

HOPE ON THE HORIZON

All about the We, not about the Me
by Elena V. Carpenter

People are tired of negativity. The economic crisis – lost jobs, shattered investments and savings, businesses struggling or failing, salary and benefit cutbacks – compounded by greed, fraud and lack of honorability. Fear and paralysis have replaced hope. But according to Eric Greenberg, there's reason for hope – and lots of it.

A rags to riches, self-made, entrepreneurial genius and young billionaire – fully enjoying the perks and privileges of the very wealthy – Eric Greenberg took a sharp directional turn, quit his job, tamed his ego, and changed gears three years ago.

His fork-in-the road epiphany led him to concentrate not on the financial inheritance he would bequeath his children, but rather on the state of the world his children would inherit. On the things that money cannot buy and those that money can easily destroy. On living a life of purpose and meaning that would make our world a better place by working on behalf of others.

His book, “Generation We: How Millennial Youth are Taking over America and Changing our World Forever,” is a testament to his new calling. Often coined the Millennial Generation, Greenberg chose to call it Generation We after extensive research, surveys and studies showed this group to possess a selflessness and deep concern for the greater good that is uncharacteristic of prior generations.

Millennials, those born between 1978 and 2000, amount to some 95 million in the United States, compared to 78 million Baby Boomers and 51 million Generation X'ers. The strength, power and commitment of this generation (the largest in the history of this nation) were demonstrated as Millennials became an undeniable political force in the election of the first black president of the United States. ...And they've only just begun.

Greenberg finds the Millennial generation to be “smart, well-educated, open-minded and independent, politically, socially and philosophically,” seeking solutions in a post-partisan and post-political way. Contrary to their predecessors who so staunchly defend their Republican or Democratic Party affiliations, even at the risk of political paralysis and losing sight of the very public service they vowed to their constituency, Millennials shun labels. Their allegiance is to issues and not party politics; they look for direct results, not posturing and maneuvering. Like all generations, Boomers were greatly influenced by their societal environs – the emergence and eventual omnipresence of television, fax machines, cell phones and computers; the sexual revolution, hippies, recreational drugs, rock and roll; the Vietnam War, ethnic and gender biases, the ease and affordability of national and international travel.

Millennials' culture is seeped with innovation. They fully embrace and capitalize on the digital age and technology. They are accustomed to cell phones that are virtual computers, iPods, IM's, PDAs, emails, the World Wide Web, access to free news,

entertainment and information online, web-cams, social networking sites; all with a unique comfort level in the proliferation of data (including rather personal information) creating a transparency heretofore unfathomable. Add to that their exposure to the 9/11 attack, the Iraqi War, terrorism, oil battles, 24/7 news, gas guzzling mega cars, deadly drugs, and corporate greed. Certainly a brave new world. This totally wired generation, with local, national and international access lives on real time, not snail mail or even express.

When they want to assemble, an email blast or Evite does the trick in seconds. They're savvy, comfortable with technology, eager for innovation, ethnically diverse, uniquely tolerant and open-minded. And very uncomfortable with the social inequities and political inadequacies that have prevailed in their lifetime.

It is this generation that Greenberg views as capable and caring; interested enough to take serious action to better a nation riddled with debt they will have to retire; where education, healthcare, job opportunities, housing and nutrition are sorely inadequate; where natural resources and the environment have taken a back seat to opportunism; where unhealthy foreign dependencies threaten our security and our economy.

In the agenda that Greenberg proposes for the Millennials, he addresses job creation, environmental renewal, clean energy, foreign vulnerabilities, economic growth, health and nutrition, education, national budgets, trade imbalances, developing nations, our industrial and manufacturing voids, and more. He does so in a direct, concise way that thankfully avoids spin and rhetoric, in order to foster discussion, awareness and understanding.

For our Millennial youth who are growing or grown up, and the X'ers and Boomers that will encompass the support base they will need in order to enhance the world they are already inheriting.

This book is a must-read for those who care about today, and about tomorrow; for civic leaders and involved parents; for politicians and businessmen. Above all, for Millennials and anyone with optimism and a desire to contribute to our community and our world. You can download the entire book (for free) at www.genwe.com; order it online, or schlep to the bookstore. Just read it.

It's a great and positive step into a brighter future.

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