



Generations: A Century of Women Speak about Their Lives

Myriam Miedzian, Alisa Malinovich

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What are the differences in how your grandmother, your mother, and your daughter experience the world? Compare the story of your grandmother's first date with you mother's, your mother's volunteer work with your own career, your great-grandmother's education and expectations with those of a teen today. The women in this landmark work of oral history are from diverse ethnic, geographic, and social backgrounds, and they tell stories about all aspects of their lives, from their professional and romantic experiences to sex discrimination and their own realized or unrealized aspirations. The result is a dynamic and captivating portrait that all women will find themselves in, and a work which will stand as one of the lasting documents of century that very well may be remembered as the Women's Century.

In recent decades volumes have been written on women's history and the effects the feminist movement has had on American culture. But something is missing from these accounts: how the reality and day-to-day texture of women's lives—whether or not they ever considered themselves “feminists”—have been transformed over the course of the twentieth century. As in the best oral history, the stories these women candidly tell are vivid and often poignantly detailed. We hear accounts of rural, chore-filled childhoods at the beginning of the century, of contemporary teens without curfews, of dates that began with a chat with father in the parlor, of the sexual liberation of the 1960s, of women who worked in factories during World War II, of those who were pioneers in their professions, and of women who today struggle heroically to balance the demands of marriage or single mothering, work, and children.

Sweeping in scope, and yet rooted in the details, emotions, and dilemmas of everyday life, the journey women have traveled over the century here becomes all the more dramatic, the transformation they have undergone all the more remarkable. *Generations* is a celebration of this transformation in all its complexity, an embracing and vibrant family scrapbook that belongs to all American women.

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