

- Why "Who am I?" is a question best answered not with a protracted identity crisis, but with one or two good pieces of something called identity capital
- How joining the world of work makes us feel better, not worse
- How our personalities shift more during our twenties than at any time before or after
- How we *do* pick our families and not just our friends

With authority, compassion, and a keen eye on the future, THE DEFINING DECADE shows us why our twenties do matter. Our twenties are a time when the things we do—and the things we don't do—will have an enormous effect across years and even generations to come.



Jean-Francois

**MEG JAY, PhD**, is a clinical psychologist who specializes in adult development, and twentysomethings in particular. She is an assistant clinical professor at the University of Virginia, and maintains a private practice in Charlottesville, Virginia. Dr. Jay earned a doctorate in clinical psychology, and in gender studies, from the University of California, Berkeley.

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# 20'S

## ACCLAIM FOR *The Defining Decade*

"I strongly recommend THE DEFINING DECADE for anyone in their twenties trying to figure out their life's direction. You'll learn how to search productively, how to avoid being indulgent, and how to turn good opportunities into great ones."

—**Po Bronson**, author of *What Should I Do with My Life?* and co-author of *NurtureShock*

"THE DEFINING DECADE is the book twentysomethings have been waiting for. It will not tell you what you should do with your life, but it will inspire, motivate, and educate you to figure it out."

—**Rachel Simmons**, author of *the Curse of the Good Girl*

"THE DEFINING DECADE is eye-opening, important, and a pleasure to read. I highly recommend it."

—**Wendy Mogel**, author of *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee* and *The Blessing of a B Minus*

"Meg Jay brings a sharp intellect, expertise on the life cycle, and extensive clinical experience to this powerful book. Age and time, she argues, are not malleable, even if people live longer and our culture believes that everything is possible. Reading this book will benefit clinicians, cultural commentators, and twentysomethings themselves."

—**Nancy Chodorow**, author of *Individualizing Gender and Sexuality: Theory and Practice*

"This fascinating, engaging book makes a convincing case that the twenties are the most transformative period of people's lives, and even better, shows readers how to get off the couch and live that decade well. It should be read by all young adults, their friends, their parents, their grandparents, their bosses, their siblings . . . really, by just about everyone!"

—**Timothy D. Wilson**, author of *Redirect: The Surprising New Science of Psychological Change*

"Expecting to experience the joy of freedom and self-discovery, many young men and women find instead confusion, loneliness, and anomie. Jay is just the sort of guide that these twentysomethings and their parents need: sensitive, thoughtful, and wise."

—**Kay Hymowitz**, author of *Manning Up: How the Rise of Women Has Turned Men into Boys*



THE DEFINING DECADE

WHY YOUR TWENTIES MATTER—AND HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THEM NOW

MEG JAY, PhD



# The Defining Decade

Why your **twenties** matter—and how to make the most of them **now**

MEG JAY, PhD

Our "thirty-is-the-new-twenty" culture tells us that the twentysomething years don't matter. Some say they are an extended adolescence. Others call them an emerging adulthood. But thirty is *not* the new twenty. Now in this enlightening book, Dr. Meg Jay reveals how many twentysomethings have been caught in a swirl of hype and misinformation that has trivialized what is actually the most transformative period of our adult lives.



**Drawing from more than ten years** of work with hundreds of twentysomething clients and students, Dr. Jay weaves the latest science of the twentysomething years with compelling, behind-closed-doors stories from twentysomethings themselves. She shares what psychologists, sociologists, neurologists, reproductive specialists, human resources executives, and economists know about the unique power of the twentysomething years and how they change our lives.

The result is a provocative and sometimes poignant book that shows how common wisdom about the twentysomething years is often wrong:

- Why it's the people we hardly know, and not our closest friends, who will change our twentysomething lives for the better
- Why living together may not be the best way to test a relationship
- How the twentysomething brain gives us our best chance to change who we are and who we will be

(continued on back flap)