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BREAKING GENERATIONAL CONFLICT WALLS THROUGH BUILDING COMMUNICATION BRIDGES

I am a young person born in Türkiye who loves the history of this land immeasurably. Living in the sacred lands entrusted to us by our great leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and all our fellow citizens who fought for this cause is a great honour. Turkish people are committed to their customs, traditions, and culture.

However, there is a growing difference of opinion between the older and new generations. Generation Z and Alpha place more importance on technological progress. While our elders prefer to work under traditions and old-school values, we do things more efficiently through technology without borders. Generation X and Boomers are still living in the past with memories that will never return because the world they lived in does not exist anymore.

In Turkish families, parents and grandparents often wish for their children to continue the family business or pursue a career of their choice. They put their children in the hot seat, forcing them to boil the ocean. However, children nowadays tend to follow their paths, make their career choices, and chase their dreams. Here is where the battle of generations begins.

I want to share a story where I have been an observer for a long time. My uncle's family always wanted him to become a doctor, but my uncle told them that he preferred the profession of a captain, which was his dream, and he struggled constantly on this issue. Then he decided to follow his dream and enter university, where he wanted to achieve his goal. Our parents often provide us with the best opportunities and fulfil their dreams or plans through their children. All these lead to generational and internal conflicts. They may need to consider their children's interests and remember that the current generation fundamentally differs from the older generation. It is expected to be different in a rapidly changing world. The generation gap has always existed.

When his family saw how happy he was with his career choice, they realized how wrong their insistence and arguments were and accepted his choice. Nevertheless, it took them about three years to accept such obvious things. During that period, they all were locked in a battle of misunderstanding and non-acceptance of each other's ideas. Everyone has the right to make their own choices and live their own lives.

Generational conflict is an age-old problem for humanity. Conflict between the elderly and the young is invariably present at all levels and spheres. Different

cultural epochs have contributed to the formation of other worldviews. Parents reproach their children for disobedience, and in return, they hear reproaches of misunderstanding. Generational conflicts are not caused by age differences but by differences in values. That happens because parents and children were raised differently and lived in different technological periods.

In challenging situations, you should always be a good listener, be flexible, think solution-oriented to end the argument, avoid being judgmental and taking sides, and value tolerance, respect for opinions, and diversity. These qualities can help both sides to calm down during an argument and find common ground, but problems may still arise during communication. All parties must address and resolve these issues through open dialogue. When we approach any argument in this way, we encounter positive results. It is always better to build communication bridges than build a giant wall in front of you through which no one can reach you. It is so important to have a solution-focused mindset to resolve any conflict.

Engaging in arguments can have positive outcomes as it can lead to personal growth and development. Overall, arguments can catalyze positive change and progress at both individual and societal levels.

I am convinced that it is a wrong idea that the conflict between generations can be resolved by forcing one to accept the values of the other. By pushing our children or parents to live by our standards, we will only achieve the loss of their individuality. The conflict between generations can only be resolved through mutual understanding, empathy, and open communication.