

Hi. I'm Meryam Bukhari, a student in the 2016 class of the MIT Sloan MBA program. I'm 26 years old and a millennial.

What do young workers-- millennials-- today want from their jobs and careers? And how do they want to establish and maintain a balance between work and life? These questions are important to lots of people-- employers wanting to recruit and keep young talented workers, millennials like me who are about to enter the workforce, and hordes of consultants giving us and business leaders advice about the changing workforce.

So let's start with what our parents told us when we were growing up. My parents, like I would guess many of your parents if you're a millennial, said that if I worked hard in school and got a good education, I would do well in life, even better financially and socially than they did. But today, many of us are worried that our generation, the millennials, might not achieve that goal.

And if we ask young people today if that's what they really want out of their careers, we get different answers. For example, the people who took this course last year said that their top probability was addressing big, important problems at work, while also having a sensible work-life balance. Doing well financially was also important. But these data, like other surveys of young professionals, show that it's not at the top of the list.

Hi. My name is Eileen Rivera. And I'm a third year student at Wellesley College. I'm also a millennial about to enter the workforce. And as you saw, there is no one single most important aspiration. This extended quote from a young woman in the class illustrates how she sees these different aspiration fitting together.

"My dream includes a job where I do important work, something that gives back to the community. I dream of having a work-life balance that melds together. I hope that I'm able to utilize technology to make work more accessible and eventually have the option to do work from home.

I do hope to be able to find a company that has a retirement plan where the company contributes some percentage to the plan. In some regards, I hope to have some of the same benefits that my parents had-- health insurance, retirement plans, et cetera. Most importantly, I want to have passion for my work. I want my work to help people. And I hope to make a decent living, while making the generations before me proud."

All this suggests that even though our generation shares many of the same concerns of prior generations, we care more about having an impact and work-life balance and money. Our generation of workers also looks very different than workforces of the past, both in America and around the world. Almost half of Americans today are people of color.

And many millennials here and around the world are children of immigrants or immigrants themselves. We will all be working together, learning from each other, and some of us will be starting families that blend our diverse backgrounds. So we will want our workplaces to embrace who we are and where we come from.

But many millennials are also having a hard time getting started. In the US, the majority of millennials say we are not earning enough money to live like we want to. More than a third of millennials report that we depend on our families for financial support. So many of us have to start out in debt from student loans and can't find full-time or career-building jobs in the fields we studied in school.

How does all this affect how and where we work? Well, for one thing, we move around from job to job a lot. A recent survey said people between age 22 and 32 change jobs between one and four times in the last five years. And 66% expect to change jobs again in the next few years.

Many of us are also sending a clear message that we want more opportunities, not just for ourselves, but for everyone regardless of race or the income bracket in which they were raised. That's why some are protesting against low wages of fast food companies, racial injustices, and income inequality as seen by the Occupy Wall Street Movement in 2011 and by protests of women and men who are forced to work in unacceptable conditions in garment factories in global supply chains.

What does this mean for the next generations of managers and leaders? Sloan School MBAs who studied data from last year's class, concluded that as managers of the future, they will need to listen to their employees, engage them in solving problems that really matter to the organization and to society, and be flexible in how, when, and where people work so they can be productive and attend to personal and family affairs. Those are the messages sent by last year's class. Let's see how this year's class can bring our voices into the process of shaping the future of work.