

## **BABY BOOMERS – WHO ARE WE?**

Baby Boomers are the so-named generation born during the prolific period following World War II, starting in 1946 and ending in 1964. The number of Baby Boomers in the US is currently over 75 million, including 5 million born in other countries that have since immigrated to the US. Boomers will continue to make up a significant part of the US population through the year 2025, with 65 million in the 61-79 year old range. The ratio of males to females has stayed relatively constant. There were approximately 1.05 male births for every one female birth.

The biggest year of the boom was 1957, when 4.3 million boomers were born. Boomers today represent 28% of the U.S. population. \*

### **Some Myths About Boomers:**

Baby boomers did not all come of age during the turbulent 1960s: The demographic anomaly is that the baby boom stretches from 1946 to 1964. Therefore, the oldest of the early boomers graduated from college during the Summer of Love, the youngest of the late boomers left college during the Reagan years.

Baby boomers were not all political radicals: even for those boomers who were young adults during the late 1960's, opposition to the Vietnam War was far from universal. For example, one-third of the early boomers served in Vietnam, and younger voters were more likely to support conservative candidates. In 1968, many of George Wallace's supporters were young, Southern and rural.

### **There Are Some Common Traits**

There is an interesting ... bent toward action, as Leonard Steinhorn points out most emphatically in his book; *The Greater Generation*:\*\*

“This Boomer determination to transform our social values and create new forms of social capital first became evident on the increasingly diverse campuses of the Sixties, and today it is evident in every corner of Boomer culture and life. A Simmons Market Research Bureau study in the early Nineties found Boomers considerably more likely than other adults to participate in public meetings, work on local civic issues, volunteer in politics, give time and money to charities, and write letters to officials, newspapers, magazines and product manufacturers.”\*\*\*

“Boomers will never go down in history as a generation that fought a great war to protect liberty, not should they. But Boomers should go down in history as a generation that fought a great cultural war to expand and advance liberty.” \*\*\*\*

Most Boomers also experienced similar messages from their parents regarding the power of education (many of us are the first generation in our family to graduate from college.) Many were instilled with a work ethic so tough, that it later popularized the notion of the need for Work/Life Balance.

### **The Challenges of Transition**

Many Boomers are at the pinnacle of their careers, having battled long and hard to obtain title and power, often at the expense of family life. Many are weary. Many are wondering if it was all worth it. The realization that there are some years left, but retirement is generally the next great phase of life looming in the horizon. Some Boomers will continue to work after normal retirement age, others will jump ship and be delighted. Still others are not sure what would be the best move.

Overall, are you ready? Do we have any idea what will be fulfilling for you? How does one go about “planning fulfillment” anyway?

### **A Need to Take Stock and Regroup**

It is indeed time well spent to take stock of your life and goals...sooner rather than later. Many career counselors will advise you to do some assessment now, to get a jump on previewing the next phase in your life, and all of its possibilities. For now I am going to recommend some reading and tips about this journey.

### **Readings to Get you Started;**

Steinhorn, Leonard, *The Greater Generation; In Defense of the Baby Boom*. New York, New York, Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Press 2006. ISBN # 0-312-32640-8

Miners, Rick & Jeri Sedlar, *Don't Retire, REWIRE; 5 Steps to Fulfilling Work That Fuels Your Passion, Suits Your Personality or Fills Your Pocket*. Indiannapolis, Indiana, Alpha Books 2003. ISBN# 0-02-864228-7

### **More Tips:**

- Start talking with people who are currently retired. Ask them what is going well, what they found challenging, and any other “tips” on what they might have done differently as they prepared to transition.
- Create a journal and place it either in your briefcase or by your bedside. The point is to have it accessible to you each day as thoughts come to mind about your next phase. Start simple. Write several headers on each page; What I love about my job right now/ What I will not miss/ What crazy dreams do I have when I am not doing this job?/ What hobbies or passions do I have? What legacy do I want to leave?

That should get you thinking...and do consider attending my seminar.

### References

\* U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census and Dept of Labor statistics

\*\* Steinhorn, Leonard, *The Greater Generation; In Defense of the Baby Boom*. New York, New York, Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Press 2006. ISBN # 0-312-32640-8

\*\*\* Steinhorn, Leonard, *The Greater Generation* page 21

\*\*\*\*Steinhorn, Leonard, *The Greater Generation* page xiii

© 2006-2008 Sharyn Mosca All rights reserved