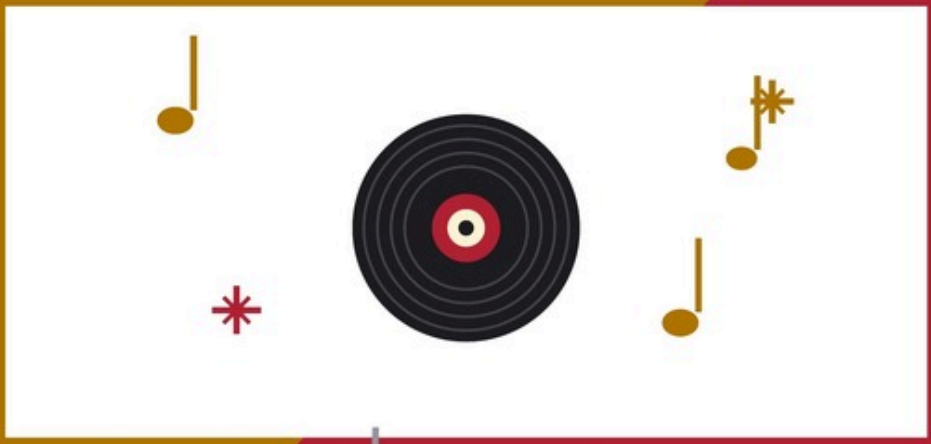
A PLAYFUL GUIDE TO THE BOOMER GENERATION

Boomer Proof

Isms, sayings & stories from the boomer generation



Large print • Plain language • Zero judgement

John Marshall

PROUDLY CANADIAN



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FREE SAMPLE CHAPTER

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THE COSMIC THUMBS-UP

Far out!

Two words that could mean anything from 'that's amazing' to 'I have no idea what you just said, but I support you.' The Swiss Army knife of hippie approval.



1. **What it means** That's wild, amazing, mind-blowing — or just pleasantly weird. The farther out, the better.
2. **How to deliver it** Draw out the 'aaaar.' 'Faaar out, man.' Bonus points if you stare into the middle distance like you're watching your thoughts orbit.
3. **Peak usage** Anything surprising qualified: a good sandwich, a strange cloud, your neighbour's new haircut. Low bar, high enthusiasm.
4. **Say it today** Still perfect for anything that impresses you. Try it at the farmer's market and watch the vendor grin.

Good to know: Astronauts made it literal in 1969, but hippies had already taken it cosmic years earlier.

Take care: Do not say it at a funeral. Some rooms are not far out. Read the room.

> **A familiar moment:** Gord, 71, from Saskatoon, saw his first grandchild on a video call and said 'Faaar out!' The baby cried. Gord stands by it — the baby was, objectively, far out.

THE GROOVE STANDARD

Groovy

The official adjective of an entire decade. If something was good, it wasn't good — it was groovy. The word itself sounds like it's wearing bell-bottoms.

Feel the rhythm › Snap the fingers › Sway a little › Certify it groovy

1. **What it means** Cool, excellent, pleasing — with a beat you can dance to. Originally from jazz: playing 'in the groove' of the record.
2. **How to deliver it** Say it like you're tasting something delicious. 'Grooo-vy.' Let it roll. Rushing it ruins it.
3. **Where it lived** Record shops, dance floors, basement parties. If the music was right and the company was righter, the night was groovy.
4. **Say it today** Due for a comeback. Tell a teenager their playlist is groovy and enjoy the confusion — then explain. You're welcome.

Good to know: Jazz musicians in the 1930s said a band was 'in the groove' when everything clicked. Hippies just added the 'y' and the dancing.

Take care: Saying it ironically still counts as saying it. Own it or retire it.

> **A familiar moment:** Diane, 68, from Hamilton, told the young cashier her thrift-store lamp was 'groovy.' The cashier, 19, said 'Thanks! My grandma says that too.' Diane has never been prouder or older.



THE SOLIDARITY STAMP

Right on!

Agreement with a fist pump built in. 'Right on' didn't just mean 'I agree' — it meant 'I agree and I am ready to march about it.'

Hear the truth › Raise the fist › Nod hard › Shout it right on

1. **What it means** Exactly right. I stand with you. Preach. It turned agreement into a small rally.
2. **How to deliver it** Punch the air on 'on.' 'RIGHT on!' Volume is mandatory. Whispering it is a contradiction in terms.
3. **Peak usage** Protests, concerts, kitchen tables. Anywhere someone said something true and the room needed to detonate a little.
4. **Say it today** Use it when someone nails it — the grandkid's school presentation, your friend's rant about phone bills. Instant ally.

Good to know: By the early 70s it was everywhere: talk shows, sitcoms, even commercials trying to sound young. The Man bought 'right on' and sold it back.

Take care: Fist pumps at the dinner table may startle the gravy. Calibrate for the venue.

> **A familiar moment:** At a Legion bingo night in Brandon, 74-year-old Art yelled 'RIGHT ON!' when his neighbour won the jackpot. The whole hall joined in. The caller now allows it. It is, officially, bingo canon.

THE GENTLEST PROTEST

Make love, not war

The slogan that fit on a bumper sticker and in a philosophy degree. Four words that ended arguments, started conversations, and annoyed every general in North America.

See the conflict › Choose the flowers › Paint the sign › Mean every word

1. **What it means** Choose kindness over conflict, every time. The hippie foreign policy, domestic policy, and dinner-table policy.
2. **How to deliver it** Calmly, with total sincerity. It was never shouted — it was offered, like soup.
3. **Where it lived** Marches, dorm walls, VW vans, and at least one embroidered pillow in every commune-adjacent household.
4. **Say it today** Deploy during family debates about the thermostat, the remote, or politics at Thanksgiving. It disarms like nothing else.

Good to know: The phrase showed up at anti-war marches in 1965 and never left. Your grandmother may have had it on a button. Ask her.

Take care: Sarcastic delivery defeats the purpose. This one only works if you mean it, man.

> **A familiar moment:** Two brothers in Kelowna, 69 and 72, ended a forty-year feud over a borrowed canoe when one of them — at a family barbecue, in front of everyone — said 'Make love, not war, eh?' They both laughed. The canoe is still missing. Nobody cares anymore.

THE GENERATION GAP IN ONE LINE

Don't trust anyone over 30

The boomers' own warning label, printed while most of them were under 25. Then they all turned 30 and had to pretend they never said it.

Be 22 › Distrust the suits › Turn 30 › Quietly retire the slogan

1. **What it means** The establishment can't be trusted. Anyone with a mortgage and a tie is suspect. Youth knows best.
2. **How to deliver it** With total, shining certainty — the kind only available to people whose frontal lobes are still under warranty.
3. **The irony** Every boomer eventually crossed 30 and became the untrustworthy one. The slogan expired like milk, right on schedule.
4. **Say it today** Use it on yourself for comic effect: 'Well, I'm 70, so don't trust me.' Gets a laugh every single time.

Good to know: Popularized by activist Jack Weinberg in 1964 during the Berkeley free-speech movement. He was 24 at the time. He is now well over 30.

Take care: Do not use it to win arguments with your grandkids. They will simply wait. Time is on their side.

> **A familiar moment:** Retired teacher Barb, 70, from London, Ontario, has 'Don't trust anyone over 30' framed in her hallway — right next to her Order of Canada nomination letter. She calls it 'my complete autobiography in two frames.'

BOTANICAL OPTIMISM

Flower power

The radical idea that you could fight something with a daisy. Protesters put flowers in rifle barrels, and for one strange, beautiful moment, the evening news didn't know what to do.

Pick the flower › Find the tension › Offer the stem › Change the picture

1. **What it means** Gentle resistance. Peace as a strategy, not just a wish. Beauty as a counter-argument.
2. **How to deliver it** You don't say it so much as practice it. Hand someone a flower mid-argument and watch the argument deflate.
3. **The famous photo** In 1967, a protester placed carnations in the rifle barrels of soldiers at the Pentagon. The image went around the world.
4. **Say it today** Bring flowers to the neighbour you're feuding with over the fence. Flower power still works. Fences hate it.

Good to know: Poet Allen Ginsberg coined it in 1965 as a deliberate tactic: make protests so beautiful the cameras couldn't look away.

Take care: Actual gardening still required. The metaphor wilts without water.

> **A familiar moment:** After a brutal condo-board meeting in Victoria, 68-year-old Priya taped a daisy to the complaint letter about her wind chimes. The board dropped the complaint. She now keeps emergency daisies in the freezer.

THE VERBAL OLIVE BRANCH

Peace, man

The universal remote control for human conflict. Two syllables that could end a shouting match, a sibling war, or a bad vibe at a party.

Feel the tension › Raise two fingers › Say the word › Watch it land

1. **What it means** Calm down, let's be cool, no hard feelings. A peace treaty you can say in one breath.
2. **How to deliver it** Flash the two-finger V and say it low and easy: 'Peace, man.' Never shout it. Shouted peace is an oxymoron.
3. **Where it lived** Everywhere tension did: parties, dorms, concerts, the back seat of every car with more than two teenagers in it.
4. **Say it today** Perfect for defusing the grandkids' fights in the back seat. Say 'peace, man' from the driver's seat and watch them stare.

Good to know: The V-sign meant victory in the war years; hippies flipped it into peace. Same fingers, much better mood.

Take care: Does not work on automated phone menus. The robot does not want peace. The robot wants your account number.

> **A familiar moment:** At a noisy restaurant in Halifax, 72-year-old Frank ended a shouting match between two tables by standing up and saying 'Peace, man.' Both tables went quiet. The waiter comped dessert. Frank's wife says he has been dining out on that story for six years.

THE DISAPPOINTMENT LABEL

Bummer, man

The official review of every disappointment, from burnt toast to cancelled concerts. 'Bummer' made bad news sound almost groovy.

Hear the bad news › Drop the shoulders › Exhale hard › Call it a bummer

1. **What it means** That's a shame. What a letdown. Delivered with a shrug, because what else can you do?
2. **How to deliver it** Let the air out of it: 'Buuummer.' It's a sigh with consonants.
3. **The scale** A minor bummer: the store is out of your ice cream. A major bummer: the concert is cancelled. A total bummer: both, same day.
4. **Say it today** Use it for life's small defeats. Stubbed toe? Bummer. Rain on golf day? Bummer. It makes misfortune feel communal.

Good to know: Surfers gave it to the hippies, who gave it to everyone. A bummer was originally just a bad wave — then it became a bad everything.

Take care: Not for actual tragedies. Some news is too big for 'bummer.' Upgrade your vocabulary for the heavy stuff.

> **A familiar moment:** When the Jays lost the 2024 playoff run, 66-year-old season-ticket holder Sal turned to his son and said, 'Total bummer, man.' His son said, 'Dad, you haven't said bummer since 1978.' Sal said, 'Some words wait for the right heartbreak.'

THE CHILL COMMANDMENT

Hang loose

The opposite of 'hang tough.' Permission to relax, officially granted. A whole philosophy in two words and a hand gesture.

Finish the good talk › Relax the shoulders › Wave the hand › Hang loose

1. **What it means** Stay cool, don't stress, let it roll off. The laid-back farewell.
2. **How to deliver it** Flash the shaka — thumb and pinky out — and say it like you're already on the beach. Even in February. Especially in February.
3. **Where it lived** Beach towns first, then everywhere. It was the 'goodbye' of people who didn't believe in hurrying.
4. **Say it today** End stressful conversations with it. Doctor's appointment done? Hang loose. Taxes filed? Hang loose. Works every time.

Good to know: It came with the shaka hand sign from Hawaiian surfers: thumb and pinky out, middle fingers down. Maximum chill, minimum effort.

Take care: The shaka is not the same as other hand gestures. Thumb and pinky only. Check before you flash.

> **A familiar moment:** Retired principal Ed, 73, from Regina, still ends every phone call with his old army buddy with 'Hang loose.' Forty years of calls. Neither of them has ever hung up tight.

THE PERSEVERANCE PARADE

Keep on truckin'

The anthem of stubborn persistence. Whatever's in the way — bad knees, bad news, bad weather — you keep on truckin'.

Hit the hard patch › Lower the head › Find the rhythm › Keep on truckin'

1. **What it means** Keep going. Don't stop. One foot in front of the other, no matter what.
2. **How to deliver it** With a grin and a strut. It's not marching — it's truckin'. There's a bounce in it.
3. **Peak usage** Stuck in traffic, halfway through a marathon, third hour of a phone call with the cable company. Truckin' applies.
4. **Say it today** The perfect motto for physiotherapy, home renovations, and long winters. Say it out loud; it genuinely helps.

Good to know: Robert Crumb's 1968 cartoon of big-footed strutting men became the decade's most bootlegged poster. The phrase itself is older — 1930s jazz slang for keeping going.

Take care: Does not excuse ignoring actual medical advice. Truck through the rehab, not around it.

> **A familiar moment:** When 70-year-old Ruth finished her last round of physiotherapy after a hip replacement, she marched out of the clinic chanting 'Keep on truckin'!' The physiotherapists applauded. One of them had the poster in his office.

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