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The Book: *The Great Reset: How New Ways of Living and Working Drive Post-Crash Prosperity*

Author's credentials: Richard Florida, professor of business and creativity at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management, is best known for his conversation-starting 2002 book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*.

Written for: Anyone, particularly those looking for reasons for (cautious, unrosy) optimism about the United State's future.

Rating: ★★★★★☆

Last year we heard the phrase, "A crisis is a terrible thing to waste." With the financial crisis and the Great Recession losing intensity, we're in danger of doing just that.

In 23 punchy, provocative chapters, Richard Florida calls for a recalibration of our economy—rooting it less on enabling thoughtless consumption and more on

stimulating human creativity.

Some of Florida's ideas are modest, such as abolishing the home mortgage interest deduction, which distorts the

housing market. For many people, renting makes more economic sense than owning. Other ideas are broad, such as investing more in public transportation (high-speed rail) and improving pay and prospects in the increasingly important service sector.

Government should be involved, but it can't rebuild the economy from the top down. This is primarily a bottom- and middle-up effort—one that requires that we not be passive consumers but active citizens.

Many of us—especially politicians and pundits—keep speaking as though we can go back to the way things were. If we just bail out homeowners and financial companies, it can be 2005 again—or even 1985 or 1955. Back to the old American Dream! But that's an American fantasy. And one that, Florida argues, will derail long-term recovery and growth.