Read the sentences. Match the phrases (1-10) in bold with their meanings (a-e).

1.He**'s made it** as a journalist.

2. He**'s dropped out of** college.

3. A few people on the course **fell by the wayside**.

4. She**'s set her heart on** becoming a singer.

5. That band **is going places**.

6. She**'s thrown in the towel**.

7. He**'s got his sights on** the top job.

8. They **blew their chance**.

9. They**'re** definitely **going up in the world**.

10. She**'s realized her lifelong ambition**.

A. having a goal

B. achieving success

C. on the way to succeeding

D. not getting to the end

E. failing

SUCCESS ACROSS GENERATIONS

Success at work – and in life more generally – is something that every generation strives for. But what we mean by success and how we measure it can vary greatly. Over time societal norms and expectations change and evolve. People working in human resource management take a keen interest in these changes as they attempt to manage and motivate the workforce of the present and prepare the ground for the workforce of the future. One approach they have adopted is building profiles of different generations that help them to analyse their attitudes and motivations. Although there is some debate about where each generation starts and ends, the main three categories are broadly defined as follows.

Baby boomers, born roughly between 1946 and 1963

This group came typically from stable family backgrounds with stay-at-home mums. Although their parents on the whole had conservative attitudes, they were brought up in a time of great social and economic change (the 1960s), a period when youth was celebrated and traditional ways of doing things were being challenged. As a result, they tended to grow up questioning authority. They are an optimistic generation and with some justification – economic opportunities were good for them and for those with a university education, financial success, or at least comfort, was more or less guaranteed. At work they put in long hours and strove to be experts in their fields, because they measure success by how good they are at what they do. In a similar way, outside work they aspired to self-exploration and personal growth.

Generation X, born roughly between 1964 and 1983

This generation, much smaller in number than that which preceded or succeeded it, is also known as the 'lost generation'. Perhaps this is because the world of their childhood was rather less clearly defined and more uncertain: global problems like AIDS and the energy crisis came to the fore; families were smaller, but children spent less time with their parents; people also seemed more cynical about progress. Accordingly, Generation X felt they had to rely on themselves to succeed and so a more pragmatic approach to life emerged, with an emphasis on a career education. It is fair to say this group were less happy-go-lucky than

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the baby boomers, more focussed on hard work and its traditional reward – money. In turn, this (monetary) definition of success gave rise to greater peer pressure to conform and 'grow up' more quickly.

Generation Y or Millennials, born roughly between 1984 and 2003

Generation Y are as numerous as baby boomers. The age they were born into is characterized firstly by its strong and sustained economic growth and secondly by the development of the Internet and digital technologies, an age where everything is available on demand. It's also important to note the attitude of their parents, the baby boomers. They adopted a much more consultative approach to parenting than the previous generation, allowing their children to negotiate their own educational options and encouraging them to discuss issues in and outside the home. The result is a more outward-looking generation and one which believes in negotiation and collaboration. The downside, perhaps, is that they have high expectations and often demand instant gratification.

Seeing their parents work long hours, they want a more balanced life and put a premium on free time rather than money or their rank in an organization's hierarchy. They are keen to develop in creative areas and the increased connectivity of the Internet world affords them ready access to a like-minded and appreciative audience. In this context, success can be measured on a smaller scale – something as simple as someone liking a post on your social network page. Millennials also tend to view success in terms of their contribution to the community – they expect the companies they work for and the projects they work on to be ethical, socially inclusive and to answer real needs in society.

Make notes under these headings (a-d) for each of the three groups. Are there any similarities between the generations?

A Characteristics of the age B Family life C Working habits D Attitude to life in general

Find words or phrases in the text with the following meanings.

1 works hard to reach (a goal) (para 1)
2 things that are usual, a standard (para 1)
3 for a good reason (para 2)
4 became noticeable and in need of attention (para 3)
5 relaxed and easy-going (para 3)
6 pressure from your own age group (para 3)
7 exactly when you want or need it (para 4)
8 disadvantage (para 4)
9 regard as very valuable or important (para 5)
10 with similar ideas or values (para 5)

Work in pairs. Give possible examples of the following ideas.

1 conservative attitudes
2 self-exploration and personal growth
3 a (more) pragmatic approach to life
4 everything is available on demand
5 issues in and outside the home
6 contribution to the community

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