

GENERATIONAL IDENTITY FRAGMENTS

GEN Z



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HOW TO USE THE CARDS

1. **Set the challenge:** Choose a focus question (e.g. 'How might we engage Gen Z in volunteering?').
2. **Draw fragments:** Pull 2-3 cards per group or participant.
3. **Build the person:** Treat the cards as facets of one individual. How do they interact? How do they clash? What tension can you identify? What opportunities arise from these tensions?
4. **Ideation:** Create 3-5 ideas per combination: messaging, channels, experiences, partnership approaches, products, or service tweaks.
5. **Stress-test:** Swap one card and repeat. Notice which ideas hold up across multiple combinations, and which falter.

Don't shy away from unlikely combinations. The value of the deck is in designing for this cohort's fractures and complexities, not to smooth it away.

POST-COVID ANXIETY



Lockdowns hit at a crucial formative period for this Zoomer. They spent their teenage years locked in their bedrooms, when they should have been building crucial connections. Years later, they **still experience social anxiety and isolation** as they try to close the social skills gap. That doesn't mean they're not trying: they're **intentionally rebuilding** by saying yes more, putting themselves out there, and joining hobby-led communities.

DIFTP: THE NEW YOLO



'Do It For The Plot' is Gen Z's version of 'You Only Live Once'. They feel like **the world is doomed** and there's no point in taking action. And if the future is broken anyways, you may as well live in the now. **Spontaneity, subversive experiences,** and **dopamine hits** are top of the agenda.

THE MANOSPHERE PIPELINE



They feel like nothing they can do is right anymore. They're **angry, frustrated, and feel left behind by society**. While looking for some validation, they stumbled into the manosphere. Finally, **a community that understands** what it's like for them. Whenever they try to open up about this, they're rebuffed and feel more ostracised. Ultimately, it just pushes them further into the rabbit hole.

ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT ICONS



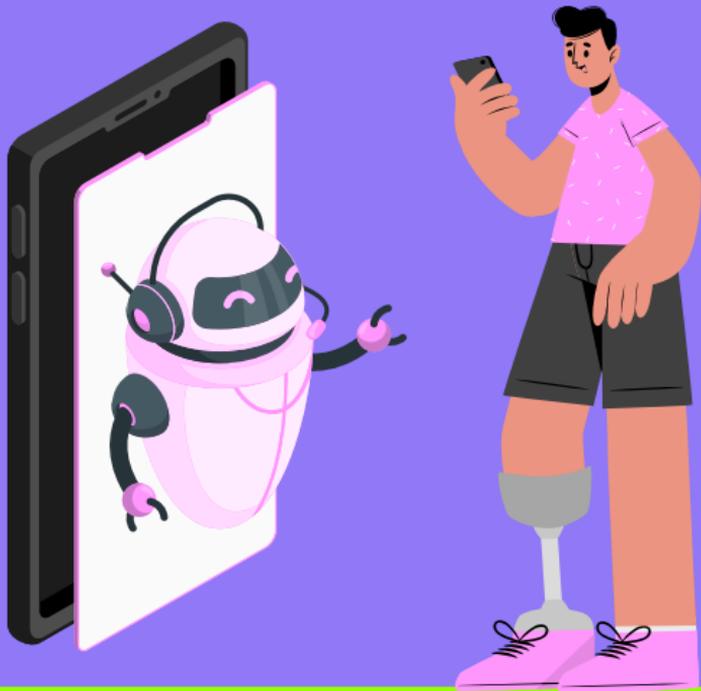
Gen Z's first political memories date back to the pandemic. They remember hearing about #PartyGate on TikTok and feeling disillusioned by the hypocrisy of the government. Their **trust in politics** (and the media, for that matter) **has never really bounced back**. Now, they prefer anti-establishment politicians who 'tell it like it is' and **speak directly to their issues**.

THE SYSTEMS REDESIGNER



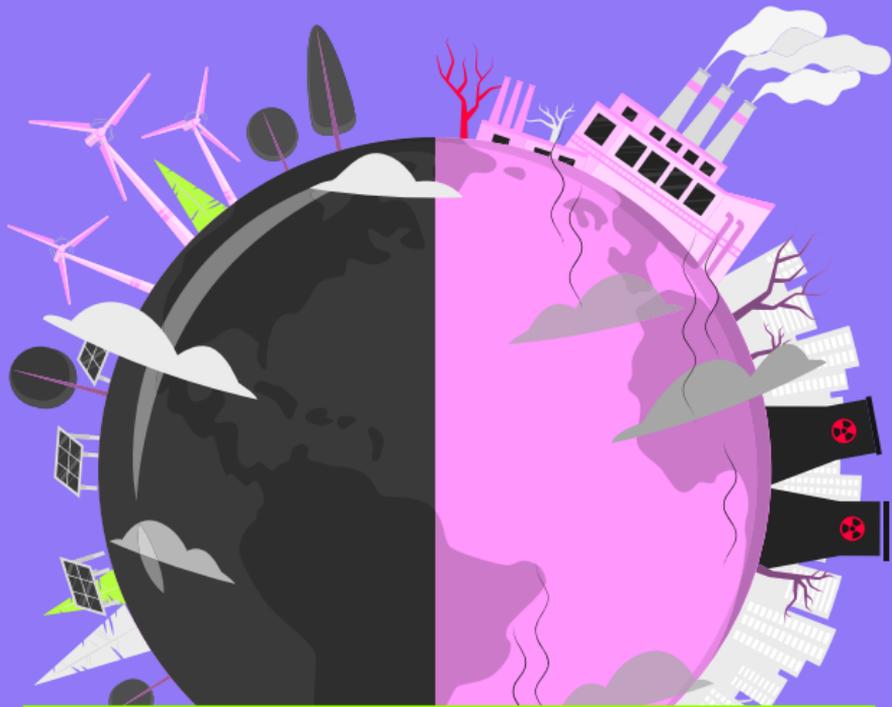
This Zoomer doesn't expect (or trust) broken systems to fix themselves, so they're out there **building alternative structures for a more positive future**. They show up to create mutual aid groups, social media guides on how to drive change, or protest movements that drive progress in the rooms they can't get into. They may not trust the system, but they **haven't given up on change**.

EDUCATED BY AI



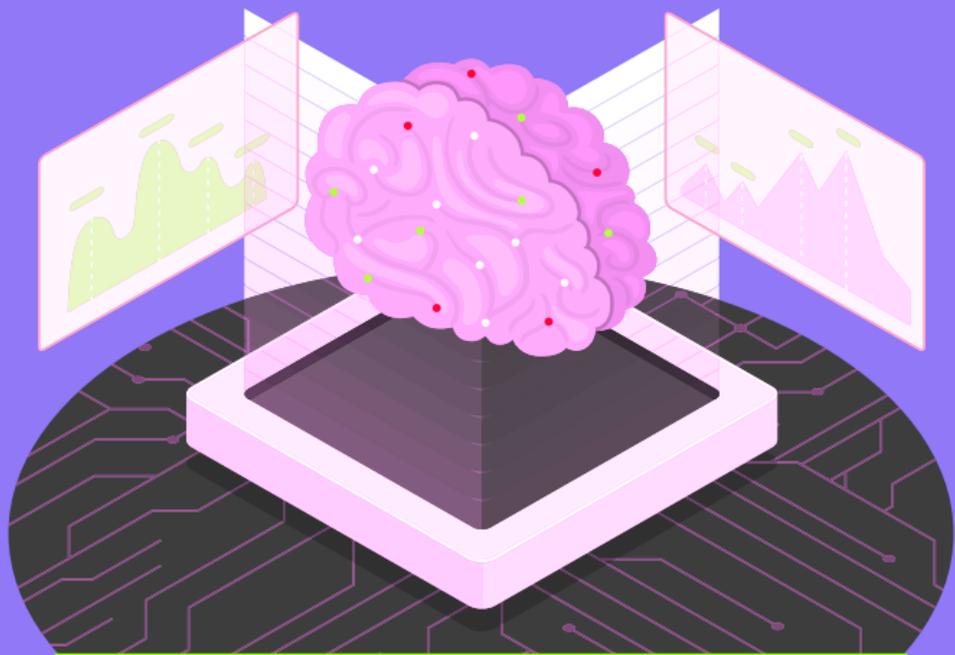
This younger cohort has **never really known education without AI**. Since they entered secondary school, they've been doing all their homework with the help of ChatGPT. If AI can do it for them, it probably wasn't worth learning in the first place. Sometimes, they even **use AI to navigate some tricky social situations**. It's just so much better at knowing what to say.

CLIMATE GENERATION



Every day, there's a new headline about another way in which **humanity has failed the planet**. This Gen Zer is exhausted. They're doing everything right: they go to the protests, they're vegan, they don't shop fast fashion. But **their individual actions aren't enough** and no one in charge is listening. They just want a way to **make their voice heard**.

AIXIETY



If it were up to them, they'd **go back to a time before ChatGPT** was ever released. They're anxious it's eroding their ability to think and eliminating the jobs they're training for. But **they know they can't ignore it**, and they're investing in building AI literacy. They use it to work faster, think differently, and prototype new ideas. Using AI is what finally **unlocked the extra time** to invest in their hobby and side-hustle.

STRAIGHT TO THE SOURCE



This Gen Zer **wants to do something about the causes they care about.** Their parents suggested donating, but they're not sure they trust these opaque institutions to direct the money where they want it to go. Instead, they'll find a mutual aid network that **guarantees the donation is as direct as possible.**

THE SPIRITUALIST



This Zoomer is searching for a framework to **create structure in their chaotic life**. When their algorithm started feeding them spirituality content, they finally felt like they found something with meaning. Writing down their daily manifestations makes them feel **slightly more in control** every morning.

NOSTALGIC YEARNING



2016 is the last time the world felt stable for this cohort. Now, they **look backwards for comfort**, curating lifestyles cobbled together from decades they barely remember. They **romanticise slower, simpler eras** they never lived through. The present feels chaotic, so the past is a refuge – even if their version of it is imagined.

FINANCIALLY PRECARIOUS



They have a job and **they work hard**. But they still feel like they're always **one unexpected cost away from overdraft**. Sometimes, they turn to their parents for a helping hand. Homeownership, retirement, long-term planning? That's all out of reach. In the meantime, they're focusing on budgeting spreadsheets, side hustles, and building an emergency fund. Big milestones may be delayed, but they're **building security in smaller, more flexible ways**.

FINFLUENCED



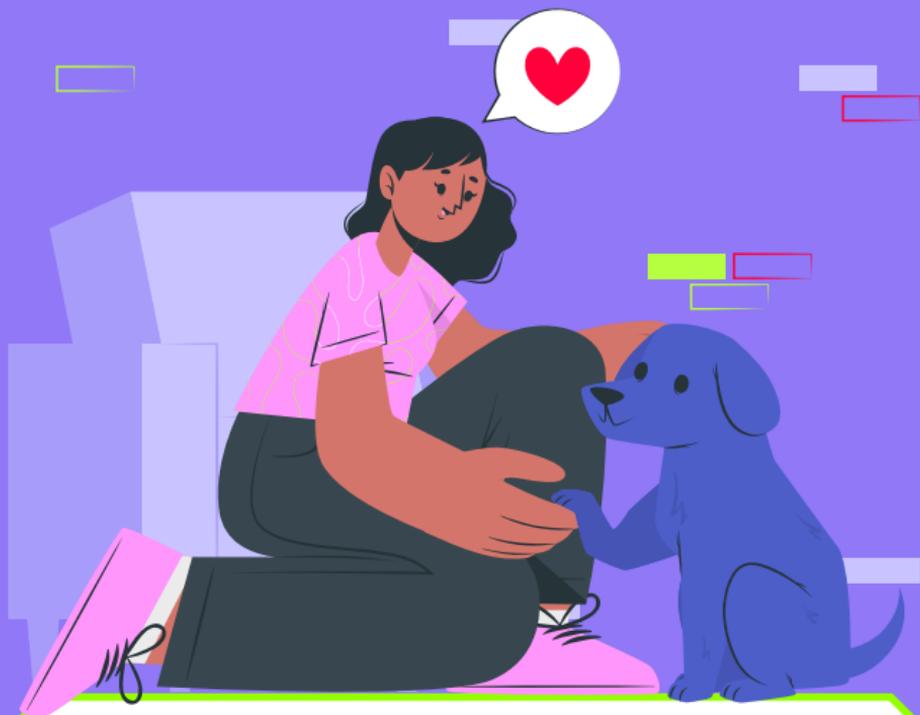
Money and budgeting were never on the curriculum. They **don't trust official guidance**, so they've **turned to TikTok**. This is where they find their budget breakdowns, guidance on launching their side-hustle, and passive income hacks. The knowledge may be primarily peer-validated instead of regulated, but it is proactive. They're **trying to get fluent** in the system the best way they can.

LOGGED OFF



This Zoomer finally **hit a wall with the endless scroll**. The endless digital churn stopped feeling social and they realised how draining being 'always-on' actually is. Whilst they'll never fully log off, they realised they have to step into real life to **find real connection**. You'll find them at a Tuesday night run club or a volunteering shift on Saturday mornings. They want to show up and **relearn how to belong in the real world**.

CHILDLESS BY CHOICE



This Zoomer is **questioning the timelines and assumptions** they inherited. Marriage, mortgage, baby – why in that order? Why at all? More and more of their friends are consciously choosing not to have kids, for a variety of reasons, and they feel much more **confident in their agency to choose for themselves**.

PREPARING FOR THE REAL-WORLD



This Gen Z parent wants to **prepare their kids** for instability and polycrisis from a young age. Practical skills and resilience are top of the agenda. They **don't shy away from difficult conversations**. They're not afraid to admit that they don't always have the answers and they feel unsure too.

GOOD ENOUGH IS ENOUGH



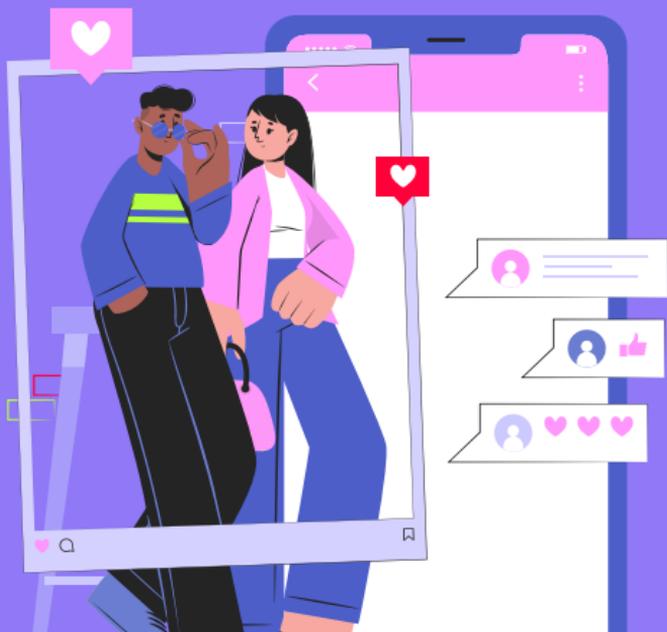
Social media has projected an ideal of parenthood that's unachievable for this busy parent. They feel a **constant pressure to optimise** every snack, schedule, and screen time routine. It's exhausting. Instead, they're **leaning into 'good enough'**. Being loving, present, and imperfect is enough.

PERSON FIRST, PARENT SECOND



This parent refuses to **disappear into the identity of parenthood**. They still want nights out, careers, hobbies, and travel. They'll go to festivals and events, and you'll find them in a beer garden with their friends and stroller. They **continue to show up**. Now, they just have a +1 they bring along.

COMMUNITY, NOT BROADCAST



After a lifetime of performing on their public feed, they're done. They've logged off of Instagram, because it's **full of brands** broadcasting to them. Instead, their online lives take place in **closed servers and hobby-based platforms** where they can get involved and avoid being observed. If they can't shape, remix, or build content themselves, they're not interested.

NEWS ON THE FYF



They no longer open the BBC website to read the headlines. The **headlines find them**. Get Ready With Me video. Update on Ukraine. Vlogging the best places to eat in Japan. Everything you need to know about the Epstein files, filmed by someone in their bedroom. The algorithm decides what content they consume and the news they hear. They **rarely stop scrolling to fact-check**.

THE MICRO-VOLUNTEER



They'll give **a Saturday or an hour after work**, if their schedule allows it. It's a quick burst of energy for something that genuinely matters to them. Yet the idea of signing up every Tuesday for the next six months feels far too restrictive. They want **flexibility and ease**, not strict scheduling.

ETHICAL CHECKOUTS



This Zoomer desperately needs to buy new detergent. Luckily, their local Tesco has both own-brand and premium sustainable detergent on offer. Since they're already there, they're happy to **spend the extra £1 on a cause they care about**. If it hadn't been readily available, they probably would have ordered whatever was cheapest on Amazon.