Zak Dychtwald
China Expert, Millennial Explorer, & Cultural Futurist

Zak Dychtwald is a lifelong fan of interesting people, big ideas, great food, new adventures, science fiction, and religious meaning. A writer, consultant, and public speaker, he has traveled extensively throughout five continents to explore what makes people and cultures tick while searching for glimpses into the future.

After graduating from Columbia University in 2012, he moved to China to explore the country and get to know China’s young people on their own turf. Over the next four years, through living in tenements, hostels, and high rises, traveling thousands of miles throughout both the Eastern megacities as well as China’s developing interior, interviewing locals from Guangzhou to Chengdu to Shangri-La, Zak realized that the China we talk about in the West is far different than the new futuristic China he saw emerging.

When the world talks about China, the focus is usually on the past: Old stereotypes, old politics, old traditions, and the older generations. But China’s future is being determined right now by their Millennials. In their lifetime, these young people have witnessed: The Internet open China up to the world, a massive longevity boom coupled with a baby bust creating a 4-2-1 demography, and surging capitalist success directed by their “Communist” government. While their parents were consumed with survival questions around food, housing, and subsistence, young China is asking: Who do we want to be? How do we want to live? What should be the purpose of money? What will China’s role be in the 21st century? He covers this and much more in his first book, Young China: How the Restless Generational Will Change Their Country and the World, which is already receiving high praise.

Through his writing, speaking, and consulting, Zak’s overarching goal is to enrich and advance the way the world understands China. He has recently relocated to New York City where he is the Founding CEO of the Young China Global Group—a think tank and consultancy designed to create understanding about Eastern and Western millennials for individuals, companies, and governments. A fluent Mandarin speaker, he spends a third of the year in China.