

Rowena Crosbie and Deborah Rinner

The background of the cover is a complex, abstract pattern of glowing yellow and orange lines, resembling a network or data stream. In the center, two dark silhouettes of human profiles face each other, with a dark briefcase positioned between them. The title 'Your Invisible Toolbox' is written in a white, serif font across the center.

Your Invisible Toolbox

THE TECHNOLOGICAL UPS AND INTERPERSONAL DOWNS
OF THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

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INTERPERSONAL DOWNS OF THE
MILLENNIAL GENERATION

bpc

Business Publications Corporation Inc.

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The Depot at Fourth

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(515) 288-3336

For Ted and Charles

*Your belief in the potential of people
and passion for developing future generations
has been an inspiration.*

It's all possible. Your legacies live on.

About the Artist

Kevin Wilson was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1967 and is currently living in Edmonton, Alberta. He also happens to be the brother of Rowena Crosbie, one of the authors of *Your Invisible Toolbox*. It was during his high school years when Kevin discovered his talent to create. From there, he started teaching himself the techniques of airbrush painting. He honed his craft by starting on canvas, slowly graduating from there to motorcycles, helmets, vehicles and anything that could be painted.

In 2013, Kevin partnered with two local artists from Winnipeg and created The Creative Collective art group. For two years, they have executed art shows that showcase various independent local artists – including everything from tattoo artists to mixed media artists producing work out of their home. Kevin's work has been featured in art shows throughout Canada, including the 2015 Art Walk in Edmonton and the 2016 Lab Art Show and the Art World Expo, both in Vancouver. Additionally, Kevin has received various honors for his airbrush work on motorcycles.

Kevin's preferred medium has always been metal, anything from steel to aluminum. His newest pieces consist of a collaboration of shapes and colors and custom airbrushing. Kevin's work is freehand, original and always exploring new approaches. The piece that was created for the cover of this book is custom and of the same title, *Your Invisible Toolbox*. It is painted on a 4-foot by 4-foot sheet of aluminum that was cut specifically for this work. The two faces are also cut from metal and attached to the base, making the art piece three-dimensional. The toolbox that connects the two individuals is subtle, reflecting the nature of interpersonal tools that remain in the background in positive human interactions. The color and visual experience change in different lighting due to a grinding process that preceded the airbrush work and the use of candy urethane paint to capture the bright colors. The original artwork hangs in the Tero International headquarters in Des Moines, Iowa.

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Foreword

Millennials, Generation Y, or Echo Boomers are some of the common names given to the American population born between the 1980s and early 2000s. Never a day goes by when the public does not read or hear about the work ethics, behavior, and attitudes of millennials that differ from the generations preceding them. Demographers state that this cohort is the largest population group ever to enter the labor force at one time in the history of this country. It is estimated that by the year 2020, there will be nearly 86 million millennials in the workplace—or 40 percent of the total working population.

Being the first generation to enter the workforce in the twenty-first century, millennials are the most popular subjects to observe and evaluate. Their lives are transformed by multiple factors, including social, economic, and technological, that were unknown and almost nonexistent in the lives of generation X and the baby boomers. Consequently, this impact has generated a paradigm shift in the values, attitudes, and social and interpersonal skills of millennials at work.

Some of the hallmark qualities that have been observed of millennials are technical adeptness, innovativeness, and entrepreneurial skills. They are known to be confident, self-assured, decisive, and extremely well informed. In a detailed and comprehensive article, *Time* magazine described millennials as those who “might be the new greatest generation.”

According to the Pew Research Center, millennials should be recognized for being multitaskers, well informed, and civic-minded. However, the observations also indicate that millennials have been perceived as being self-obsessed, self-promotional through social media, and short on social skills: “They do not retain information; they spend most of their energy sharing short social messages, being entertained, and being distracted away from deep engagement with people and knowledge. They lack face-to-face social skills...”

The Pew Research Center study concluded that millennials benefit but also suffer due to their hyperconnected lives.

The twenty-first-century professional faces multiple challenges in the job market. High-tech proficiency and hard-core skills are necessary and valued, but professionals also need to be adept in soft skills. At work, we have to deal with people, and that necessitates the need to be proficient in interpersonal skills.

Tero International has been a leading interpersonal research, design and training firm for over two decades. This book provides a compilation of the knowledge and expertise gathered through experience, putting it into the hands of everyone, but particularly the millennials. This book poses the dilemmas, questions, and conflicts millennials face and provides the interpersonal tools necessary for them and all of us to succeed.

Coupled with the advantages millennials bring to the workplace, by enhancing their interpersonal communication skills through *Your Invisible Toolbox*, millennials may turn out to be, as *Time* magazine mentioned, the “new greatest generation.”

Harwant Khush, Ph.D.

Preface

In a very real sense, Rowena Crosbie and Deborah Rinner are like sculptors of the Renaissance who are producing great works of art. However, their finished products are not static marble figures to be displayed in museums to impress visitors, but rather dynamic interactive millennial professionals trained to impact their clients and collaborators.

In their new volume, *The Invisible Toolbox*, “Ro” and “Deb” have distilled twenty-five years of enormously successful professional training at Tero International, the “go-to” institute in Central Iowa for turning out polished performers, from Miss America contestants to entry-level agricultural extension specialists and future corporate boardroom occupants.

With one hundred compelling stories, each sharing an insight into more effective interpersonal interaction, *The Invisible Toolbox* is based on the bottom-line proposition that 85 percent of career success depends on soft skills. Whether coaching on making eye contact, business etiquette, or effective public speaking, the authors provide two- or three-word bottom-line lessons and insights that are designed as takeaways to put the finishing touches on an entire generation of newly minted young professionals.

Each of the one hundred stories, from number 1, “It Was One of Those Days,” to the concluding “Are You Who You Say You Are?”, has such an engaging title that addressing the table of contents is akin to being offered a piece of candy from a box of spectacularly tempting chocolates: You don’t know where to start, but you feel assured that whichever you pick, it will be delicious. And the one thing that is certain is that it will leave you wanting more. They are so irresistible, you can’t ingest just one.

Indeed, the stories are so succinct and the bottom-line takeaway aphorisms so pithy that each could be printed on a card, somewhat like the classy notes left on your pillow at a boutique hotel. It could provide a one-a-day lesson with a two- or three-word bottom line that would only take five to ten minutes to ingest and be easy to remember and practice the following day but impart an invisible “tool” that will last a lifetime.

Given my thirty-two-year career at the US State Department, including an assignment at the National Security Council of the White House, I naturally gravitated to stories like number 31, “The White House Crashers,” and number 52, “The Everyday Diplomat,” in the section entitled “Tools for Working Globally.” I came away wishing that *The Invisible Toolbox* had been available at the Foreign Service Institute when I went through my own entry-level training for a diplomatic career.

Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn (ret.)
President, World Food Prize Foundation

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Special acknowledgment and thanks to the Tero International staff, trainers, consultants, and interns for their important roles in the research, development, customization, and delivery of Tero training programs, for their efforts in data collection, analysis, and interpretation, and for valuable contributions to the content in this book.

Sincere thanks also to the Tero clients who have placed their trust and confidence in the Tero Team to help them build the competitive advantage that comes from mastery of the interpersonal skills used in business.

We also thank the many individuals who generously gave of their time to review an early copy of the book and provide their impressions. Several of their comments have been included in this book.

Deep-felt appreciation to Ashley Holter and the team at Business Publications for their work in bringing this project to readers and special thanks to Renee Johnson who skillfully edited the book.

Finally, we are indebted to Kevin Wilson whose artistic talents created the inspiring image which graces the cover of this book. Kevin's artwork expertly captures the book's theme. The essential tools for improving communications and relationships are available to all if we just look hard enough to find them and work hard enough to master their use.

Introduction

Each of us has two sets of tools. The first toolbox is filled with the technical skills, equipment, and devices needed to help us carry out our activities. The second toolbox is invisible. It contains the tools that we use in human interactions.

How important are the tools in the invisible toolbox?

Microsoft has not yet invented the software that calms an irate customer, juggles multiple and conflicting priorities, and collaborates with team members to solve a complex problem—all on the same day. Apple has not yet designed the device that negotiates conflict with a colleague, demonstrates compassion to a loved one, extends kindness to a stranger, or mentors a protégé.

Those tasks are handled by people relying on the tools contained in their invisible toolboxes. When we use the tools effectively, relationships flourish, businesses grow, and personal happiness results. When we use the tools ineffectively, relationships are damaged, businesses suffer, and personal hardship results.

Highly developed interpersonal skills have never been more important. Relating well to others is increasingly a casualty of our high-tech world that brings us smaller and smaller devices and fewer and fewer opportunities to master the complex skills of human relations.

While the tools in the second toolbox are invisible, the effects are profound. According to Harvard University, Stanford Research Institute, and the Carnegie Foundation, technical skills account for 15 percent of the reason we get a job, keep a job, and advance in a job. The other 85 percent of our success comes from our use of the tools in our invisible toolbox.

Working across geographies and industries with groups and individuals for over two decades has afforded the authors of this book a unique opportunity. We have seen firsthand the interpersonal dilemmas, struggles, problems, and decisions facing business professionals. The tools in *Your Invisible Toolbox* were forged from what we have learned works, and they reflect what is necessary for everyone to have on hand in order to effectively relate, connect, understand, and lead.

The First One Hundred Days

The phrase “the first one hundred days” is widely acknowledged as a period of time in which someone new to a role strives to learn his or her responsibilities and form a unique approach to work. Whether a new CEO, a new hire, or someone accepting a new role, the first one hundred days is commonly known as the honeymoon period where judgments from others are often withheld to allow time for the individual to settle into his or her role.

It is in the spirit of the first one hundred days that we’ve written this book. Although useful to every generation in the workplace, it is designed with the millennial business professional in mind. Although the invisible tools are useful for anyone, the millennial generation has unprecedented challenges when it comes to the need for these tools.

The ability of millennials to positively affect business and relationships in ways no other generation has before them is evident. The rapid pace of change and technological advances minimizing human connection place them at risk. To leverage technology and change to yield its greatest potential for the future, millennials must utilize a full toolbox of interpersonal effectiveness tools.

Millennials may not be given a formal hundred-day grace period to develop the interpersonal capacity necessary for their advancing roles and increased responsibilities.

This book provides millennials, and all of us, an extended honeymoon period in which to develop interpersonal effectiveness. Divided into five parts, it encompasses one hundred chapters, each providing a critical interpersonal tool for success in the workplace.

When used well, the effects of using these tools are anything but invisible.

Part I

TOOLS FOR INTERACTING WITH OTHERS

An interest in mastering the skills and tools of human relations in business is nothing new. What is new is how complex the environment is for businesses today. In a high-tech interconnected world, the challenge is greater and the stage is bigger. In the past, communication was largely one-way and change occurred at a manageable pace. Technology changed all that.

Business is changing, and traditional education has not prepared professionals for this new reality. The skills that led to success in the past are being challenged and replaced with new models of interacting. The business people who will succeed in this new economy are those who master a new set of skills for interacting effectively with others.

In this part of the book, we examine the tools for interacting effectively with others.

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back.

MAYA ANGELOU

1

IT WAS ONE OF THOSE DAYS

A Pew Research Center study reported that 59 percent of millennials described their own generation as self-absorbed. Forty-three percent said they were greedy. Many don't like being identified as millennials, and 60 percent don't consider themselves to be a part of the millennial generation.

“He said, ‘Just do it for somebody else.’ That’s when it dawned on me that it was one of those pay-it-forward scenarios and that it would mean a lot to him if I accepted.”

It was one of those days. It was November 10, 2015. Jamie-Lynne Knighten had just returned from a visit with family in her native Ontario, Canada. Now she, her husband, and young children were back in their new San Diego, California, home, and she was picking up groceries at a supermarket.

She had taken her youngest child with her to the store. The five-month-old was being fussy. The shopping excursion took an hour and a half. When Jamie reached the checkout, she realized she had forgotten her debit card at home.

The grocery total was more than \$200. She remembered she had her Canadian credit card with her. Jamie gave the cash she had on hand to the cashier and swiped her Canadian credit card. Declined. She swiped it again. Declined. She surmised that they had put an anti-fraud lock on the card because of her travels, and she called the credit card company to have it lifted. Her phone died. A line was forming behind her at the checkout. She was trying to hold it together.

It was one of those days.

“Take us back to the day in the grocery store. How did you come to meet?” was the question posed to Jamie-Lynne Knighten by CBC Radio

As It Happens host Carol Off. Jamie recalled that she was about to ask the cashier if they could hold her purchases so she could return home to fetch her debit card when a stranger's voice said, "May I?"

"May you what?" she replied.

"May I take care of your groceries?"

She protested with her thanks. After all, it was a large purchase, and this was a stranger.

The stranger replied, "I would like to. Do me one thing. Just do it for somebody else." Jamie realized he was serious and that this was a pay-it-forward gesture. She accepted.

As they left the store, she introduced herself and learned the young man who had performed this random act of kindness was named Matthew. She shared with Matthew that her family had just moved to the area and that she was feeling a little overwhelmed. She inquired where he worked, and he responded, "LA Fitness." Jamie promised herself that she would follow up with Matthew in the days ahead to thank him more formally.

It would be another week before she learned that Matthew's last name was Jackson. That he was twenty-eight years old. That he died in a car accident on November 11, 2015.

Jamie had called the local gym about a week after the encounter and spoke with Matthew's manager in hopes of reaching him and reconnecting. It was through tears that his manager told her about the tragedy.

When Jamie called her husband to tell him the sad news, it hit him hard. The stereotypical US Marine, who doesn't get upset about too many things, was shaken by the news. It was a cold reminder of how fragile life is.

Jamie came to know about Matthew and his character from his boss, who had worked with him for four years. She told Jamie, "That's who he was. Always doing for other people. Never asking for anything in return." Through his coworkers, Jamie was able to connect with Matthew's mother and spent two hours discovering more about who Matthew Jackson was.

"She told me he was a big sweetheart who was always doing things for other people. One thing she's really proud of is that he's a bear hugger. In every photo you see of him with somebody, he doesn't just have one arm around them. He's giving them a huge bear hug. And that's what it felt like when he paid for my groceries and took care of me."

Jamie created a Facebook page called *Matthew's Legacy*, asking people to do something extraordinary for a stranger to honor Matthew and help restore faith in humanity. The response has been worldwide, and the stories are heartwarming. Jamie says she wants her children “to recognize that they can actively participate in making a positive change in the world like he did.” She goes on to say, “It doesn’t have to be monetary. It doesn’t have to be huge and grandiose. Create a lifestyle of kindness. Help people in small ways or big ways. Whatever you can do. Every little bit helps.”

YOUR INVISIBLE TOOLBOX

Matthew’s legacy endures, and Jamie is paying it forward. This is a powerful lesson for you to contemplate as it challenges the labels often ascribed to millennials of self-absorbed and greedy. This is one excellent example of the interest millennials claim they have for their fellow humans being translated into action. When have you missed the opportunity to perform a random act of kindness?

Surprise someone with kindness

2

THE HOPEFUL GENERATION

In 2014 the deficit in civility perceived by the generations looked like this:

- Millennials (93 percent)
- Gen Xers (92 percent)
- Boomers (94 percent)
- Silent Generation (97 percent)

Almost one in four millennials (23 percent) believed civility would improve in the next few years. Has it? Is the hope of this generation founded in experience?

Millennials, the largest cohort generation in the workforce, value civility. Why is that view and outlook so important?

It's not difficult to appreciate the benefit of taking the time to intentionally show gratitude to people in our family and social circles. We readily engage in reciprocity, giving thanks and acknowledgment to effectively support and maintain the people and personal relationships we hold most important to us.

What about in the workplace? Where business is the bottom line, do we need to take the time to intentionally thank the coworkers we interact with? Does gratitude create a workplace benefit? If it does, how do we make sure we're taking the opportunities to demonstrate it enough and appropriately?

Dr. P. M. Forni of Johns Hopkins University has alluded that showing thanks in the workplace is not only important, it is imperative to the health of an organization. Dr. Forni is head of the Johns Hopkins Civility Initiative and has conducted numerous studies to assess the effect of civility in the workplace. Not only have the findings concluded that treating coworkers politely lowers stress (which can activate positive rather than negative effects in the nervous and immune

systems), but civility also positively influences tenure, absenteeism, and workplace morale.

Unfortunately, while civility is often valued in organizational missions, it isn't always evident in day-to-day interactions. A solution to demonstrating civility in the workplace can be as simple as remembering to intentionally acknowledge others and give written thanks.

Psychologist and philosopher William James said the “deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.” It may be challenging to remain aware of the many tasks and responsibilities we engage in during the workday. It's easy to remember the activities that coworkers intentionally thank us for. Receiving acknowledgment and thanks influences not only our sense of contribution to our organization but fuels our desire to further contribute.

Although our responsibilities in our job may solely be our own, on any given day there are numerous “behind the scenes” people who make what we do possible. This list can begin with the person who cleaned the workroom sink or makes the coffee all the way to the CEO who is ever pitching and visioning so we maintain our livelihood. If we really stopped to count the number of people who positively affect what we can accomplish in a single day, we would likely be surprised at how many there are—and how rarely we intentionally show appreciation.

The metaphoric words of author Peggy Tabor Millin describe the benefit and results of being intentional with our thanks.

“I was on a train on a rainy day. The train was slowing down to pull into a station. For some reason, I became intent on watching the raindrops on the window. Two separate drops, pushed by the wind, merged into one for a moment and divided again—each carrying a part of the other. Simply by that momentary touching, neither was what it had been before. And as each went on to touch other raindrops, it shared not only itself, but what it had gleaned from the other. I realized that we never touch people so lightly that we do not leave a trace. We need to become conscious of what we unintentionally share, so we learn to share with intention.”

YOUR INVISIBLE TOOLBOX

Civility involves thinking of others as much as ourselves. Is there a person you are thinking of right now whom you appreciate? Maybe the person assists your efforts in the workplace or influences who you are becoming as a professional? If so, take a minute to write a brief personal note to this person, intentionally telling him or her the things he or she does that matter to you.

Write a personal note

3

I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED

Most millennials share stories, images, and facts about their lives on social media. The movement started with Facebook and has evolved as platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat arrived on the scene. We are all part of a movement where everything we think, say, and do can be tweeted, posted, and blogged for public consumption. When does sharing become over-sharing? Is there a line?

*Be careful with your words; once they are said,
they can be only forgiven, not forgotten.*

UNKNOWN

It is said that customers measure a company not by how they are treated when things go smoothly but by how they are treated when problems with its product or service arise. It is in these moments that customers decide who they will flatter with their future business.

The scene is familiar. A group of passengers is milling around the airport boarding gate awaiting word on the status of their delayed flight. Boarding can't commence because the copilot has not arrived.

Federal Aviation Authority guidelines prohibit a pilot from flying alone. Calls have been made to the copilot's home, but he can't be located.

Everyone waits.

Apparently the copilot called in three days earlier to book the day off. Someone failed to replace him on the schedule. The flight is due to leave Los Angeles on New Year's Day. Some of the travelers surmise the copilot is at the Rose Bowl.

Three hours later, when the passengers finally board their flight, crew members are asked, "What happened?"

Following are their responses. Imagine you are a senior leader in this organization. Two of your company's values are honesty and good customer service. How does the customer experience measure up?

1. “A new crew had to be called in. We’re doing the best we can.”
2. “We had to take a thirty-five percent pay cut, and everybody is calling in sick in protest. I was called in to replace them. I’ve worked every holiday this year.”
3. “On behalf of all of us at the airline, I apologize for this unbelievable situation. We know this is an inconvenience for you. I’ve worked for this airline for twenty-four years and have never seen a scheduling oversight like this. We are embarrassed and appreciate your patience. We will get you to your destination as soon as possible.”

All three responses pass the honesty test. However, handling customer communications during a difficult time requires more than just an honest answer. It also requires:

- Discretion. While you must be 100 percent truthful (customers do not tolerate dishonesty), you do not have to be 100 percent open. Your principal tactical challenge is to determine how open you should be. The reputation of the organization is entrusted to the individuals who communicate with customers.
- Expressing compassion. While challenging, it is important to address the issue from the viewpoint of the customer, not your company or yourself. That is the viewpoint they will be listening from.

Three honest answers. The differences relate to discretion and compassion. Response (1) was impersonal and defensive. Response (2) revealed troubling morale issues. Only (3) began to address the issue from the customer’s viewpoint.

YOUR INVISIBLE TOOLBOX

Customer service is high on the list of key differentiators and competitive advantage for organizations, including this airline. This uncommon skill is too often left to chance. The good news is that the skills of good customer communication are learned. Always consider the audience, use discretion, and express compassion when communicating, especially when the news is bad.

Be discreet and compassionate

4

THE BIG ASK

October 4, 2014 turned out to be an interesting day for Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft. When presenting at a computing conference attended by 7,500 female engineers, he was asked to give advice to women who are afraid to ask for a raise. He suggested they work hard and trust karma.

As you can imagine, this advice, in an age of documented social, economic, political, and cultural issues affecting how women are perceived and misperceived in the workplace, didn't go over too well.

Most of us would agree that cause can influence effect (karma), yet given the business landscape women travail, peppered as it is with gender-ridden landmines, just trying hard and waiting for someone to notice is not enough.

Unfortunately, just asking isn't enough either.

In a perfect world, productive work by males and females would be equally noticed and rewarded. In a perfect world, women and men would feel correspondingly comfortable and competent asking for a raise or promotion if there is due contribution meriting one.

The question asked of Nadella, as well as the answer reveal what we already know. It is not yet a perfect world in the workplace for women... or men, for that matter.

We need to stop buying into the myth about gender equality. It isn't a reality yet. Today, women make up half of the US workforce, but the average working woman earns only 77 percent of what the average working man makes. But unless women and men both say this is unacceptable, things will not change.

BEYONCÉ

Nadella apologized a few days later, stating he realized his answer didn't include the information that he supports programs to close the pay gap between men and women. He made it clear he should have said that when women think they deserve a raise they should just ask for one. In the aftermath of his initial remarks, he became conscious of the fact that karma may be skewed due to gender. But did he realize the advice to "just ask" might be skewed as well?

It is commonly cited that:

- Women don't ask.
- Women should ask.
- Women have to be careful how to ask.
- A woman's risk in asking might be greater than the benefit—
if the ask doesn't go well.

Obviously the issue is complicated for everyone involved, women and men.

It's indisputable that there's a real pay gap.

People can argue about how big, but that's almost beside the point.

*The point is that every woman, every girl, deserves to
get paid what they're worth.*

SHERYL SANDBERG

The gender disparity in comfort and response with regard to asking for a raise is evident. But even if it wasn't there, do both men and women communicate interests in a way that influences thought, creates buy in, and reflects value to the other party involved?

Too often when trying to influence a decision during communication we focus on short-term tangible results. An immediate pay increase is a short-term tangible. We set that request on the table, and whomever we are asking responds in kind. Your short-term tangible may be the raise. Your employer's short-term tangible interest may be profit margin for this quarter.

Battling around in the short-term tangible realm creates opposition quicker than buy in.

In the world of interests, there are more than short-term tangibles (things that can be measured). With respect to a raise, you are asking for the

raise not just for the short-term tangible money, but also for the intangible feelings and attitudes that are important to you, such as recognition of your work. In the long term, the tangible raise is an indicator of a healthy career or a path toward managing. In the long-term intangible, the interest could mean security or reputation as a leader.

There are four types of interests, short-term, long-term, tangible, and intangible. To be successful influencing a decision, and to make points that signal common gain, it is crucial while asking not to stay in the short-term tangible box of dollars and cents. You need to communicate what your request means in terms of recognition, career goals, and aspirations. These are the intangible and long-term considerations that benefit everyone.

YOUR INVISIBLE TOOLBOX

Linking intangibles and long-term interests to how the company can gain, as well as documenting contributions that illustrate evidence of these intents, is a much more influential way to handle the “big ask.”

Address intangibles and the long term

A NEW WORLD OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM

“Don’t tell anyone I told you...” We all say things when we don’t think someone else is listening. How many of us have said something in the privacy of our homes or behind closed doors that we would be mortified if someone in an external audience heard it?

Members of the millennial generation are beginning and advancing their careers during the rise of a new trend in journalism. It’s called citizen journalism. Citizen journalism is the ability for the ordinary person to report information (or misinformation) to a wide audience in real time thanks to the availability and affordability of technology.

People are being tethered 24/7 to increasingly smaller technological devices with increasingly more powerful computing capabilities. The Internet, its blogs, search engines, and social media communities have put the power of information in the hands of consumers. Billions of devices around the world allow for message sharing and spin at a pace never imagined.

Many are finding out the hard way that communications that may have been appropriate behind closed doors are not appropriate on the global stage. Like it or not, it appears this is the new normal, and it is here to stay.

*With technology and social media and citizen journalism,
every rock that used to go unturned is now being flipped, lit, and put on TV.*

LZ GRANDERSON

It was reported that more than \$2 billion was spent on the 2012 US presidential race. This is a sum exponentially greater than in any previous presidential campaign in history. Did the money make the difference?

“There are 47 percent of the people who will vote for the president no matter what. All right, there are 47 percent who are with him, who

are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe the government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you-name-it—that that’s an entitlement. And the government should give it to them. And they will vote for this president no matter what.... These are people who pay no income tax. My job is not to worry about those people. I’ll never convince them they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.”

These words, uttered by presidential candidate Mitt Romney at a private fund-raiser, were caught on videotape and later obtained by the liberal magazine *Mother Jones*. It was this one internal message leaked out to an external audience that may go down in history as the single factor that swayed the election and cost Governor Romney the opportunity to serve as president.

Iowa Rep. Bruce Braley, a Democrat running for the US Senate seat vacated by retiring Iowa Democratic Senator Tom Harkin, speaking to a group of lawyers at a fund-raising event in Texas, was caught on videotape disparaging Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley as “a farmer from Iowa who never went to law school.”

A later apology and Braley’s insistence that he was the better candidate for Iowa farmers was not enough to unravel the damage to his campaign. He was defeated by his opponent, now US Senator Joni Ernst.

This is the world millennials came of age in. Wayback Machine, the website that contains an impressive historical record of virtually everything that has ever been on the Internet, makes it extraordinarily difficult to ever hide.

YOUR INVISIBLE TOOLBOX

Not only are communications almost always at risk of becoming public, permanent records mean that communications can come back and haunt professionals years or decades after the offending behavior. Even statements made on websites have an afterlife.

Consider the consequences
