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Resources

The Next Great Generation

College freshmen and their younger siblings have values, direction, and purpose.

EXCERPT

"The experiences that Millennials have not personally known also define them.... They've never known what it was like to grow up without miracle vaccines, eat foods without vitamin additives, entertain themselves without electronic games of immense complexity, write a term paper without Internet and word processor, be barred from schools because of race or from sports because of gender, or duck and cover in nuclear war drills at school. They've never known recessions, student riots, political assassinations, red scares or foreign crisis that directly threaten the lives of their families. So, too, have they never known pro athletes who didn't regularly shop their skill and celebrity to the highest bidder, or a sexual landscape that wasn't dotted with lawyers and deadly diseases, or a school curriculum that wasn't an ideological battleground."

MILLENNIALS RISING: THE NEXT GREAT GENERATION

By Neil Howe and William Strauss
Vintage Books: \$14

Move over Boomers and Gen Xers, here come the Millennials. And according to Neil Howe and William Strauss, they could just save the world.

Using a wealth of marketing reports, statistics, graphs, and testimonials from an in-depth opinion poll of the new generation and their teachers and parents, the authors contend that Millennials—born 1982 through 2002—are poised to become the next great generation,

one that will provide a more positive, group-oriented, can-do ethos for America.

Throughout the book—which explores the roots of this turnaround generation, who they are now, and where they are headed—the authors convincingly argue that while teens today may be heavily tattooed and inclined to body piercing, appearances are as misleading as ever. Millennials are returning to conservative family values, emphasizing cooperation rather than creativity, and showing a new respect for rules.

More numerous and culturally diverse than their forebearers, their views reflect the duty-minded, civic-oriented ideals of World War II fighters, not the cynicism of their me-

first baby boomer and Gen-X-age parents.

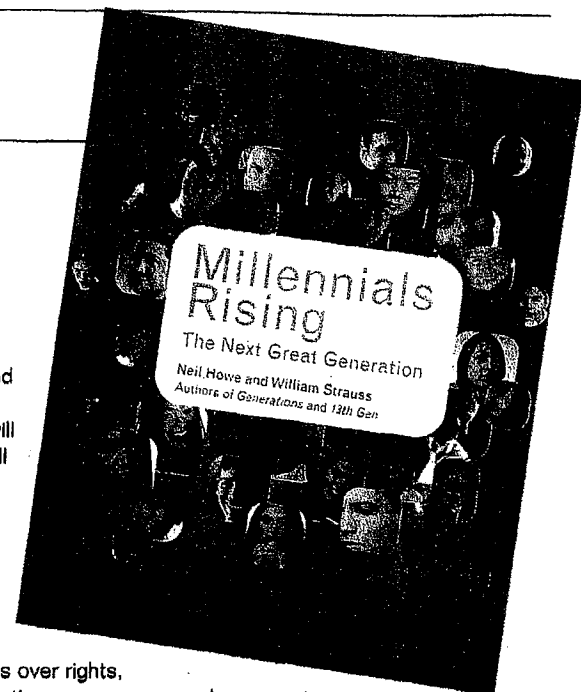
"The Millennials will correct what they will perceive to be the mistakes...of boomers, by placing positivism over negativism, trust over cynicism, science over spiritualism, team over self, duties over rights, honor over feeling, action over words," write the authors.

Can children reared on Barney, Britney, 'N Sync, and the rest of the bubble gum youth culture really be "the next great generation"? Consider the evidence:

According to national surveys cited by the authors, homicide, violent crime, abortion, and pregnancy among teens have all plummeted at the fastest rates ever recorded. Teen suicide rates are falling for the first time in decades. And today's young people have stricter attitudes about sex than their elders, with virginity being a cool new trend.

There are also the testimonials on every page—from children, teachers, parents, politicians, researchers, and more—that speak of new hopes and big dreams.

Unlike the latchkey kids of Gen X, Millennials can't remember a time



when parents and politicians weren't focused on them and their needs. They lie under a gathering of adult protection—from bicycle helmet laws to school uniforms.

Politicians campaign on their behalf, and as a nation we've donated more concern and attention their way than to any other generation in generations.

Though the book does over-generalize, it's an entertaining read, with an intriguing analysis of popular culture that could prompt engaging discussions among old and young.

It's also hard to resist the book's hopeful vision for our children and future. Many of the theories they wrote about in their two previous books—*Generations* and *13th Gen*—have indeed come to pass.

—Dina S. Gómez