

College of Business book Review by Hong Yin for 12/25/06

Title: "Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation"

Author: Neil Howe and William Strauss

Publisher: Vintage Books

Length: 415 pages

Price: \$14.95 (paperback)

Reading time: 12 hours

Reading rating: 8 (1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)

Overall rating: 3 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

Will the Millennial Generation become America's next great generation? Is this possible? Those questions are at the center of Neil Howe and William Strauss' book "Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation." The authors use a large amount of data, facts, and stories to prove that Millennials are the most watched and protected generation in U.S. history; they are optimistic instead of pessimistic, team-oriented instead of self-oriented, rule followers instead of rule breakers; they are the most diverse generation; and they are smart. Therefore, the authors make a remarkable conclusion: "A new generation is rising."

Just as the boomers in the '60s, the Xers in the '90s, it's now the time that the Millennials—who were born in and after 1982—step into the central stage of the nation. To meet the Millennials, you need to know their past, present and future. The answer to "where they came from" describes the past and shows the location of Millennials in the history. Moreover, the authors explain why Millennials are a sharp break from Gen Xers and why they are a direct reversal of Boomers. The answer to "who they are" tells the present and explores this rising generation from several social areas including demography, politics, family, school, culture, community, commerce, and world. The answer to "where they're going" pictures the future and predicts the timetable of Millennials over the next decade once they enter their adulthood. Overall, today's kids are still rebellious, but they are heading to a positive direction.

As pointed out by the authors, "Millennials have the capacity to become the next great generation, but this capacity does not ensure any particular outcome." It does not suggest that Millennials do not have any weakness. With a comparison to the older generations, they are less creative, more depended on peers, more spoiled, and unethical. These could harm the greatness. However, Millennials represent the future of the nation. They are like a fully charged rocket. What they need are a right direction and an opportunity to let them launch.

The authors of *Generations*, *13<sup>th</sup> Gen*, and *The Fourth Turning*, Howe and Strauss have their attention on the issues of generations since a long time ago. Both their knowledge and tremendous efforts certainly serve the best to make a rich and convincing presentation. To write the book, they have taken their own surveys and they have interviewed with more than two hundreds of kids, parents, and teachers to collect a large amount of the first-hand materials.

There are another two features that make this book a lot of fun and more enjoyable. One is to include some wonderful cartoons from R. J. Matson. Another one is to use a chorus of sidebar quotes from hundreds of Millennials and adults. Written with wit and insight, this book is beneficial to both the younger readers and the older readers. For the youngsters, it shows them what the future will be and to fully prepare for it, they need to believe in themselves. While for the elders, it helps them to see how and why today's kids are different from their own and it is important for them to overcome pessimism and think positive about today's young Millennials.

Hong Yin is an assistant professor of Management in the College of Business at Western Carolina University. Her research interests include optimization problems in service and supply chain systems involving strategic interactions of multiple parties, supply chain management in E-commerce, and applications of game theory, optimal control theory, and queueing theory. For previously reviewed books, visit us at our website at [www.wcu.edu/cob/](http://www.wcu.edu/cob/).