



# When Leaders Don't Want to Lead

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FIEC LEADERS  
CONFERENCE,  
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# A prayerful hope

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David said, “My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD should be of great magnificence and fame and splendor in the sight of all the nations. Therefore I will make preparations for it.” So David made extensive preparations before his death.

**1 Chronicles 22:15**

Then King David said to the whole assembly: “My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God. With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble—all of these in large quantities.

**1 Chronicles 29:1-2**

# Gen Z and leadership

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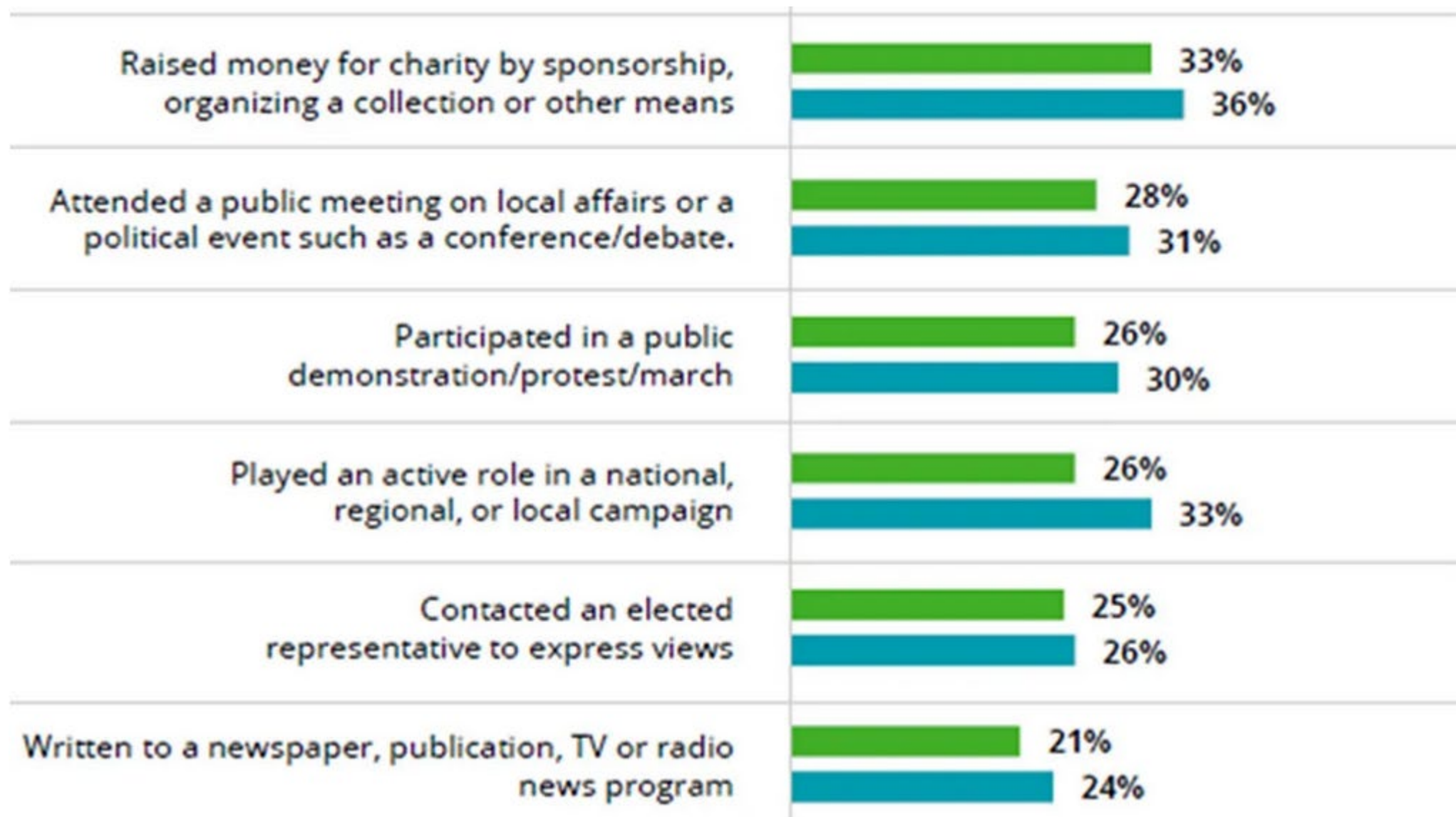
'Gen Z' is defined as those who were born between around 1997 and 2010 i.e. today's 13–26-year-olds.

**What indicators have you seen that would seem to show that this demographic don't want to lead?**

# THEY ARE TAKING ACTION TO DRIVE THE CHANGE THEY WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD

% that have done the following over the past two years





# Risk averse

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In almost every metric, Gen Z are more risk-averse than older generations



“The whole concept of 24/7 reputation management grew up with this generation of digital natives.”

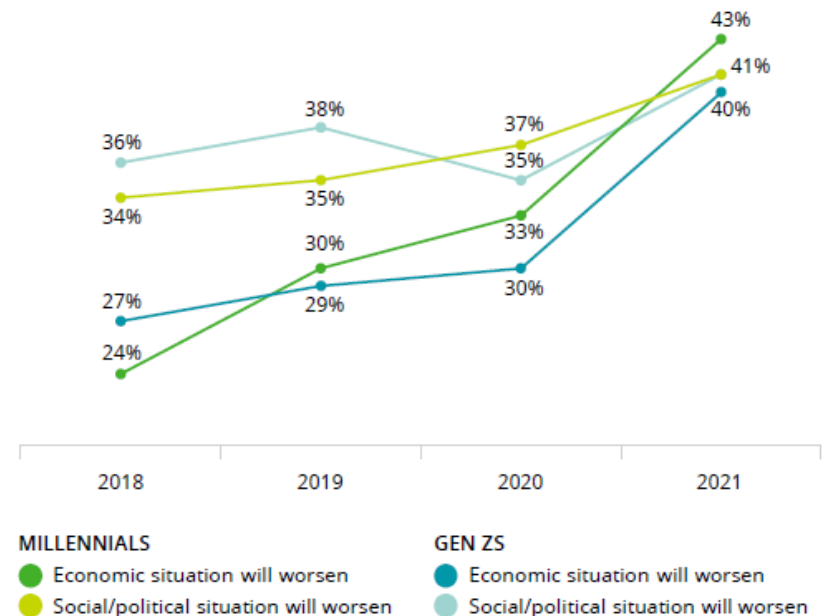
# Economically insecure

Gen Z are much less likely to be optimistic about their future economic security

“Gen Z are far more likely to save... not necessarily for a more prosperous future but mitigating against the next disaster.”

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL/POLITICAL PESSIMISM GROWS

Proportion who believe the economic and the social/political situation will worsen

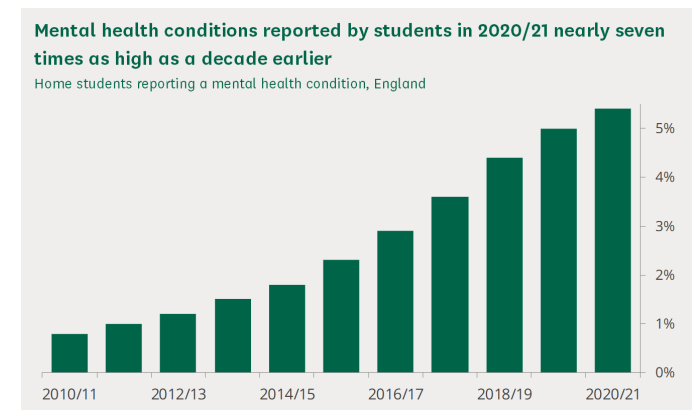


# Anxious and fragile

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Gen Z are the most anxious generation since that brought up in the shadow of the Second World War

– they are anxious about their own mental health, and those around them

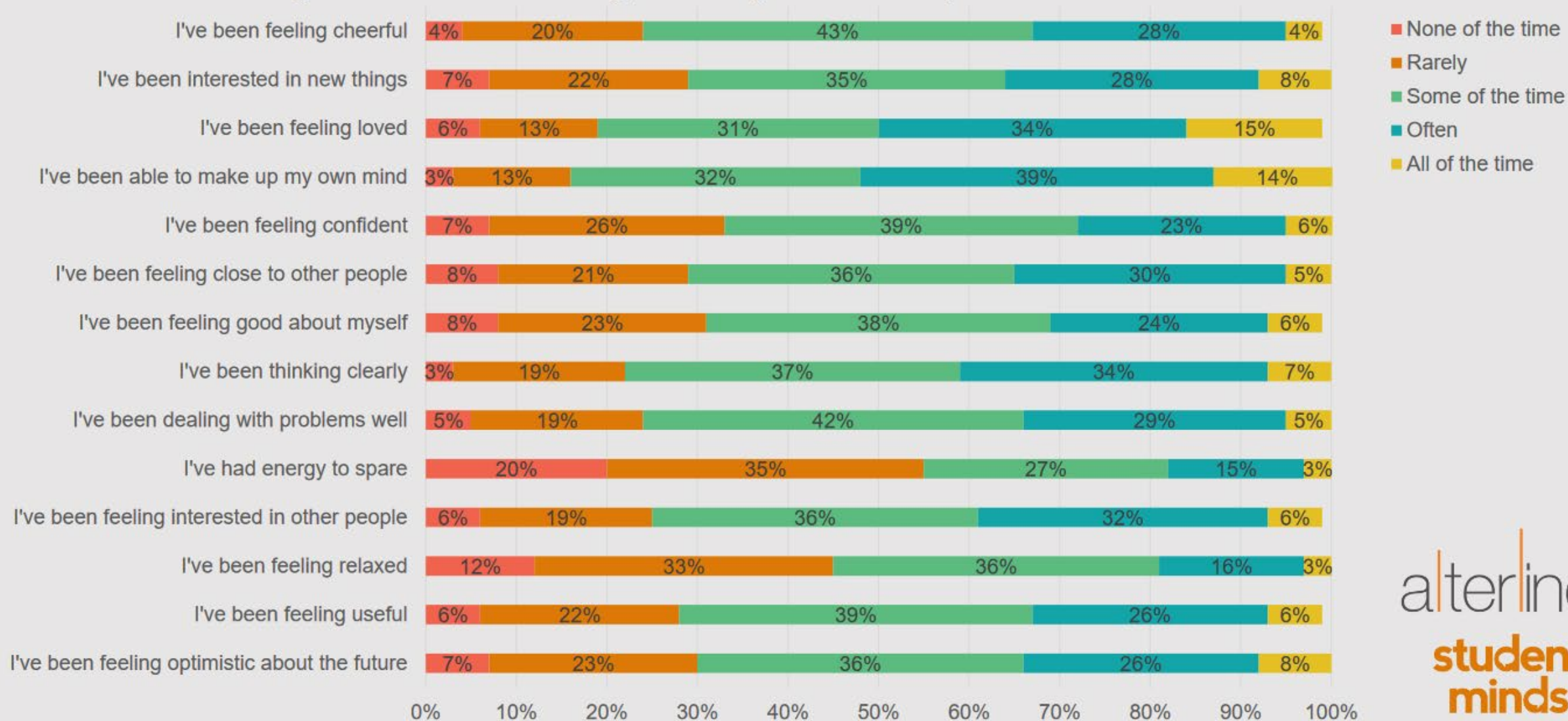


“One reason Gen Z is so adamant about the significance of mental health is because they see members of the older generation not talking about it and suffering as a result. The evidence backs them up.”



# Mental Wellbeing

## Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Score (WEMWBS)



# Diverse

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Gen Z see themselves as the most individualised generation alive

Today's uni undergraduates are 72% white.

Only 66% of Gen would say they are exclusively heterosexual.

77% of Gen Z say that have experienced discrimination.

**“Gen Z defines themselves as being more highly individualized than previous generations, through direct observation, ongoing dialogue and project collaboration. This perception is important. Whether they truly are the most individualised generation of our time or not is almost a moot point if they believe that they are.”**

# Lacking in confidence

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Gen Z lack confidence in their own abilities, especially in social situations

	2015	2022
I have confidence to make up my own mind	57%	47%
I know what is expected from me at work	68%	49%
I feel able to concentrate on one task for a sustained period	53%	39%
I feel able to talk to senior people at work	39%	21%

# Cautious of taking responsibility

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Contrary to the idea that children are ‘growing up too fast’, the evidence shows Gen Z are growing up much more slowly than previous generations

- they have been parented more closely
- writers speak about a ‘second adolescence’ that is experienced by many in their twenties
- Gen Z are worried about being ‘part of the problem’ when it comes to failures of leadership (including within the church)

# Gen Z in the workplace

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Gen Z's expectations of the workplace – fairer salaries, more time off, opportunity to work remotely, greater social and environmental responsibility.

“Having observed older workers experience burnout, time poverty and economic insecurity at the grindstone, they're demanding more.”

“They're willing to work hard for the right employer, but if the juice isn't worth the squeeze, they'll leave and make ends meet some other way.”

# Gen Z and leadership

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Imagine yourself to be a member of Gen Z. Someone asks you, “Why are you cautious to lead at church?” How do you answer?

An apparently keen young Christian adult is seemingly diffident about joining the church as an unpaid ministry trainee. Why might this be?

Where have you seen examples of younger adults taking responsibility?

In which areas or ways are younger adults more willing to step up and lead?

# 1. Be clear about expectations

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Gen Z want to know what they are committing themselves to!

- Genuine transparency creates trust.
- Prospective young leaders have **lots of questions** – answer with honesty.
- Describe exactly what you are expecting from them.
- Gen Z demand much more (in person) feedback than others.
- Consider how flexible you will be – flexibility is attractive to younger leaders **but** don't flex if it will damage your church's ministry.

**“Assume nothing. Avoid polish. Authenticity is always better than sheen.”**

## 2. Reconsider remuneration

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Gen Z are much less willing to tolerate low salaries.

Within UCCF, we informally benchmark our staff workers' salaries to the average first graduate salary.



# 3. Teach and model sacrifice

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Many emerging younger leaders haven't been taught very much about sacrifice, and they haven't seen it widely modelled.

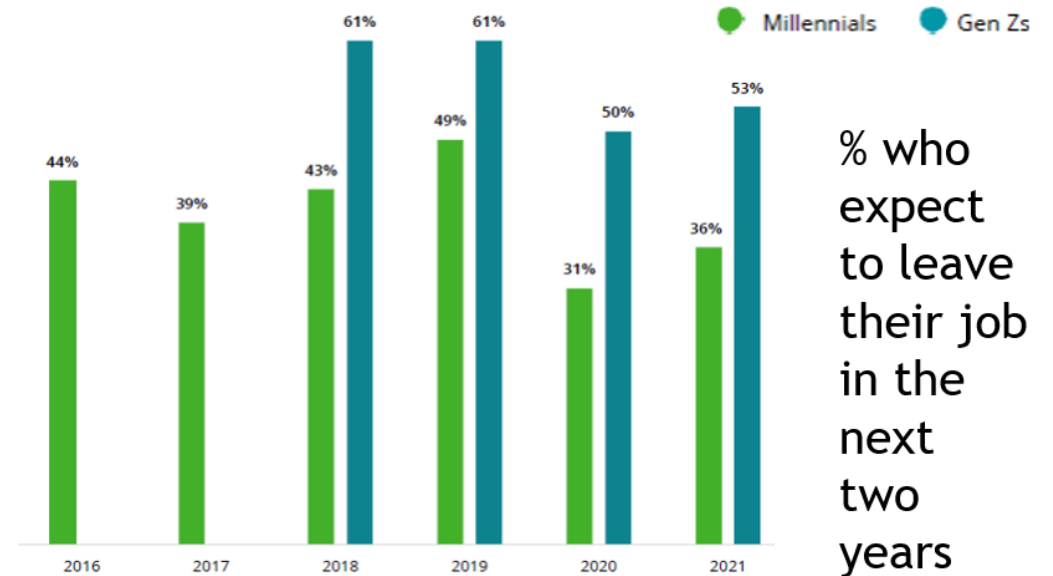
Potential leaders are asking: is this sacrifice worth it?

“I was blown away and sometimes baffled by the joy of our staff and Relay Workers as they served... What we really want to see is more of our Staff Worker, and that they'd model to the CU what it means to find joy in the midst of sacrifice.”

# 4. Offer shorter-term leadership ‘tasters’

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Gen Z are worried about over-committing themselves:  
start by giving them shorter-term, time-limited opportunities to test the water.



# 5. Seek out their thoughts

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Gen Z may turn down most opportunities to give their viewpoint, but when they do want to give it, they expect to be able to do so.

(But remember that they may feel unconfident in offering it if it's not actively welcomed!)

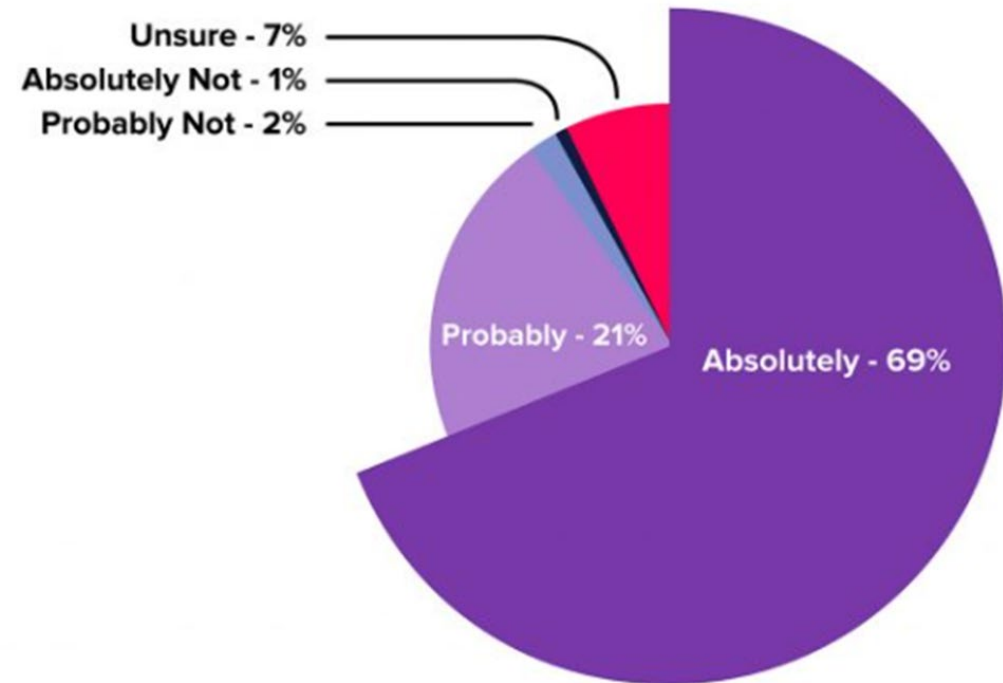
“The old adage that if you want commitment from people then they need to be involved has never been more true. You have to make it clear that you welcome their input, no matter how much of it there might be and how often it might arrive. Without a sense of ‘you-said-we-did’ a lot of your potential future leaders will wander off very quickly.”

# 6. Get them working with others who aren't like them

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Gen Z want to work in diverse workplaces and teams – they want to be mentored by those in other generations, and especially enjoy working in ethnically-diverse settings.

Would you be more likely to apply for a job that had recruiters and materials that reflected an ethnically and racially diverse workplace?



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