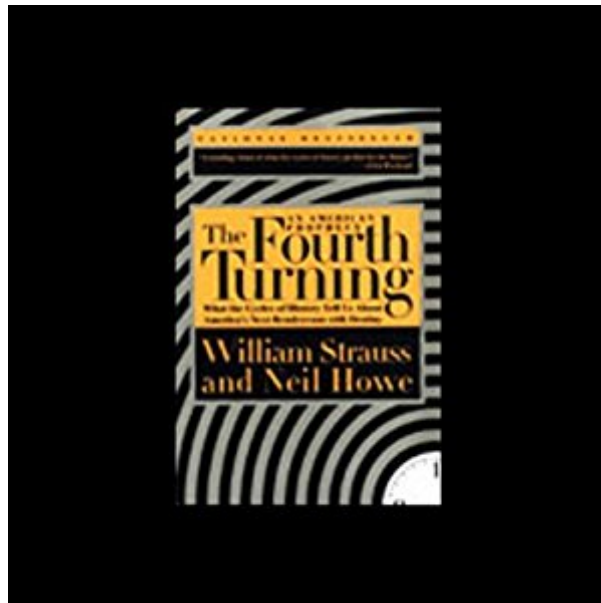


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# The Fourth Turning: An American Prophecy



## Synopsis

An utterly persuasive prophecy about a new American era that begins just after the millennium, *The Fourth Turning* illuminates the past, explains the present, and imagines the future. William Strauss and Neil Howe base this vision on a provocative new theory of American history. With intellectual audacity, the authors look back 500 years and uncover a distinct pattern: History moves in cycles, each one lasting about the length of a long human life, each composed of four eras - or "turnings" - that last about 20 years and always arrive in the same order. First comes a High, a period of confident growth as a new order takes root. Next comes an Awakening, a time of spiritual exploration and rebellion against the now-established order. Then comes an Unraveling, an increasingly troubled era as individualism triumphs over crumbling institutions. Last comes a Crisis - the Fourth Turning - when society passes through a great and perilous gate in history. Strauss and Howe locate today's America as midway through an Unraveling, roughly a decade away from the next era of Crisis. They show how generational dynamics are the key to understanding the cycles of American history and draw vivid portraits of all the modern generations: the can-do G.I.s, the mediating Silent, the self-absorbed Boomers, the pragmatic 13ers, and the child Millennials. Placed in the context of history's long rhythms, the persona and role of each generation becomes clear - as does the inevitability of the coming Crisis. By applying the lessons of history, *The Fourth Turning* makes some bold and hopeful predictions about America's next rendezvous with destiny, and shows us how we can prepare for what's ahead.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I picked up a copy of "The Fourth Turning" because to refresh myself on the generational differences of donors. I was hoping to help a colleague wrestle with how to apply fundraising techniques with attention to these cohorts. Having read the authors' 13th Gen a few years ago, I knew this would be an erudite review. I got what I was looking for and much more! "The Fourth Turning" is actually a compelling look at human history, especially Western history since the middle of the fifteenth century! Howe and Strauss have amazingly taken the most recent 20th century generations (GI, Silent, Boomer, Xer, and Millennial) and found corresponding generations for the last few hundred years. From this, they've developed a convincing rubric of generational archetypes-GIs and Millennials are the "Hero," Silents are the "Artist," Boomers are the "Prophet," and Xers are the "Nomad." Moreover, they've revisited the millennia old theory that time moves through seasons in a cyclical pattern, one that corresponds with the seasons of the year. The post-WWII era was our "High" or spring; the Consciousness Revolution was our "Awakening" or summer; the 80's and 90's was our "Unraveling" or fall; and we're currently headed for our "Crisis" or winter. They chose to label the seasons "turnings" and the time encompassing the four turnings as the "saecula," a label used by the ancients that roughly corresponds to a century. With an amazing attention to detail, a scholarly eye to history, and a wonderfully readable writing style, Howe and Strauss show the interplay of the generational archetypes and the turnings.

The book The Fourth Turning is a history combined with prophecy written by generational sociologists William Strauss and Neil Howe. This book is inspiring and provides interesting explanations for why things are the way they turned out to be, but it still doesn't have all the answers. The theory is basically that history goes through four types of turnings: a conservative High, in which institutions are stable after the success of a major war (the Era of Good Feelings, the Victorian Era, the '50s), a spiritual Awakening in which young people scrap convention for religious discovery (Ben Franklin's Great Awakening, the Transcendental Awakening, the turn-of-the-century Muckrake reform era, the '60s), a wild Unravelling (the colorful Gold Rush, the roaring twenties, and the current era that began about 1984), and a fourth turning -- or Crisis (the Revolutionary War, the Civil War and the Great Depression and World War II were the last three examples). A catalyst will spark the Fourth Turning that will become around 2005. These turnings change when each generation enters a new phase of life. After you read this book, it's one of those books that completely transforms your mode of thinking. Both the present and the prophesied future are explained by means of generations -- fit into four different types ("archetypes") that shift along with the turnings. The authors identify the Lost Generation (born 1883-1900), the G.I. Generation (born

1901-1924), the Silent Generation (born 1925-1942), the Baby Boomers (born 1943-1960), the 13th Generation (born 1961-1981) and the Millennial Generation (born since 1982). They explain how these generations relate to those throughout history, and date the historical generations born all the way back to 1433.

Member of the 13th Generation? Millennial Generation? The Boomers? Care to track your own development through the maze of historical events to find out where you've been, and more importantly, where you are going? Where our country is going? Then pick this book up immediately. Simply put, the "Fourth Turning" is THE most important book written in the last twenty years, and a book that should be required reading. Strauss and Howe apparently have devoted their lives to the study of history and the development of generations in societies. The book is loaded, and I mean, loaded with historical references, some of which I wasn't familiar with until now. By looking at these events, and more importantly, looking at the people that went along with those events, Strauss and Howe noticed some recurring patterns in generations over the centuries. Apply this pattern to our country, and to our future, they have correctly predicted that we are headed for a "Fourth Turning", a time of great crisis and peril. Normally, I shun books that people claim to have "visions of the future" involved with them. They are frequently erroneous and based on the whims of the author. However, "The Fourth Turning" is different. By basing their theories of the future on past events, they offer support and credence to their thoughts. The effect is both enlightening and chilling, but it is one that we simply cannot ignore. I found every single page of their book fascinating as a study of recent history and future history. Also, I personally found self-enlightenment in reading about the generation in which I belong, the long lost "Gen X" crowd, or the title they label it, "13th".

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