

# Snowflake Work Habits

By Phyllis Chesler

If these are the views and attitudes of our coming generations – then I fear all is lost.



Something is very wrong. It's the problem without a name. I used to think it was my fault.

Please understand, with some exceptions, but for more than a half century, I have been blessed by the most impressive assistants: Hard working, devoted, skilled, and passionate about the work. In the past, I could post a job notice at most of the NYC area colleges, interview a slew of recent college graduates, and then choose the best one. Many stayed for two, sometimes three years. They were ambitious, well-spoken, and brilliant.

In the 1990s, one young man who'd been my best student at Brandeis, was a budding scholar and fluent in Hebrew; he went on to become a rabbi. In the 21st century, a graduate from the University of Chicago was a rising intellectual – we even published a study together – after which he headed for law school. My most amazing assistant came to me as an intern from Barnard. She was enormously self-assured and well-read, she was able to accurately summarize academic studies, and could

edit my work as if she'd worked in publishing for many years. She went on to join the ranks of corporate America. ***(READ MORE from Phyllis Chesler: [Why Are Women in America Cheering for Hamas and Iran?](#))***

However, in the last five or six years, something changed. Given the increasing “wokeness” among college students, and given the nature of my politically incorrect work, I hesitated reaching out to the elite colleges for an assistant. Instead, I began to post ads.

I would post an ad for an “author’s assistant,” which stated quite clearly that the position required writing, literacy, and proofreading skills, attention to detail, an ability to organize material accurately, and that the applicant must be tech-savvy.

I would receive hundreds of responses from desperate applicants, most of whom had not attended or graduated from college and whose previous work experience included machine repair, marketing, sales, childcare, roofing, cooking. A few worked as content creators for racially or ethnically specific blogs or zines. One worked as a bank security guard, another tutored children in music – one worked as a “technician for disabled people.”

Most of these applicants had African, Asian, and Hispanic names and my heart broke for them. How will they ever be able to improve their lives if they do not graduate from college? What if they cannot afford the tuition? I needed a college graduate or even someone who was attending graduate school.

However, now that I’ve met the more recent highly educated applicants – and after trying to work with a few, I am now considering returning to the high school grads. Here’s why.

I better understand why [Generation Z](#) has been described as “snowflakes.” Easily “triggered,” requiring lots of handholding, perhaps unemployable, many lack the kind of work

ethic required for serious intellectual or artistic labor and yet, most treat working for an author-with-deadlines as a corporate position. They expect to get every national and religious holiday of their choice, vacation time, sick days, personal days, benefits. They will not work overtime (even for extra money) because they value their “family” life just as much.

According to a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* by Alexandra Bruell about difficulties with employees, she quotes Executive Editor Joe Kahn at the *New York Times*:

*The organization has added a lot of digital-savvy workers who are skilled in areas like data analytics, design and product engineering but who aren't trained in independent journalism. (Kahn) also suggested that colleges aren't preparing new hires to be tolerant of dissenting views*

I actually managed to keep such a tech-savvy assistant for almost three years, (bless her), but she kept arguing with me about my views on the trans issue, the importance of not using “dead” names, as well as the advantages of new gender pronouns and a “queer” identity. I finally told her that she should write her own articles.

Here are some other examples. One rather excellent young woman seemed perfect – at least until I asked her to alphabetize my contacts. She did so – by alphabetizing a thousand people by their first names! I asked her, and trust me, as gently as I could, where she had ever seen this done? She told me that this is how she organized her own contacts.

I dared to correct her. I sent her back to re-do the task. Her eyes glistened with unshed tears, her head snapped back a bit. From then on she started to make a series of typing and cognitive errors – and when I told her that she had to correct them, she seemed to experience it as an insult. She wrote that it had been an “honor” to work with me but that she could not

bear the “constant attacks.” This same woman would suddenly announce that she needed to take the next day off –and when I asked her to make up the lost time over the weekend she said that “I was treating her like an indentured servant.” (**READ MORE: [Opera House Bigotry](#)**)

Another very smart college grad made an unfortunate mistake. It seemed to have spooked her. I assured her it was not that big a deal, that we could deal with it. But I saw that it was eating away at her. I did not know this but she had begun to leave her coat and her bag by the front door “just in case she had to run out suddenly.” Her mistakes seemed to shame her and she feared that I “might” yell at her and that is something she could not bear.

What in God’s name is all this girlish fragility about? Had my reputation preceded me to such a degree that these young women wanted to please me so much, have me think well of them so much, that when they felt they’d failed me – they had to run away?

In addition to these challenges and disappointments there is the overriding and enduring “[wokester](#)” problem. I would schedule an interview with the most enthusiastic applicants but would always tell them to visit my website first. I said that my work was viewed as “politically incorrect” and controversial. Once the righteously arrogant caught a drift of what they thought were my politics – you can only imagine what happened next.

Many cancelled our interview. Some actually castigated me for my views. A few advised me to change those views if I wanted to be seen as a good role model.

If these are the views of our coming generations – then I fear all is lost, that Western civilization, rational thought, history, literature, science, tolerance for intellectual diversity, high standards, a work ethic, and respect for

authority are now on auction: Going, going, gone.

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