



The Fourth Turning: What the Cycles of History Tell Us About America's Next Rendezvous with Destiny

By William Strauss, Neil Howe

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First came the postwar High, then the Awakening of the '60s and '70s, and now the Unraveling. This audacious and provocative book tells us what to expect just beyond the start of the next century. Are you ready for the Fourth Turning?

Strauss and Howe will change the way you see the world--and your place in it. In *The Fourth Turning*, they apply their generational theories to the cycles of history and locate America in the middle of an unraveling period, on the brink of a crisis. How you prepare for this crisis--the Fourth Turning--is intimately connected to the mood and attitude of your particular generation. Are you one of the can-do "GI generation," who triumphed in the last crisis? Do you belong to the mediating "Silent Majority," who enjoyed the 1950s High? Do you fall into the "awakened" Boomer category of the 1970s and 1980s, or are you a Gen-Xer struggling to adapt to our splintering world? Whatever your stage of life, *The Fourth Turning* offers bold predictions about how all of us can prepare, individually and collectively, for America's next rendezvous with destiny.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The Fourth Turning continues the project of mapping out the place of generations in history, a project begun in the authors' earlier books *Generations* and *13th Gen*. If millennial fever takes hold, *The Fourth Turning* may be only the first of an impending wave of pseudo-scholarly tracts prognosticating future (but imminent!) doom as we collectively close the books on this millennium. Those expecting a serious or dry tome might be put off by the authors' taste for bulleted text and catchy phrasings, but can you blame these guys for wanting to make impending peril as exciting as possible? After all, they think we are headed toward "events on par with the Revolution, the Civil War, or World War II" in the next 20 years. Mixing solid understanding of present generational divisions, with some fairly broad generalizations, Strauss and Howe promise to move from history to prophecy. Fans of *Future Shock*, *Megatrends*, or *Powershift* will be familiar with the authors' style of writing and not at all put off by the book's reach or style. Their take on history provides an intriguing (if not always reliable) lens through which to view the past, present, and maybe even the future.

From *Library Journal*

After researching historical patterns, the authors (*Generations: The History of America's Future, Morrow*, 1991) conclude that America is on the verge of crisis. They substantiate their hypothesis by identifying and tracing a repetitive, four-stage historical cycle that, throughout recorded time, started on a high note and ended in hardship. Narrator Michael Tilford's polished, convincing voice and steady pacing lend an air of legitimacy to the authors' assertions. A brief question-and-answer session between the narrator and the authors at program's end provides an interactive quality that enhances the sometimes methodical drone of the historical analysis. Like other works of prophecy, *The Fourth Turning* should circulate well in public libraries. —Mark P. Tierney, The World Bank, Washington, D.C.

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From [Booklist](#)

What *is* so attractive about deterministic, cyclical theories offered to explain troublingly complex realities? Strauss and Howe, who staked out "generational change" as their mantra in *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584[^]-2069* (1991) and then *13th-GEN: Abort, Retry, Ignore, Fail?* (1993), return to argue that the U.S. can anticipate a major crisis--a fourth turning--in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Regrettably, some 40 percent of the book's 350 pages retrace seasons of time and life, the cycles of history, and the "Anglo-American Saeculum" : largely a rehash of ideas from their earlier books. They discuss the U.S.' most recent three turnings: the "High" of the decades after World War II; the 1964[^]-84 "Consciousness Revolution" ; and 1984-2005's "Culture Wars." To assess "fourth turnings," they describe examples (England's War of the Roses, Armada Crisis, and Glorious Revolution, and the American Revolution, Civil War, and Depression and World War II) and then predict the kinds of catalysts and crises that might push the U.S. into its next "fourth turning." Strauss and Howe offer suggestions on how we can prepare for these challenges, but few will learn much from their standard words of wisdom. Probably a harmless enough brand of New Age futurism from the GOP Beltway think tanks, but aggressive marketing suggests high visibility. *Mary Carroll*

Users Review

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