

farce forward

If you're one of the generation who fondly remembers the statement 'I hope I die before I get old', you should think about changing your iTunes, says Sally Feldman



It's the end of the tax year, and what better time to make a life-affirming, future-forward decision than when your eyesight's failing after squinting over crumpled petrol receipts. Get thee behind me nostalgia, enough of the sneering at remixes of 1977 soul classics.

Instead, I'm wriggling out of my Boomer chrysalis to embrace the future as a Flexistentialist butterfly. Not for me the crass generational stereotyping of being defined by my work (all those years of watching people's eyes glaze over at cocktail parties when I explain what I do has left me spent). I'm jumping on the Five Channel Generation bandwagon, armed with a swath of drop-down menus and multi-functioning, enabling technology.

But before you shake your head and go straight to the next page, hear me out.

Bleisure-seekers are no longer content with a hotel that offers CNN with coffee creamer on the side. They also want to be able to buy parts of the hotel to take home

This isn't post-traumatic tax syndrome; I've seen the light, and I'm blinking into the high beam being shone by those crazy guys at the Future Laboratory.

This group circumnavigates the world at jet speed (did anyone say carbon footprint?) consulting to corporations, advertising agencies and media organisations on consumer trends. It is they who nonchalantly bandy about terms coined by savants like the boffins at Microsoft (who came up with Flexistentialists) and economists such as Holm Friebe (whose name, as far as I can make out, is not a cunning, future-forward anagram, although, god knows I've tried). Friebe uses the term Digital Bohemians to describe this young, alpha-thumbed consumer group that I aspire to join. (Flexistentialism is the same concept, only harder to say after a Campari and soda. It has nothing whatsoever to do with yoga.) Now, in this chilly economic climate, one could be excused for being a tad sceptical about anything an economist comes up with, but, in the spirit of the times, let's give our friend Friebe the benefit of the doubt.

This latest generation's guiding principle (my preferred term for them is Generation *¿Que?*) is Bleisure, or the blurring of business and leisure, which has evolved with the converging of

technology – MySpace, iPhone and all that other inappropriately capitalised gadgetry – so they need never be offline, hook and sinker. According to the Messrs Laboratory, the means by which this tech-savvy group works, rests and plays have converged, leaving Boomers, Xs, Ys and Zs despondently clutching their melting Mars Bars in a cloud of dust.

The reason for this is that, while the 80s were all about using the left side of the brain à la Gordon Gekko (competitive advantage ruled), the 90s were about using the right side of the brain (knowledge was shared). Naturally, this nanosecond's generation has morphed into the bet-both-ways era – mixing work (left) and creativity (right) – which only makes sense if you're the sort of person who can navigate without turning a map

upside down. Not that you need to, nowadays, of course, what with global satellite technology bailing you up from your dashboard or iPhone.

Which brings me to the future of travel. It seems Bleisure-seekers are no longer content with a hotel that offers CNN with coffee creamer on the side; they want a boutique environment, where their WiFi can snuggle up with their iPod in a bleisable home away from home, which preferably includes a gallery space, hip bar, destination restaurant and cinema. All good, you say, but whose home from home is this anyway? Sure, we all know people with cinema-sized plasmas – but a DJ and tapas in the spare room? I don't think so.

Bleisuristas also want to be able to buy parts of the hotel to take home with them, apparently – sheets, mattresses, a spunky concierge, perhaps? Again, when you go for a sleepover at a friend's place, must you leave with their Le Creuset?

To this end, I've not only decided to join 'em, but to start my own trend consultancy, a place where lifestyle buzzwords such as Boastmodernism (the ostentatious display of Charles Eames furniture), Satirement (the now-hilarious concept of giving up work before you die) and Flatisseries (ridiculously expensive bakeries-cum-delis that open up under inner-city apartment blocks) can thrive and prosper. I shall call it iGuess. Well, I will, if I get a tax rebate. **VE+T**