

Why Millennials Are Weak

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Essays and ideas can emerge from formal writing assignments or from passing comments. “Why Millennials Are Weak” was prompted when Quinn Greenwell’s brother mentioned an online reader comment, which Greenwell considered further through discussion and research. As you read, notice that Greenwell moves directly from the phenomenon itself (the apparent weakness of Millennials) to the cause of that phenomenon.

My brother turned me on to this Reaction (what is sometimes called a Reader Comment), which followed a Yahoo SNL (*Saturday Night Live*) recap November 13, 2016—the Saturday after Donald Trump was elected president:

Millennials are the weakest group of people ever. Once all the boomers die the Chinese will walk across America with ease.

So, we talked about this and wondered, “Are Millennials the weakest group of people ever? And, if they are, will their contemporaries in China be weak too?” Of course this led me to a Google search, and I found a study saying that Millennials are literally weaker than their parents—at least in the sense that, according to the study, they have weaker handshakes. NPR reported, “In a study of Americans ages 20–34, occupational therapists found that men younger than 30 have significantly weaker hand grips than their counterparts in 1985 did. The same was true of women ages 20–24, according to the study published online by the *Journal of Hand Therapy*. . .” (Jacewicz). In the study, 237 participants squeezed a hand dynamometer, which measures grip force: “Men’s hand strength decreased by 20 pounds and women’s hand strength decreased by 10 pounds” (Best).

This isn’t what I was thinking I’d find. But it was interesting. The title of one of the articles got right to the point: “Why Millennials Have WEAK Handshakes: Lack of ‘Hard Work’ Means Young People Today Have Less Grip Strength.” That made sense. While some Millennials have strong grips, others don’t because they don’t work the same types of jobs as people worked in 1985. While jobs have changed, so has everyday life: raking a yard full leaves would probably strengthen one’s grip more than using a leaf blower; washing dishes by hand might strengthen one’s grip more than putting them in and taking them out of the dishwasher; dialing a rotary phone might strengthen one’s grip

The essay emerges from (is a response to) a Reader comment.

These paragraphs discuss physical strength, which the writer learned about while researching for something else.