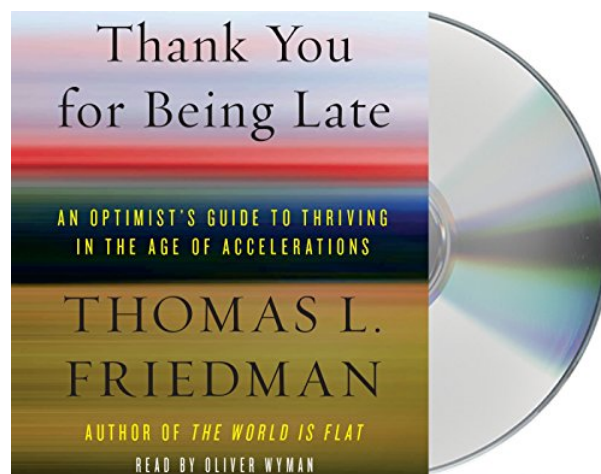
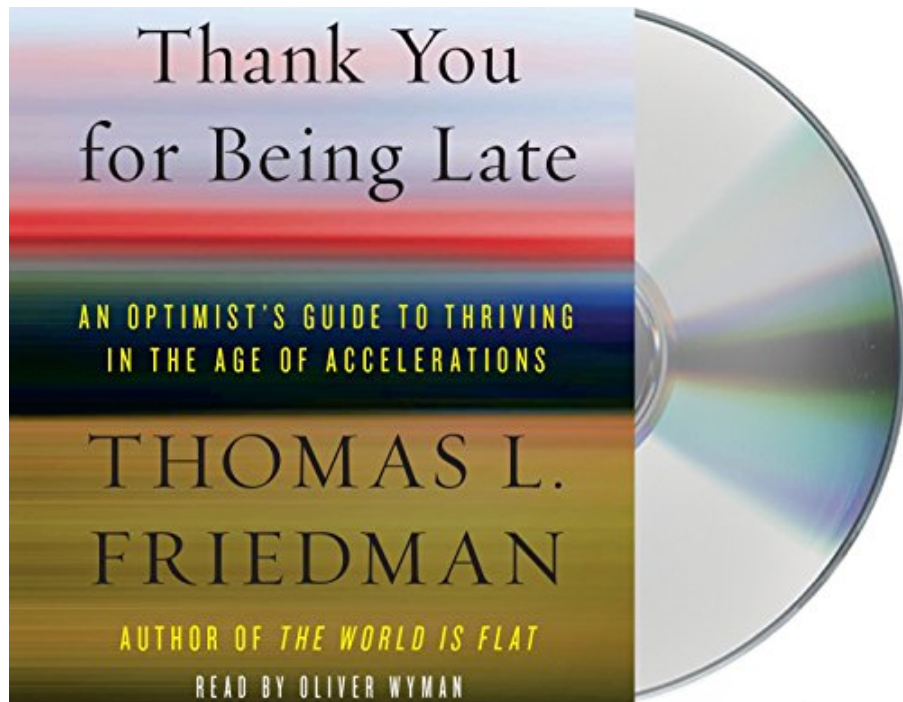


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OPTIMIST'S GUIDE TO THRIVING IN THE  
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A field guide to the twenty-first century, written by one of its most celebrated observers

We all sense it?something big is going on. You feel it in your workplace. You feel it when you talk to your kids. You can't miss it when you read the newspapers or watch the news. Our lives are being transformed in so many realms all at once?and it is dizzying.

In *Thank You for Being Late*, a work unlike anything he has attempted before, Thomas L. Friedman exposes the tectonic movements that are reshaping the world today and explains how to get the most out of them and cushion their worst impacts. You will never look at the world the same way again after you read this book: how you understand the news, the work you do, the education your kids need, the investments your employer has to make, and the moral and geopolitical choices our country has to navigate will all be refashioned by Friedman's original analysis.

Friedman begins by taking us into his own way of looking at the world?how he writes a column. After a quick tutorial on that subject, he proceeds to write what could only be called a giant column about the twenty-first century. His thesis: to understand the twenty-first century, you need to understand that the planet's three largest forces?Moore's law (technology); the Market (globalization); and Mother Nature (climate change and biodiversity loss)?are accelerating all at once. These accelerations are transforming five key realms: the workplace, politics, geopolitics, ethics, and community.

Why is this happening? As Friedman shows, the exponential increase in computing power defined by Moore's law has a lot to do with it. The year 2007 was a major inflection point: the release of the iPhone, together with advances in silicon chips, software, storage, sensors, and networking, created a new technology platform. Friedman calls this platform "the supernova"?for it is an extraordinary release of energy that is reshaping everything from how we hail a taxi to the fate of nations to our most intimate relationships. It is creating vast new opportunities for individuals and small groups to save the world?or to destroy it.

*Thank You for Being Late* is a work of contemporary history that serves as a field manual for how to write and think about this era of accelerations. It's also an argument for "being late"?for pausing to appreciate this amazing historical epoch we're passing through and reflecting on its possibilities and dangers. To amplify this point, Friedman revisits his Minnesota hometown in his moving concluding chapters; there, he explores how communities can create a "topsoil of trust" to anchor their increasingly diverse and digital populations.

With his trademark vitality, wit, and optimism, Friedman shows that we can overcome the multiple stresses of an age of accelerations?if we slow down, if we dare to be late and use the time to reimagine work, politics, and community. *Thank You for Being Late* is Friedman's most ambitious book?and an essential guide to the present and the future.

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#### Most helpful customer reviews

462 of 481 people found the following review helpful.

A Clear Explanation of How We Got to Where We Are

By michael langsdorf

Friedman offers a compelling, well-researched paradigm for understanding how the US arrived at its current level of dysfunctional politics. His hypothesis, restated throughout the book is that the US, as well as the rest of the planet, is being subjected to three relentless, ineluctable forces: the exponential development of technology, the forces of globalization and concomitant interdependence, and severe climate change, all of which have altered forever the complacent stability to which we had become accustomed. He argues further that the pace of change (speed) as well as the rate of change (exponential) are exceeding in many cases, the capacity of individuals and societies to adapt to change, while politicians--glued to their own narrow ideologies and even narrower political bases--provide only simplistic, quixotic and ultimately futile responses.

Though I could have done without the plethora of folksy interjections, as a whole the argument made is compelling, well documented and (for me) fairly frightening. In the closing chapters of the book, Friedman offers several common sense, pragmatic solutions and manages to convey a sense of optimism that eventually, the world will be capable of adapting in a manner that improves global civilization. Given the facts and strong arguments made in preceding chapters however, the optimism seems unfounded;; particularly given the lack of political will for the heterodox approach that the author justifiably feels that circumstances require.

I've given this work five stars because it has helped me, more than any other source I've read, to develop a reasonably clear understanding of how we got to where we are. I do not share the author's optimism, but I appreciate the clarity of thought, the ability to synthesize what appear to be disparate trends, and finally, the insightful, cogent analyses.

197 of 208 people found the following review helpful.

A keen prescription for "dancing in the eye of a hurricane"

By Jeffrey A. Joseph

Where is the country headed and how can we all adapt? Tom Friedman has always been a reliable reporter of global trends and this book reiterates some of the points made in "That Use To Be Us." Average is no longer sufficient, there are a million people on the earth that can do your job and, therefore, success will depend on engaging in e a lifelong learning process. In this book Mr. Friedman carefully details the acceleration in technology that has not only caused disruption (when a new method makes an old method obsolete) but also dislocation (when things change so quickly society is unable to adapt).

People sense the dislocation occurring in this country and the reaction has caused the rise of Bernie Sanders on the left and Donald Trump on the right. According to Mr. Friedman, the wrong response is to try to keep things as they were. This is analogous to keeping your paddle in the water to try to slow down when whitewater kayaking. What you should do is paddle as fast or faster than the current to keep stability. How does one "paddle faster?" Turn AI into IA. Huh? Turn Artificial Intelligence into Intelligent Assistance. Internet tools will help people identify their interests and train them to be proficient in them e.g. the Khan

Academy. Companies can also assist their employees in this process, identify employees with desired interests and skills and guide them into future jobs. AT&T is already doing this. Of course, not everyone will be able to succeed this way. Too many people will be dislocated and our current government is woefully unprepared to help people adjust to the new economy. Mr. Friedman suggests an 18 point plan that is a combination of right and left ideas e.g., eliminate the corporate tax which will eliminate corporate tax loopholes and allow corporations to repatriate offshore holdings, revisit Dodd-Frank and Sarbanes-Oxley to facilitate rational risk taking, establish a Regulatory Review Commission to eliminate regulations that are strangling business development- but also, institute a single-payer health care system, expand the Earned Income Tax Credit and expand free trade while providing wage insurance for those people affected by the loss of their jobs.

Mr. Friedman is optimistic but, as other reviewers have pointed out, his optimism doesn't seem to follow from his narrative. Ultimately, he does not solve the problem posed by John Maynard Keynes in 1928 and reiterated by many recent authors- in a consumer driven economy what do we do when artificial intelligence and robots eliminate so many jobs that people can't afford to purchase the goods and services produced? That is the most important question for today and tomorrow.

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Very interesting, very alarming, very good.

By Sue Redmond

Tom Friedman's books are always good, but in spite of his "Optimist's" approach, it is alarming. It's good to see where things will be going, but gosh, I'm glad I'm retired. While there will still be issues I will have to deal with, at least finding and keeping a job will not be one of them. Eye-opening (for me, at least) explanation of what's driving terrorists in the Middle East, and why they won't be disappearing anytime soon. He does outline what would be needed to cope with things to come, be we as a country would need much more cooperation/organization to make it happen. We would be wise to begin by firing all the politicians if we hope to get anything done.

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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 American Fell Behind in the World We Invented and How We Can Come Back*, co-written with Michael Mandelbaum, was published in 2011.

Thomas L. Friedman lives in Bethesda, Maryland, with his family.

Oliver Wyman, a native New Yorker, has appeared on stage as well as in film, and television. He is one of the founders of New York City's Collective Unconscious theater, and his performances include the award-winning "reality play" Charlie Victor Romeo and A.R. McElhinney's cult classic film *A Chronicle of Corpses*. He also lent his voice to several episodes of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. Oliver's work as a narrator extends to over 150 audiobooks and has won many him awards, including Audie awards for his reading of Lance Armstrong's autobiography, *It's Not About the Bike*, and Thomas L. Friedman's *The World is Flat*. He also read James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*, Tim Dorsey's *Atomic Lobster*, and David Weber's *By Schism Rent Asunder*. Oliver has won five Audie Awards from the Audio Publisher's Association, fourteen Earphone Awards from *AudioFile Magazine*, and two Listen Up Awards from *Publisher's Weekly*. Oliver was named a 2008 Best Voice in Nonfiction & Culture by *AudioFile Magazine*.

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