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Let's Talk About Money -- and Trauma

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For better or worse, our genetics and childhood experiences spill into our adult lives -- and in the case of family businesses, they affect how we view our family coworkers and the wealth our predecessors created. In an era when a "great wealth transfer" is underway from Baby Boomers to their heirs, many younger generations are in the dark about the size of their inheritance and in denial about how it will affect their lives. Family business conflict can result.

Ruschelle Khanna, a **therapist and family business advisor(https://www.ruschellekhanna.com)** for two decades, says multigenerational family firms must understand how attitudes about money are shaped and reinforced, especially as successor generations prepare for leadership. She is the author of the upcoming book, "Creating an Echo Legacy: Overcoming Generational Trauma to Build True Wealth."

Link to video

In this interview with FamilyBusiness.org's Kimberly Eddleston, Khanna describes how generational trauma -- uncomfortable experiences in childhood -- affect the business in five key ways. For example, heirs may bring toxic attitudes into the business if they remember abuse. They may feel abandoned if parents were too focused on the business; or be people pleasers if that helped them escape punishment when they were younger. Or they may become overwhelmed by the demands of the business, or worst of all, disengaged from it.

Khanna says families must gather the courage to have uncomfortable conversations about childhood experiences and money -- and the older generations should make the first move.