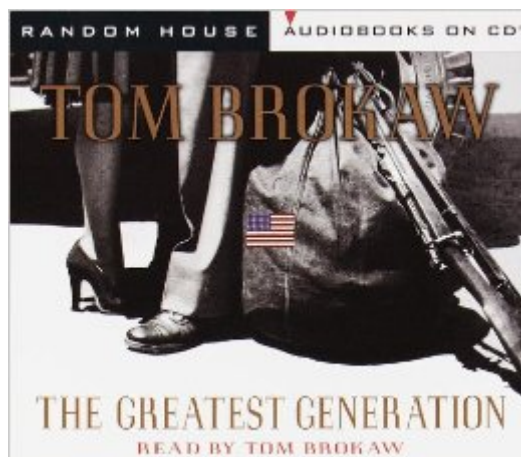


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The Greatest Generation (Tom Brokaw)



Synopsis

3 CDs / 4 hours
Read by the Author, Tom Brokaw
Also available on cassette
In this superb audiobook, Tom Brokaw goes out into America to tell - through the stories of individual men and women - the story of a generation, America's citizen heroes and heroines who came of age during the Great Depression and the Second World War and went on to build modern America. "They won the war; they saved the world. They came home to joyous and short-lived celebrations and immediately began the task of rebuilding their lives and the world they wanted. They married in record numbers and gave birth to another distinctive generation, The Baby Boomers. A grateful nation made it possible for more of them to attend college than any society had ever educated anywhere. They have the world new science, literature, art, industry, and economic strength unparalleled in the long curve of history." This generation was united not only by a common purpose, but also by common values - duty, honor, economy courage, service, love of family and country, and, above all, responsibility for oneself. "I am in awe of them, these men and women who have given us the world we have today. I feel privileged to have been witness to their stories. As I came to know many of them I became more and more moved by their everyday excellence - and more and more convinced that this is the greatest generation in our country's history." - Tom Brokaw

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This very moving book teaches more lessons than I can include in one review. By now most readers

probably already know the basic theme - it's the story of a number of representatives of the generation that lived through the depression, fought World War II, and built post-war America. Many of the stories will bring tears to your eyes and make you recognize how far we have fallen from the standard of sacrifice and non-whining patriotism that these people took for granted as standards to live by. But perhaps I can point out an additional, less-commented-on lesson from the book: Despite the consistent themes of responsibility and duty which underlie almost every account, these people were far more diverse than we today have given them credit for. They were not monolithically conservative, worshipers of the Establishment, traditionally religious, obsessed with making money, conformist gray-flannel people with 2.6 kids and a stay-at-home mom in each family. For example, when the Viet Nam war and the associated 60s protests arrived, the reactions and tolerance levels of these people varied widely. Their values and lifestyles were about as diverse as those we find in our new century. The one clear difference between that generation and subsequent ones can be summed up in two words: no whining. In the entire book, I don't recall a single individual even mentioning the word "rights" as they applied to himself or herself. No one believed that he or she was entitled to special privileges or to live at the expense of anyone else. No one expected the world to be fair. They took the world as they found it, and made the best of it. The only failure that the Greatest Generation can be charged with is that they were so successful in building a society where everything came easily.

The theme throughout the book is that the generation of Americans that participated in World War II rarely talk about it. My father might have been one of Tom Brokaw's examples. While I was regaled with tales of self-reliance and want during a depression, he almost never spoke about his experience in the African campaign, or the wound that nearly cost him a leg. The author made it a point of finding out a good many stories, not unlike Dad's, even as these veterans are now dying at the rate of 1800 a day. Each page was like going back to my childhood, and listening to stories I never heard before. Brokaw leaves no stone unturned or class of veteran out in the cold. He starts with ordinary people, the people on the home front, heroes, women in uniform and out, [our] shame, love, marriage and commitment, and famous people. The ordinary people were just that, ordinary in an extraordinary way. Parents and kids were compelled to survive by keeping the family unit intact. Parents searched for any job that would bring cloth or food to the home, and children disciplined by denial, accomplished a full day of work before going to school. They made do, they went without, or they made it themselves. These were the people who were already in training for their participation in World War II, but didn't realize it. The people on the home front toiled eighty-hours a week to keep

the troops in equipment and supplies. Farm boys were highly sought after by Boeing, builders of the B-17 Flying Fortress and the B-29 Super Fortress. The company knew that when the farm tractor broke down it had to be fixed, on the spot, without help. Their intuition paid off many times over. The home front could also be said to be the start of the women's movement.

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