tim Spiker:** Wow, that's fascinating. That is a wonderful segue to the next part that I want us to spend a little time on because [00:21:00] there are those trends and the idea of caution, confidence, caution, confidence, caution is fascinating to think about. And yet, each person is an individual.

And so how do we take all of that into account as we interact amongst the generations without being too much without leaning too much into stereotyping, which at times get us in trouble. We pigeonhole people. We say, Oh, you're that generation. You're that way. It's like, well, actually. That might be a millennial who looks a whole lot more like a Gen Xer.

And so how do we take this information and use it wisely, but also be careful not to go, maybe go too far with it, if I could put it that way.

**Tim Elmore:** Well, I would just say, first of all, my goal in the book is not to stereotype, but to understand. So, when I interview a Gen Z, college grad. Just knowing there might be a bit of angst inside, even if he's an optimist, even if he's zany on TikTok or whatever, I know [00:22:00] inside might be some mental health issues he's covering up in his TikTok videos. That's helpful. So, when you interview a gen zero, there's two major meta qualities that that employers are saying. I see these all the time and they're oxymoronic. So, a high sense of agency and a high sense of anxiety and both are coexisting at the same time. So the agency might be because I grew up with a smartphone, I think I know a lot, you know, maybe more than you, you know, no, you don't, Bob, you

know, I think many employers, well, I don't think I know many HR hiring managers have said, my God, they're coming in with such audacity and, and, you know, almost like cockiness, you know so, so just know this can be channeled in the right direction, but here's the oxymoronic part or the paradox of it all.

They also come in with a high sense of anxiety, also [00:23:00] fostered by the smartphone. So, think about it, the overwhelming information I have at 12 or 16, I'm not even ready for all that. We need to lead them knowing that about their life. That just makes us better leaders who have greater understanding. And I think they're going to lean in and stick around because they feel like I've got a manager who understands me.

So that's my goal. We can stereotype. Stereotypes are mental shortcuts that are not helpful. We do not need to take those shortcuts. We do need to do a broad sweep and say, Ooh, I need to be aware. Maybe, maybe, maybe this young man or young woman might be struggling a little bit with. Maybe panic attacks, or at least when they happen, I'm not shocked.

**Tim Spiker:** Yeah. Well, and that pulls us back to the curiosity that we were talking about earlier. It's I'm going to be informed about the general trends, but I'm not going to stop there. I'm now going to extend my curiosity to see, well, maybe, maybe this is a, a very different person in that generation. And [00:24:00] maybe they're free from some of those things, or at least to your point, maybe I won't be surprised if they show up later on your, your comment about how the smartphone comes into play here is just.

It's interesting. We, as a family sat down and watched the, the social dilemma. And I'm sure many people out there have seen that. It's, it's kind of a shocking documentary if you haven't seen it before. About how these technologies work, but it reminds me to one of your other. Books Artificial Maturity where you talk about this fast forwarding.

Not because we're actually mature, but because we've been more exposed. And so that's what I hear as you talk about the smartphone here.

**Tim Elmore:** That's exactly right. And for listeners, if you'd never heard that term, I don't blame you, but it's a, it's a term that I've used. Because it describes not that the kids are not the culprits, they're the victims of this day. We live in. So kids today are overexposed to information far earlier [00:25:00] than they're ready, but underexposed to firsthand experiences later than they're ready. So,

you know, when I was growing up, man, I was doing a paper route at 12 and I'm not saying that makes me saintly.

I'm just saying I got work experience early on, well, parents are keeping their kids sometimes out of work because academics are so important or volleyballs important. All those are good. But boy, nothing, other than firsthand experience really gives me wisdom. I could watch 12 or 20 YouTube videos and think I know everything. And I got the world, but no, you don't. You've watched videos.

**Tim Spiker:** And I think, you know, you've got a variety of different industries that listen in on the podcast. And many of them are dealing with very young people in their ranks and wanting to understand, needing to understand those better is. Is really critical.

And something you said triggered another thought for me. Simon Sinek has a, has a great little clip where he [00:26:00] explains this idea and I won't put it in the exact same words as you and Simon, but ultimately the generational trends existed exist for a reason they happened to the generation. And when we, when we, when we start to look at that, I think, and this was Simon's point, we can be more open to empathy.

Especially with younger people, and it would apply older as well, that we don't quite understand if we can wrap our minds around the idea that there are a series of things that have happened to people collectively as a group that push them perhaps in a direction that we don't understand or maybe don't even agree with, but can we keep in mind that in all likelihood the difficult employee probably didn't wake up this morning and say, how can I be a punk at work?

What's my, how can I achieve that? I'm not absolving them of responsibility because we all have to take, okay, this is the hand I was dealt and now I have to [00:27:00] play it. But I am saying and kind of mimicking off of what Simon was saying is, can we bring some empathy to the equation, understanding this next generation?

Never knew that there wasn't an internet and never didn't have a smartphone in their hands. That has impact and implication. And can we just slow our judgment down a little bit as the old fogey leaders and be curious and show up with some, wow, you know what? Maybe if I'd grown up in your generation. You know, maybe I'd be worse than you are if, you know, if, if somebody is viewing them negatively in that case, if I, if I'm not looking at the positives that they bring and I'm in that space anyway.

So, I just, I hear in what you're saying, the opportunity to empathize and connect and understand that there are these trends that have happened to people.

**Tim Elmore:** Well, Tim, let me give you the steps I'm walking through now with my younger [00:28:00] team members and what I teach leaders to use when we feel the same.

Amount of frustration. They're not getting it. What's wrong? So, you know how we've used the phrase forever and ever and ever this is a leg you got to stand on a l e g It's an acronym. Okay, so the letter A is Ask don't tell ask questions. So, I need to start not with an accusation or what the heck are you thinking? So, and by the way, sometimes I need to ask questions because I honest to Pete don't understand why they just did that. So, I might even say, tell me what you're thinking was when you made that decision or when you made that move. When I ask questions, this is just fundamental behavioral science. When I ask questions, they feel important. I'm not telling, that's me being important. I'm asking, that's them feeling important.

The letter L. Is listen well so once i ask questions it does little good unless i actually stop to listen I'm not just waiting for my turn so when I [00:29:00] listen well they feel heard and that is the cry of generation z I want to feel heard and it might feel like.

Fingernails on a chalkboard to a 55 or older employer, but I'm telling you, they need to feel hurt. You'll get to your goal faster if they feel hurt. Here's what I'd say at my team. Everybody has a voice. Not everybody has a vote, but everybody has a voice. Okay, so A is Ask questions. L is Listen well.

The letter E is Empathize. So, if I listen well, and then I'm able with verbal, nonverbal, and para verbal cues to let them know I understand. When I empathize, they feel understood. And, and I'm just saying, it's just huge. You know what I'm thinking right now, Tim? David Augsburger, a great author, and I believe a psychologist, but David said it first.

Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they're indistinguishable. Well, and think about you [00:30:00] and I as dads with young children or even young adult children. Oh my gosh, when I stop and listen to my daughter, who is 35 and we don't think exactly alike. Can I say that here? For her to know that I'm speaking to her as if I believe I'm right, but I'm listening to her as if I believe I'm wrong.

It's a game changer. It's just a game changer. So, the letter G. and a leg is now I can Guide I've earned my right After asking and listening and empathizing now, they're going okay your turn to volley back on the tennis court here And, and now I've maybe earned some, some moments to say, you know, can I tell you what?

I think maybe a why that didn't go right, you know, 10 minutes ago and, and I've got a voice then. So, it's not using your badge to get your way. It's using your, your empathy to get your way.

**Tim Spiker:** There's so many, like when you add these things up, I want you to think about, and by [00:31:00] you, I'm saying all of us here, I want us to think about what happens to relationships because that's what leadership is.

It's a relationship. Between the leader and the person that is being led. But what happens to relationships when you go through a process, this, this a leg process, we get to, we get the opportunity to guide at the end. But you know, when it comes to the last piece there, just before you're talking about empathy and empathizing, I think that communicates that you matter when your emotions. When your emotions matter so much that I want to connect with those emotions. And I think, I think you're fundamentally saying you matter. So, if you think about those first three pieces, the net result of asking, listening well and empathizing is communicating to the person you're valuable, you're heard, and you matter.

Now you tell me what happens to relationships when we live our life in such a way that we communicate with our actions and our [00:32:00] words. You're valuable, you're heard, and you matter. That's what's going to buy us the leverage to be able to hold people accountable in a healthy way. That's going to allow us to deliver the difficult messages in a way that's productive and constructive.

That's going to allow us to help people. Thrive instead of just surviving and just so many, I just think about those three things. And of course, I get a chance to guide if I'm first coming with your valuable, your herd and you matter.

**Tim Elmore:** This is so powerful. When you look at the different generations, 96 percent of who we are, we have in common.

Now there's 4 percent that we have found, and we get mad at or glad at or whatever, depending on who it is, but we need to start there and say, we have a ton of common in common, whether you're 22, 42 or 62, and we need to find

those, but here's the 4%. You [00:33:00] add something to our team that I don't have, unless I've got it, maybe perhaps a 20 something or 30 something or 40 something. So, we're now we have four generations on staff at growing leaders. I'm taking advantage of all of it in a good way, in a good way. And they're feeling valued because they've got some, I don't have. We're doing reverse mentoring all the time where both generations are mentoring each other in what we bring to the table.

And it's been awesome. It's really, it really has.

**Tim Spiker:** I want to wrap up with the super practical side. I love to spend time in the theory and the ideas because that's what makes things portable. I can go from context to context when I understand the principle and the idea. However, everybody loves the very practical application idea.

So let's talk about a couple of ideas of some activities that could be done to help close generational gaps on teams.

**Tim Elmore:** Well, the first [00:34:00] one might be the simplest that I'm thinking of right now. If I were to put a title to it, it's, I'd simply call it, "Ditch the Niche". So, we find ourselves in niches when we gather around, Boomers are together, or Boomers and Xers are together, Millennials and Gen Z are together. So, we got to ditch the niche and, and, and put the 20 somethings, 30 somethings with the 40 somethings and 50 somethings on purpose, just maybe on a team that's going to think about marketing or how do we sell this new product or how do we how do we, you know go to market with this new product? How would we reach your demographic? How about mine? So, I just did that with my newest book. I asked all four generations; how would you market to your generation with this new product? So that's one.

Tim I mentioned earlier the term reverse mentoring i love this action and i think I can describe it quickly reverse mentoring is when you specifically have a seasoned veteran and a young rookie [00:35:00] perhaps get together for learning but both are gonna mentor and both are gonna be a mentee so the first thing you do is you swap stories. We always have something in common we find something in common when we swap stories you know but then the older obviously pours into the younger in how to succeed in this workplace. Got a few years under my belt here, but then they switch and the younger might mentor the older and say here's the newest app I just got I think we could use this here.

You know, for monetizing or whatever. And I even tell stories in the book about Tony who found a way for, you know, to use TikTok to reach two million other people in his workplace. So, I really recommend doing that. But that means we have to come to the table with humility, respect and curiosity. And when we do that.

It's fascinating. I do this with two of my team members specifically, one is 30 years younger than me. [00:36:00] One is 40 years younger than me. And I love every minute of what I learn.

**Tim Spiker:** Those are remarkably simple application points. And I, I love the title. You know, both of those titles are sticky, ditch the niche and reverse mentoring.

And., I see freedom actually in being able to show up with somebody much more younger. The freedom in, hey, I'm here to learn, as opposed to, I've gotta have it all figured out for you and I gotta have the perfect coaching. We'll do that. I'll share with you what I know, but I just, I just sense that, that there's the opportunity to feel a sense of, kind of wonder and learning to be able to go into those relationships in that way.

What's a story that you have related to all that we've been talking about that would be great for us to kind of walk away with in our mind today?

**Tim Elmore:** Tim, we've talked today, and it just kind of happened about really understanding each other, understanding our people, if we're leaders. And I [00:37:00] don't know if there's a more vivid illustration of this.

Then something that happened in April of 1945 of all places and times. But it was in that month that our president, Franklin D. Roosevelt passed away. If you remember, he'd been elected four times. Which has never happened before and never happened since, but he led us through the Great Depression, through World War II and it was just, you know, I mean, it was one of the toughest times in America's history, and he led us through all of that.

So you can imagine, when he passed away, the streets of Washington, D. C. were just lined with people who wanted to pay their respects to the President, and his, his, as his casket was driven slowly down the street, thousands and thousands of people were seen either saluting or wiping tears from their eyes at this crossing, but one particular individual is a man, and this is remarkable that it was a male, not a [00:38:00] female.

Just started sobbing. He's weeping, and he wept so violently that he fell to his knees. A gentleman right next to him felt kind of bad for him because here's this guy on his knees on the sidewalk and making a scene. So, this gentleman picked up the weeping man back to his feet. And as he did so, he just wanted to make some conversation. So, he simply said, oh, did you know the president? I love the man's response, the weeping man's response. He simply said no, but he knew me. He knew me and I think, oh, if all of my people would feel that way about my leadership when I lead them.

**Tim Spiker:** So as we wrap up the episode with Dr. Tim Elmore, there's a few things that I want to draw some emphasis to. And one of them, as we talked about that set of three there, this [00:39:00] idea of humility, of belief/ respect and curiosity. You know, you see just how critical it is. What are the commonalities between the generations? What are we, what do we want in the leaders that we follow? We want qualities that are about who they are.

And you've heard it on this podcast before the research says that 77 % of our effectiveness as leaders comes from who we are, not what we do. And certainly. That list of three that was consistent between the various generations points to just how important it is for us to be well developed human beings if we are going to reach our potential as leaders, but as we wrap up, I want to put a little special emphasis on one of those three today, and that is the one of curiosity. One of the things that we often discuss with our clients around this issue of being curious is a simple idea that goes like this. [00:40:00]

When something doesn't make sense, there's something I don't know. When something doesn't make sense, there's something I don't know. Rather than vilifying and judging the other person, can we come at it with the perspective that if it doesn't make sense to me, there's likely something very important that I don't know. And that can cause us then to show up in a much more curious fashion, not the Spanish inquisition. I'm going to pin you up against the wall type of curiosity. That's not really curiosity, but genuinely I want to understand better something that I don't get, which leads us to this idea around trading frustration for fascination.

I love that little turn of phrase. I think it's so important and such a guiding idea for us as leaders to really apply, regardless of whether you're talking about generations or personality styles or really anything. Can we make a [00:41:00] commitment that when we feel frustration bubbling up, that it's a cue for us? To get fascinated, to be curious, to wonder, and to wade into that space with openness and interest, not condemnation or judgment.



And so that leads me to the question I want to leave you with today. And that is this. Are you, as a leader, willing to trade your frustration for fascination?

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