

The Fourth Turning

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According to historians William Strauss and Neil Howe [see *Generations : the history of America's future, 1584-2069* (1990), *The Fourth Turning: an American Prophecy* (1997), and the website www.fourthturning.com]:

- there are four basic generational types, cycling predictably
- their character comes from how they were raised, and what happened when they came of age
- their alignment (relative phases of life) results in societal moods, called turnings, that also follow a predictable sequence
- every two generations (at the second and fourth turnings), there is a crisis, either relating to an upheaval of values or a secular crisis
- we are approaching the fourth turning, and a secular crisis

<i>Born between</i>	<i>Known As</i>	<i>Archetype</i>	<i>Famous Man/Woman</i>	<i>Came of Age</i>	<i>Endowments</i>
1860-1882	Missionary	Prophet	Franklin Roosevelt Emma Goldman	Third Great Awakening	Vision, values, religion
1883-1900	Lost	Nomad	Harry Truman Dorothy Parker	WWI & Prohibition	Liberty, survival, honor
1901-1924	GI	Hero	JFK Katharine Hepburn	Depression & WWII	Community, affluence, technology
1925-1942	Silent	Artist	MLK, Jr. Bob Dylan	American High	Pluralism, expertise, due process
1943-1960	Boomer	Prophet	Bill Clinton Bill Gates/Steve Jobs	Consciousness Revolution	Vision, values, religion
1961-1981	Gen-X	Nomad	Jeff Bezos (Amazon) Larry Page (Google) Stewart/Colbert	Culture Wars	Liberty, survival, honor
1982-200?	Millennial	Hero	Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook) Jennifer Lawrence	Millennial Crisis?	Community, affluence, technology

Snapshot: generations in the workplace

	<i>Silent</i> 1925-1942	<i>Boomer</i> 1943-1960	<i>Gen-X</i> 1961-1981	<i>Millennial</i> 1981-2000
How raised	Suffocated	Indulged	Abandoned	Protected
Key events	Great Depression Midwest dustbowl New Deal Pearl Harbor FDR dies VE, VJ Days Korean conflict McCarthy hearings	Jonestown Civil Rights Act Birth control pills JFK, MLK, Jr, RFK Peace Corps Woodstock Moonwalk Viet Nam	Corporate layoffs AIDS Reagan Challenger explosion Berlin Wall Desert Storm Gas shortage	OKC bombing Columbine Y2K September 11 War in Afghanistan, Iraq Clinton Impeachment
General characteristics and values	Dedicated Respectful of authority Duty before pleasure Patience is a virtue Honor and integrity Reluctant to challenge system Resistant to change	Live to work Optimistic Big influence on policy and products Willing to go into debt Team and process oriented Convenience and personal gratification	Work to live Want clear expectations Want new skills, and will stay for them Want sense of real contribution Want frequent feedback	Conditioned to live in the moment Used to tech immediacy Grew up learning to respect authority Give respect only when they get it Astoundingly diverse
Decision making style	Hierarchical	Participative	Independent/ Directive	Collaborative
Communication style	Formal, face to face	Informal, often indirect	Immediate, casual, direct	Constant, multimedia
Can be seen as	Stodgy	Long-winded	Blunt	A.D.D.
Institutions....	Deserve loyalty	Can be changed	Are suspect	Should be judged on their own merit
Basic question	How?	Why?	What?	When?

Archetypes and Phases of Life

<i>Archetype</i>	<i>Childhood</i>	<i>Young Adulthood</i>	<i>Midlife</i>	<i>Elderhood</i>
Prophet	Indulged (First Turning)	Narcissistic, self-absorbed (Second Turning)	Judgmental moralists (Third Turning)	Visionary, statesmanlike (Fourth Turning)
Nomad	Underprotected, even neglected (Second Turning)	Alienated free agents (Third Turning)	Pragmatic (Fourth Turning)	Exhausted, conservative, and suspicious (First Turning)
Hero	Protected (Third Turning)	Challenged, team response (Fourth Turning)	Hubristic (First Turning)	Busy and active (Second Turning)
Artist	Overprotected, even suffocated (Fourth Turning)	Conformist (First Turning)	Indecisive experts (Second Turning)	Sensitive empaths (Third Turning)

	<i>First Turning</i>	<i>Second Turning</i>	<i>Third Turning</i>	<i>Fourth Turning</i>
Description	An upbeat era of strengthening institutions and weakening individualism, when a new civic order implants and the old values regime decays.	A passionate era of spiritual upheaval, when the civic order comes under attack from a new values regime.	A downcast era of strengthening individualism and weakening institutions, when the old civic order decays and the new values regime implants.	A decisive era of secular upheaval, when the values regime propels the replacement of the old civic order with a new one.
Generational alignment	Old Prophets disappear, Nomads enter elderhood, Heroes enter midlife, Artists enter young adulthood—and a new generation of Prophets is born.	Old Nomads disappear, Heroes enter elderhood, Artists enter midlife, Prophets enter young adulthood—and a new generation of child Nomads is born.	Old Heroes disappear, Artists enter elderhood, Prophets enter midlife, Nomads enter young adulthood—and a new generation of child Heroes is born.	Old Artists disappear, Prophets enter elderhood, Nomads enter midlife, Heroes enter young adulthood—and a new generation of child Artists is born.
Season	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter

Libraries at the Fourth Turning

There are two narratives to justify civic institutions:

- what's in it for me?
- what's in it for us?

The past generation of librarians has had to learn to speak to the *consumer* of library services, who was motivated by self-interest. As a consequence, we grew library **use** even as we lost public **support**. The next generation of librarians must recover and reinvigorate the language of the public good, of the *citizen* who is a conscious and contributing member of society. We must turn outward to reconnect with the authorizing spirit of our changing culture.

Seven messages for the future:

- *We are here for you when times are tough.* Libraries are major players in disaster recovery: hurricanes, floods, civil unrest.
- *We think ahead.* We are sustainable institutions, “green libraries” that give thought to long term operations. We invest in children, we embrace diversity of opinion and perspective.
- *We are co-creators.* We are moving from passive distributors of content to active creators of content, from gatekeeper to gardeners.
- *We make things better.* Advocates for literacy, for impassioned investigation, for the meaning of stories and ideas, we offer non-toxic sanctuary and celebration of human inquiry. We are optimists who improve not only the lives of individuals, but of our communities.
- *We build community.* We are builders and partners in positive change. We are exemplars of civic consensus. We know our purpose and we demonstrate it.
- *We are trustworthy.* If we are to achieve a rebirth of trust, we must continue to hold ourselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct.
- *We will endure.* Libraries continue to matter, to make a difference, to be part of one of the best stories the human race has ever told.