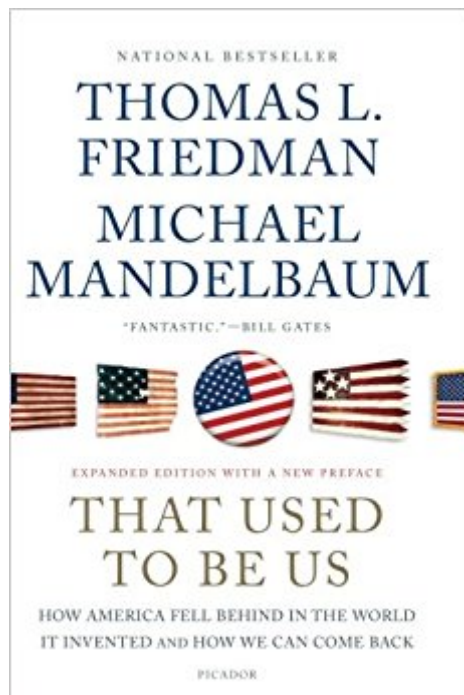




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# **That Used To Be Us: How America Fell Behind In The World It Invented And How We Can Come Back**



## Synopsis

A New York Times Book Review Editors' ChoiceA Los Angeles Times Best Book of 2011In *That Used to Be Us*, Thomas L. Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum analyze the four major challenges we face as a country---globalization, the revolution in information technology, chronic deficits, and our pattern of energy consumption---and spell out what we need to do now to preserve American power in the world. The end of the Cold War blinded the nation to the need to address these issues seriously, and China's educational successes, industrial might, and technological prowess in many ways remind us of a time when "that used to be us." But Friedman and Mandelbaum show how America's history, when properly understood, offers a five-part formula for prosperity that will enable us to cope successfully with the challenges we face. *That Used to Be Us* is both a searching exploration of the American condition today and a rousing manifesto for American renewal.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“At once enlightened and enlightening...[American society] could use more of the generous responsible spirit Friedman and Mandelbaum recommend.”  
“The New York Times Book Review”  
“Thoroughly researched and passionately argued...*That Used to Be Us* is an important contribution to an intensifying debate, and it deserves the widest possible attention....Compelling.”  
“The New York Times”  
“Anyone who cares about America's future---anyone planning to vote in 2012---ought to read this book and hear the authors' compelling case.”  
“The Christian Science Monitor”  
“An important and

eminently readable book. *The New York Review of Books* "Touches a nerve...In a country whose politicians are partisan intransigents and whose commentators are more interested in zingers than solutions, it takes courage to be so baldly civic-minded."

*BusinessWeek*

Thomas L. Friedman is an internationally renowned author, reporter, and columnist the recipient of three Pulitzer Prizes and the author of five bestselling books, among them *From Beirut to Jerusalem* and *The World Is Flat*. He was born in Minneapolis in 1953, and grew up in the middle-class Minneapolis suburb of St. Louis Park. He graduated from Brandeis University in 1975 with a degree in Mediterranean studies, attended St. Antony's College, Oxford, on a Marshall Scholarship, and received an M.Phil. degree in modern Middle East studies from Oxford. After three years with United Press International, he joined *The New York Times*, where he has worked ever since as a reporter, correspondent, bureau chief, and columnist. At the Times, he has won three Pulitzer Prizes: in 1983 for international reporting (from Lebanon), in 1988 for international reporting (from Israel), and in 2002 for his columns after the September 11th attacks. Friedman's first book, *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, won the National Book Award in 1989. His second book, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* (1999), won the Overseas Press Club Award for best book on foreign policy in 2000. In 2002 FSG published a collection of his Pulitzer Prize-winning columns, along with a diary he kept after 9/11, as *Longitudes and Attitudes: Exploring the World After September 11*. His fourth book, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (2005) became a #1 *New York Times* bestseller and received the inaugural Financial Times/Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year Award in November 2005. A revised and expanded edition was published in hardcover in 2006 and in 2007. *The World Is Flat* has sold more than 4 million copies in thirty-seven languages. In 2008 he brought out *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, which was published in a revised edition a year later. His sixth book, *That Used to Be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back*, co-written with Michael Mandelbaum, was published in September 2011. Michael Mandelbaum, the Christian A. Herter Professor and Director of American Foreign Policy at The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, is the author or coauthor of twelve books, including *The Ideas That Conquered the World*.

What a marvelous book co-authored by Thomas Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum. America is truly at a cross roads in terms of our political influence world-wide. On the home front and over the

past decades our nation has lost ground in terms of its economical and political influence world-wide. Our nation must regain its economical and political dominance that can be used to improve the standards of all nations. In order to achieve the above, there are four areas that we must improve upon as a world power. The authors discuss these areas and suggest what needs to be done. And they are able to draw upon the influence of other nations upon these same areas needing improvement. We can no longer stand alone or preach isolationism as done many decades ago. All nations, friendly and unfriendly are connected at the hip. We are interdependent upon one another whether we desire it or not. The internet and world wide economic-political influences are the glue that bind us together or draws us apart. This book has a fresh appeal since the influence of Mandelbaum has added creditability to the overall work. I highly recommend that you read this book and let its message influence your vote in 2016. We all have the responsibility to become informed and vote intelligently. So now is the time to prepare.

I will admit from the start that I am a big fan of Thomas Friedman. I believe that he has an incredible perspective on current trends that affect all of us and projects that perspective into the future. This book continues that "tradition" and we ignore its' contents and messages at our own peril. Having worked in higher education for over 30 years and now in K-12, I have seen the way our education system, in general, fails to prepare students for the 21st century. We are still using, for the most part, an outdated model that is an industry unto itself. Without a world class education system, how can we compete in the world that Friedman and Mandelbaum describe? The authors paint a somewhat gloomy picture of America's future that can only be solved by radical change from the way we are doing things. They have done a good job of summarizing the problems we face because of our broken government, backwards education system and general collective failure of our citizenry to demand better. While there is nothing here that any observant citizen doesn't already suspect, their ability to succinctly define the issues and possible solutions is what makes this book notable. This book should be required reading for every high school and college student because they are the ones who have the opportunity to fix the mess that we have left for them.

I have always enjoyed Thomas Friedman's columns in the NY Times, so I was not surprised by the material presented in his book with Michael Mandelbaum. In fact, I was somewhat bored by the warmed over sentiments voiced in the first several score of pages in this book. Later, the authors present a wealth of statistical information, buttressed by many interviews with some economic and business leaders, concerning what we are not doing correctly in this country and what we need to

rectify the present situation. I was alternately buoyed up by the myriad of creative scientific and business people cited in the book, yet ultimately depressed by the authors' condemnation of our lack of will to reverse and obvious social decline. Their remedy, expressed in the last part of the book -- that we should be more creative and make many more start ups and that unemployment can be overcome by everyone starting new businesses -- may have some merit but is hardly likely to be realized. I left the book feeling somewhat pessimistic, not only because of the aforementioned unrealizable goals cited by the authors but because I think that they, too, are pessimistic and that they concluded the book by trying to put a good face on a bad situation. It is a worthwhile book, interesting but probably with a limited shelf life, as social issues have a way of becoming old very fast.

This was my second read of this book. I've read all of Friedman's books and this one tops my list of favorites, just nudging out "Hot Flat and Crowded". It's frustrating to read about; the causes of the recent financial crisis- the corporate and individual greed; the impediments to improving education; and America's acceptance of the status quo. Case in point; the example of China building a 230,00 sq ft state of the art convention center in 8-months, while 2-escalators at a Bethesda Metro stop have been under repair for 6-months. There are more examples like it throughout the book. To be fair, the authors do provide many examples of what America does right and they are spot on. There are however other issues that need to be addressed. I strongly recommend this book and suggest that readers form discussion groups to address the many issues the authors present and what we can do to get back on track.

This book does an exceptional job of summing up our current situation but the cures it prescribes seem decades away, if possible at all. Friedman and Mandelbaum assume that the American people will soon grasp the nature of our problem and act. As a liberal who has always lived in red states, I am skeptical that enough people will comprehend the danger before it becomes a crisis. With luck, we will be able to deal with the crisis and emerge the way the authors envision but that is a rather large "if".

Hard to put down and the content is hard to swallow because it is so true. It holds up a mirror to all of us. A must read if you truly care about where we were, where we are now, and where we should be heading but may not be.

Some people wrote mixed or poor reviews but I think they didn't like the economics mixed in with environmental issues. The bottom line is in the Summer of 2016, America needs to wake up and figure out that we didn't lose jobs to China or Mexico but to Technology. The book was spot on yet had the academic backing to give it credibility.

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