

A scenic landscape featuring a winding asphalt road that curves through a valley. In the background, there are rugged mountains, some with patches of snow. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, and a bright sun is breaking through, creating a golden glow and long shadows across the scene. The overall mood is one of hope and a clear path forward.

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**A CLEAR
VISION**

**BEYOND THE RED PILL
AND THE BLUE PILL**



➤ Getting Past Dogma

Thanks to the positive forces we've described and the expanding world of possibilities in the minds of the young, workable solutions to the threats we face are possible—especially if the people of the world's most dynamic and powerful society, the United States, take the lead. But there is a major psychological stumbling block we must first overcome.

For the past generation, Americans have been divided and distracted by bogus issues and false divisions—among ideologies (blue states versus red states, conservatives versus liberals), ethnicities (white versus black versus latino), genders (male versus female), and religious groups (fundamentalist Christians versus secular humanists versus Jews, Muslims, and what-have-you).

Over the past three decades, we've been increasingly focused on two and only two alternatives: the “*Red Pill*” offered by the Republican Party (culture wars, religious dogmatism, social intolerance, destruction of the social contract, and thoughtless militarism) and the “*Blue Pill*” of the Democratic Party (old-fashioned liberalism, pandering to unions and trial lawyers, reflexive anti-corporatism, and the politics of interest groups and ethnic identity). And throughout that period, these two choices have both been growing increasingly irrelevant and unhelpful.

The problem is that of dogma. Two opposing forces, which are driven by extremists in their ranks, have transformed politics from problem-solving into ideological warfare. Extremists tend to dominate the parties by voting in larger numbers in primary elections and by using their passion and organizational zeal to push specific agenda items and policy platforms. As a result, the extremes of the two parties drive candidates to pander to their narrow view of the world.

Because of their vast numbers and shared values, Generation We can sweep away the extremists and their phony issues and unite around a new approach to national politics. Having to choose between a Red Pill or a Blue Pill has caused the diseased state of our politics today.



We say, don't take either pill. Pills only obscure your vision and weaken your ability to get anything done for the greater good.

By taking no pills, one gets to the real solution: an unobscured Clear Vision that goes beyond the ideological constraints of the existing parties. The Clear Vision focuses on solving the problems that face all Americans and the planet rather than pandering to special interests, fringe groups, and far-right or far-left dogmatism.

The Clear Vision can unify our nation through the rebirth and revival of our brilliantly designed political system. Alexander Hamilton, in *The Federalist Papers* (number 51), explains eloquently how the system of checks and balances he and the other Founders created can prevent any narrow group from seizing control of our country and ensure that the greater good will eventually triumph:

In order to lay a due foundation for that separate and distinct exercise of the different powers of government, which to a certain extent is admitted on all hands to be essential to the preservation of liberty, it is evident that each department should have a will of its own; and consequently should be so constituted that the members of each should have as little agency as possible in the appointment of the members of the others...

But the great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department, consists in giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachments of the others. The provision for defense must in this, as in all other cases, be made commensurate to the danger of attack.

Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place. It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary.

In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions.

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We need to return to the belief in the greater good shared by our nation's Founders and expressed in that magnificent document of nation-building, the U.S. Constitution.

"Politics hates a vacuum. If it isn't filled with hope, someone will fill it with fear."

NAOMI KLEIN

This policy of supplying, by opposite and rival interests, the defect of better motives, might be traced through the whole system of human affairs, private as well as public. We see it particularly displayed in all the subordinate distributions of power, where the constant aim is to divide and arrange the several offices in such a manner as that each may be a check on the other—that the private interest of every individual may be a sentinel over the public rights. These inventions of prudence cannot be less requisite in the distribution of the supreme powers of the State.

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THE PROBLEM WITH A THIRD PARTY

How can this happen in practical, political terms? It *could* mean the creation of a new party. We've become so conditioned to see politics in terms of a black-and-white, either/or, Democratic/Republican divide, we almost forget that there is nothing sacrosanct or preordained about the existence of two and only two political parties. Many democracies in Europe and elsewhere have three or more viable parties, which increases the number of ideas in circulation, and promotes a healthy competition for voter support.

The two parties that have dominated the American system since the 1860s do not enjoy any sort of permanent mandate but are merely human creations arising from the accidents of history, like most other institutions. The Democratic Party as we know it today was founded in 1828 through the organizational efforts of Martin Van Buren, in support of the presidential candidacy of Andrew Jackson.

The Republican Party originated in 1854 as a third-party alternative to the then-dominant Democratic and Whig Parties; it rose to power behind the candidacy of Abraham Lincoln at the time of our country's greatest crisis. (In fact, the slavery crisis was so serious, it actually destroyed the two-party system as it then existed, leading to an 1860 election that featured no fewer than four serious parties—the Democrats, the Republicans, the Southern Democratic Party, and the Constitutional Union Party. The latter two parties soon disappeared.)

In theory, there's no reason why a new party could not be formed in today's time of crisis. It's even conceivable that a party driven mainly by members of Generation We, focused on the issues they are concerned with and reflecting their unique generational perspective, could become a major contender alongside the two traditional parties.

However, history shows that third-party efforts in the United States rarely succeed. Dozens of parties have been launched over the

Q89

How effective do you think political activism is a means of solving the major challenges facing our country?

A

Very	18
Somewhat	51
A little	25
Not at all	6
(Don't know/refused)	1
Very/somewhat	69
Little/not	31

SOURCE: GREENBERG MILLENNIAL SURVEY 2007

decades, most of which quickly faded after having little impact. Even those that attracted support from significant shares of the electorate—such as the Populist Party, which won 8 percent of the vote in 1892, and the Progressive Party, which tallied more than 16 percent in 1924—never came close to winning the White House or any major presence in the U.S. Congress. Structural barriers, including the Electoral College, the winner-take-all voting system, and the complex hurdle system involved in 50 separate state ballot access laws, make it almost impossible for a third party to challenge the Democrats and the Republicans successfully on a national basis.

Thus, the idea of a Millennial Party or even a new Progressive Party aimed mainly at members of Generation We is probably not a practical one, nor is it one we support. A more plausible idea is a new social and political movement based on honesty, responsibility, and innovative thinking—a movement with the potential to influence, infiltrate, and take over one of the existing parties, or to form a grand alliance of shared goals that changes the agenda of *both* parties and uses the existing system to produce a positive revolution.

If a Millennial movement ended up transforming one of our major political parties, it would *not* be an unprecedented event in history. There are several examples of outside movements that have profoundly shaped, and in some cases eventually controlled, one of the traditional political parties. The Populist Party of the 1890s advocated a number of policies that eventually were adopted by the Democrats, and in more recent years, right-wing movements such as the Christian Coalition have had a powerful impact on the positions of the Republican Party.

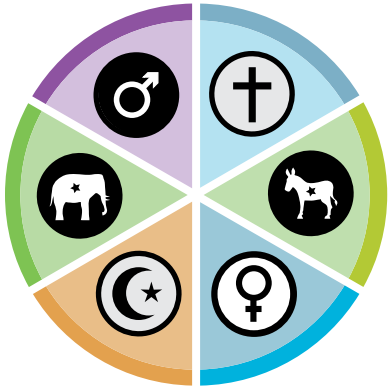
In the wake of the 2008 election, which experts and analysts of every persuasion are already labeling as one of the great tidal shifts of American history, there is a huge opportunity for whichever party steps up to the Millennial challenge and offers the younger generation the fresh vision they are seeking. Such a party—whichever it is—has the potential to lead a sweeping realignment, and dominate national politics for the next 40 years.

The Clear Vision, unobscured by extremist dogma, breaks away from the trends of the last generation. Rather than an extrapolation from current ideas or opinions, it represents a glimpse of timeless wisdom that transcends the processes in which we've been trapped.

It's a vision of hope rather than one of despair; of higher purpose rather than selfishness; of a restored sense of fairness and justice for all people, rather than for a privileged few.

It's a vision of shared prosperity, of global security and peace, and of innovation and progress in the service of all humankind.

It's a vision in which government, business, education, and other social institutions will be run by leaders who are committed to integrity and honesty; in which secrecy and hidden agenda will be replaced



honesty shared goals innovative responsibility thinking

by transparency and authenticity.

It's a vision in which exploitation of the world and its natural resources is replaced by an attitude of responsible, loving stewardship, and in which human beings treat creation with caring and kindness rather than cruelty.

And finally, it's a vision of a world without boundaries—a living planet glimpsed as if from outer space (a vision with which Generation We, unlike previous generations, grew up).

This is not an “end times” vision like the one some religious and political groups seek to foster. No one in his or her right mind wants to see apocalypse in their time. Yet some irresponsible spiritual and secular leaders are encouraging end-times thinking among their followers. The fact that some right-wing religious demagogues believe their job is to accelerate the end of history makes them enemies of the young. No wonder they are conscripting the young into their wars—to use them and ultimately to kill them.

Apocalyptic thinking in a less-extreme but ultimately also deadly form has infected the so-called mainstream of political thinking as well. The unsustainable debt rolled up by our political leaders in the last decade is a vivid example. Other examples include the plundering of our economy by financial and corporate leaders; the destruction of the environment by businesses that are seemingly incapable of thinking beyond the next quarter; and the depletion of resources like oil, gas, clean water, clean air, and the rain forests. An entire cadre of international leaders has chosen to run the planet as if there will be no tomorrow—or as if some magical breakthrough will happen all by itself to rescue their children from the death spiral in which they find themselves.

There is no magic. If a breakthrough is to occur, it will have to come from millions of young people saying, “Enough!”

The young need to reject the deathly vision in favor of the natural vision of life all healthy beings share—a vision of growing up, having fun, falling in love, raising families, traveling the world, and helping to build a better future.

If we love our planet and hope to live happily on it for generations to come, we need to act like it. Remember, actions speak louder than words. Now is the time to put up or shut up. This philosophy needs to be at the heart of the Millennial vision.

“The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew.”

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Q68

SOURCE: GREENBERG MILLENNIAL SURVEY 2007

Thinking about the many challenges facing our country, do you feel the best way to address these challenges is...through individual action and entrepreneurship, through a collective social movement, through the media and popular culture, through government action, or through international cooperation? And what do you feel is the second best way to address these challenges?

A

	Comb	1st	2nd
A collective social movement	60	38	22
Government action	40	16	24
Individual action and entrepreneurship	35	16	19
Media and popular culture	33	16	17
International cooperation	30	12	18
(Don't know/refused)	1	1	1