



Join the Club: How Peer Pressure Can Transform the World

By Tina Rosenberg

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"Empowering . . . sweepingly ambitious . . . Rosenberg's case studies are as different as they are fascinating . . . A brilliant book." —Abraham Verghese, *Newsweek*

A winner of the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize, Tina Rosenberg has spent her career tackling some of the world's hardest problems. Now, through striking stories from around the globe, Rosenberg shows how positive peer pressure can change people's behavior and solve seemingly intractable social quandaries. In every case, pioneering social entrepreneurs throw out the old models for social change in favor of humanity's most powerful and abundant resource: our connections with one another. The result is one of those rare books that will not only revolutionize the way you look at the world but also give you the power to change it.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The ability of peer groups to affect behavioral change takes on positive connotations when applied to social activism in this ambitious, evocatively written treatment of what the author calls "the social cure." Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Rosenberg (*The Haunted Land*), recipient of a MacArthur "genius" grant, explores join-the-club strategies for progressive causes: South Africa's AIDS-awareness group, loveLife; Serbia's student-led anti-Milosevic democracy movement, Otpor; India's rural health-worker program in Jamkhed; a Christian faith-building community in suburban Chicago; and a teen-driven antismoking campaign in Florida. Overcoming the limited efficacy of the usual models—for instance, information-dispersing approaches to behavioral modification—these cases all successfully employ peer groups and in-group lifestyle campaigns in service of their respective social and political goals. Results range from decreases in teen smoking to the overthrow of oppressive governments. Citing a Brixton-based drop-in center aimed at young British Muslims, she explores the degree to which the fight against terrorism might itself be amenable to a peer group approach. Rosenberg's immersion in the issues and considered reflections on the power of peer groups to shape personal and social action brings an urgency to a strategy as old as any in civilization's arsenal. (Mar.)

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From [Booklist](#)

The concept of peer pressure connotes the ability of a group to impose its will upon an individual, to coerce a state of being that might not otherwise exist. It's what encourages teens to take up smoking and entices inner-city youths to join gangs. And yet, harnessed in an entirely different manner, peer pressure can turn the disaffected into the accomplished, the outliers into the overachievers. Pulitzer Prize-winner Rosenberg inventively examines how creative thinking and critical analysis of group dynamics turned some of India's lowest caste women into successful entrepreneurs and village leaders, how a group of ragtag Serbian students used street theater to topple a repressive dictator, and why a suburban Chicago megachurch finds its doctrine best disseminated one dinner table at a time. This "social cure," Rosenberg posits, has the power to channel herd mentality into forces that can bring about positive changes for at-risk individuals, whether they are battling AIDS in South Africa or drug abuse in South Carolina. --Carol Haggas

Review

"A solution that is simple yet profound, and rooted in human nature." (Deirdre Donahue - USA Today)

"Rosenberg is an uncommonly incisive and empathetic observer." (Jonathan Liu - Boston Globe)

"Timely, thoughtful and important." (Jeffrey D. Sachs - New York Times Book Review)

Users Review

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