



# THE SHADOW CAME AND STOOD IN ITS PLACE LIKE YESTERDAY

An Anthology Of The Times During COVID-19 | Part 2

The Alternate Room | Kantar India Qualitative

It is intriguing to study how the different generations are evolving through these times and adapting to the new realities. Their realizations and vulnerabilities are likely to be different...

The Silver Hair, are they being made to feel dispensable? How are they coping? The GenZ, the immersive experience seekers, how will they alter their path? How are the Millennials doing?

After a quick recap of our perspective from the early days of lockdown, this delves into the story of generations, a story of cultural rejuvenation.





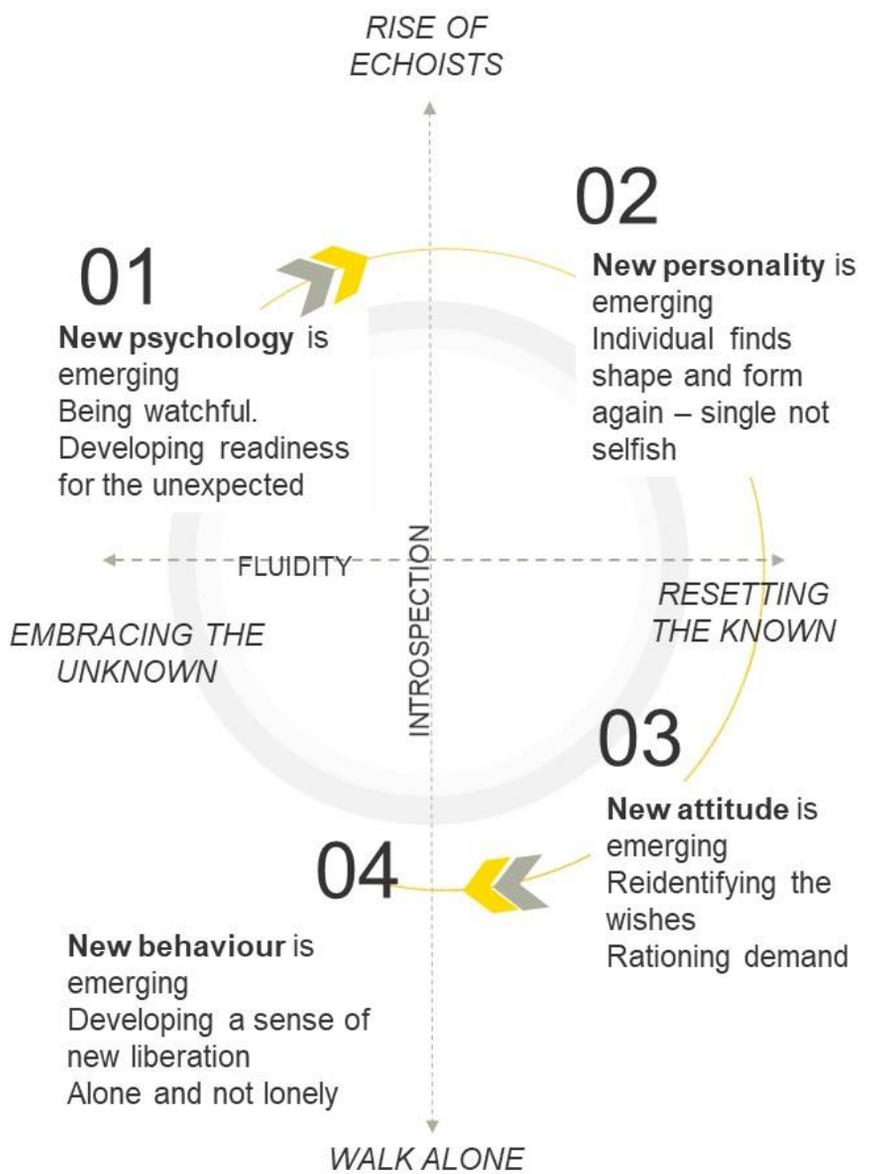
Recap | Part 1

# Waiting Is A Part Of Intense Living

In these times with more existential questions than answers, our response system is being shaped by two powerful forces of **INTROSPECTION** & **FLUIDITY**

A new change model is emerging for a new normal post COVID-19

People, as individuals are evolving through this cycle of change - floating, oscillating, trying to find their space





## Part 2

# The Shadow Came And Stood In Its Place Like Yesterday

In a crisis, a culture reveals both its resilience and vulnerability.

People, as individuals in every generation are evolving through this cycle of change. Resetting the known and embracing the unknown in a response system woven by the two powerful forces of introspection and fluidity. Wherein introspection has been the immediate reaction during this period of lockdown; and fluidity, has been our response to the crisis.

A normality of philosophy ascribes to introspection the process of analysis, and to fluidity, the process of synthesis.

As people engage in both processes, a symmetric discourse is emerging. This forced slow down, real vulnerability and deprivation has consciously and unconsciously led people to reinstate some of their past in their present and in their foreseeable future. Blurring the timelines between generations and their ways of life.



Within families, every generation is looking to give more than they receive yet practising the art of having to walk alone (not lonely). Physically and cognitively they are coming closer and are not the disconnected 'mental factions'; questioning a favourite popular culture narrative called 'generation gap'.

They are one of the same lineage, separated in time, trying to endure and make sense of these strange, new and convulsing times. Think of a vinyl, cassette player, CD player, iPod and Alexa simultaneously communicating with each other... attempting to synchronize their invariably different mechanics to produce the same music.

The generations are meeting each other for breakfast, lunch and dinner in a culture from our past.

A pre-globalization past where the Silver Hair lived their young and working life and still swear by its values. While physically they are vulnerable, and their freedom is curbed; culturally they are returning to a position of centrality in decision making because of their life skills and experience of navigating difficulties.

## Silver Hair

Embracing the storm with the stillness of serenity. Their life is like a still life painting - perceptually still but intellectually agile. In this self-portrait, Silver Hair have nothing left to prove but still a lot to contribute. Physically still but the mind is busy in taking care of others' happiness.

Tired of their screens, the younger generations are turning towards the Silver Hair and they are the in-house storytellers. The TED speakers, their lives, the Netflix documentaries – original and theatrical. A nostalgic tradition from our ancient past has resurfaced in the present – storytelling as a medium of learning, growing. That old African proverb, *“when an old man dies, a library burns to the ground.”* Once again, the Silver Hair have a job to do... a responsibility, a mandate to oversee the house with wisdom and care. They are enjoying this role resurgence

Frugality, finding happiness in meeting needs and sacrificing wants, the discipline of delayed gratification, the echoism of putting self before others – the cognitive skills that are a need of the hour; the Silver Hair are its shaolin masters. They have seen crises in the past and are willing to do it again. And this is bringing the GenZ closer to them.



## GenZ

They are crossing the crevasse with a slender thread.

The modern-day experience seekers who have grown up amidst affluence, proliferating choice yet increasing inequality and polarization are finding resonance in the simplicity and tenacity of the Silver Hair. Their contemporaries from a different time – the analogue clocks to their smart watches.

Some of the GenZ are willing to espouse the Silver Hair mode of living as part of their life review – the manual, abrasive ‘real’ experiences of coming of age. Hence the affluent singleton monetarily unaffected by COVID-19 is still reassessing needs and wants. Vowing to clear the clutter from her wardrobe, the Marie Kondo method; grow her own vegetables, draw-up a 1-year budget of needs and not overspend by a rupee.

They may be reconfiguring their ideology. Beneath their Netflix watching, Tinder-impulsive lifestyle, they are working from their hometown, conversing in their mother tongue, enjoying the earthy taste of fresh vegetables, watching Ramayana with their family - a different kind of cultural tour de force is taking place.

They often used to be a guest in their family. Now they see their home as a cultural institution.

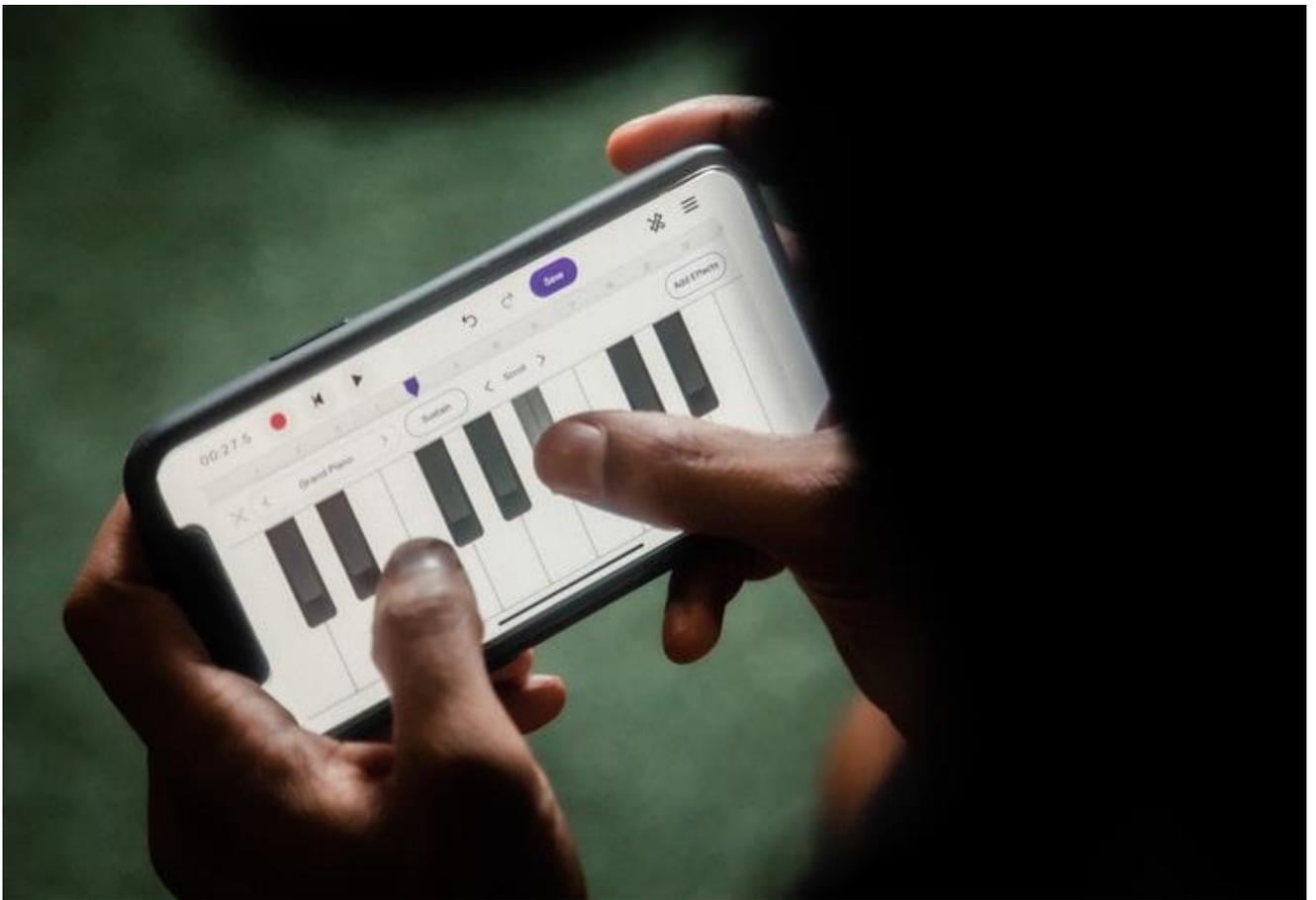


Some of the younger **GenZ**

still in their teens, are engrossed in their digital world.

Living in a virtual bubble, unaware of its fragility and the ingredients of real life. The device is at the centre of their existence. The extension of self - both functional and emotional. They remain perpetually engaged, excited in a realistically stalemate situation. They need encouragement to embrace the scorching sun of the real, imperfect world. They need support.

As do the **Millennials**, who for a large part were torn between the world they grew-up in and the world they make now. They are overcome with a prodigal dilemma - feeling wasteful, for their material ambitions and repentant for the cultural distance from their roots and Silver Hair upbringing.





Facing pay cuts, stagnating salaries, increased utility bills, having to worry about their parents and their own children and yet, believing that they must appear resolute in the face of adversity. It is an exacting challenge for the **Millennials** – they are silently operating in the shadows.

They are vulnerable yet do not give themselves the permission to feel so; are required to persevere through the ebbs and flows with stoicism.

They need support.





The accelerating rates of change in lifestyle and technology made us believe that generations were irrevocably drifting apart... too far polarized, too incompatible.

But now generations lost in translation have a chance at redemption in this post-COVID world.

The pause has drawn attention to the beauty of their contrasting elemental mix - when Millennials can reassess their life and ambitions; when GenZ can do a life review, experience the authenticity in singular, frugal life experiences... meeting the Silver Hair on their hurdle tracks.



As Leonardo da Vinci said, *‘the water you touch in a river is the last of that has passed and the first of which is coming’*.

The culture has not been forgotten, nor has it paused while life had – it is being remastered through the collective conscientiousness of each generation’s introspection and their fluidity; in this time of physical inertia.

The consistent dialogue for more than hundred days among several generations is designing a new culture. A culture of shared values, of simple joys, of resilience and vulnerabilities. And of no pretense. Bearing promise for a cultural rejuvenation. A truly progressive, avant-garde life.

As people look to reset the pieces, learning to adapt to COVID and not just fight it; generations are rediscovering their real self and one another, as no one is putting up a front. Curators of popular culture must recognize and participate in this cultural rejuvenation. Brands must take note, as they look to create new meaning in people’s lives.

## Therefore...

1. Meet the generations at their confluence, as the idea of 'generation gap' appears to be an imperfect hypothesis
2. Celebrate the Silver Hair's resurgence, their return to centrality – both individually and socially
3. Rescue the Millennials from a dilemma of their own making, tell them they do not need to always put up a brave face, it is ok to be kind on themselves
4. Curate authentic, singular mind travel experiences for the GenZ. Portray them in vivid shades as they review and reconfigure their cultural ideology
5. Encourage the younger GenZ, still in their teens, give them reasons to step out of their virtual comfort and embrace the scorching sun of the real, imperfect world



Credit: Titles inspired by works of Nasreen Mohamedi



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