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Hello, my name is David Mersher. I know, I know... You've been meaning to get around to saving America.

We all know it's broken. And Washington isn't the problem.

Well—okay; Washington is a problem. It's just not the problem. I am. But not just me; my neighbor is the problem, too.

—And by the way, so are you.

For a good while now we've been waiting for politicians or big institutions to fix things. Waiting... Waiting...

Waiting's not working.

America was founded on the ideal that regular citizens and entrepreneurs would lead the nation. It turns out the American founders were right.

***It's time for you to finally
stand up and lead.***

Author Oliver DeMille said of this book:

"For years, many people have asked me how we can really get America on the path to greatness again. It's a complex question, because a number of things need to happen to get us back on track.

"If I had to boil them all down to one thing, it would be that we must refocus on the principles of freedom that have always worked. That's something we're not doing in current America, or around the free world for that matter.

"So that has always been my answer, and I stand by it still. But the problem is that this answer isn't very specific. I mean, what's the first step to restoring the freedom principles? What can regular Americans do right now that will make a major difference?

“These are the questions we answer in this book. We get right down to the nitty-gritty of how to fix America, and how average citizens can make this happen. Truly, effectively, and realistically.

“Last spring, Orrin Woodward came to me with a proposal to really fix our great nation. I was amazed at how good it was, and we spent many hours debating the particulars and crafting a plan that can really work.

“We brainstormed how to get it in the hands of as many people as possible, and we hit on the idea of writing the proposal into a book with a story—something people of all ages and walks of life will want to read.

“And now, here we are. The book answers this most pressing question of our time: **how to really fix our nation and get back on the right track.** Specifically. In detail.

“This book isn’t at all partisan. In fact, readers of the manuscript from both major political parties as well as independents have raved about how effectively *LeaderShift* provides real answers way beyond the party struggles that are holding our nation back.

“Whoever you are, we think you’ll find this proposal to fix our nation intriguing, fresh, unique and exciting. It is rooted in the principles of freedom applied by American founding fathers, with a full dose of modern realism that can really work.”

**Here’s a sneak peek of the first four chapters from
the amazing new book *LeaderShift*
by Orrin Woodward and Oliver DeMille:**

1

“Still watching, Mr. President. Nothing this year so far.”

“Or this decade,” the small man replied.

“Or even the last four decades,” he muttered, as he turned and walked down the long hallway. His shoulders were slumped in what looked like disappointment. But those who knew him well understood that his feelings were a lot closer to despair.

Goodnight, David,” Marcus said.

“I’ll call tomorrow afternoon.” David waved, as Marcus checked his watch and walked toward his BMW.

David smiled. Marcus checked his watch a lot whenever he had a new one and wanted to be sure everyone admired it. This time it was a new Tag Heuer Grand Carrera with the leisure racing band, and Marcus had mentioned in passing that it only cost him \$10K. Last weekend it had been a Vacheron Constantin. David shook his head.

That’s just the world we live in, sad as it is. Whoever has the most toys wins, and all that . . .

He turned and walked along the water of his private estate. The old feeling of frustration immediately came back as the lights from Marcus’s car left the driveway and turned onto the main road. David had enjoyed the lighter mood during dinner with Marcus, but now the old worry returned.

I used to think that way, too.

David switched on his iPhone and glanced at the news updates. Arguments in Washington about tax increases. New regulations. Partisan battles. Fuel prices. He put the phone back into the safety of his pocket and kept walking.

I'd rather have Marcus's interest in shopping than the national addiction to bigger government. Thinking of these two things in the same sentence made him smile. *Together, these two views just about sum up today's America.* He sighed.

When he reached the end of the dock, he stopped and leaned on the rail. The lights from the city across the bay reflected off the water. It was beautiful, and David forced himself to listen to the waves against the dock and feel the breeze rather than think about . . . the thing.

David Mersher had been the CEO of Indytech for almost two decades, and the company he had founded was now a leading growth firm despite the struggling national and world economy. He had won more awards than he cared to remember, and his family was the joy of his life. His wife, Amy, had been his business partner from the beginning, and with his oldest daughter, Emily, finishing grad school this spring, many of his friends were suggesting that he relax more and enjoy the fruits of his success. "You've earned it," they told him. "Let others worry about the direction of the nation. It's not your problem."

He took a deep breath of ocean air. *I need to face this thing head-on. It's time to deal with it. It's festered too long.*

I know how to deal with these things, just like I always have. Directly and immediately.

David squared his shoulders and confronted the challenge he'd been feeling for months.

America is my homeland. I've been blessed with a wonderful wife and four hardworking children. Professionally, my life has been a blast, owning my own company and specializing in corporate turnarounds. I should be able to just relax and enjoy life.

But America's story is not inspiring. Well, not right now, anyway. It is bankrupting itself—interest on the national debt is one of America's greatest expenses, the welfare state has bred generational poverty and a widespread loss of self-respect, our national credit rating will most likely keep getting downgraded, and the international warring factions have turned our military into the world's largest police force.

With each passing election, many Americans think their vote has created some change, but the simple truth is—things keep heading in the wrong direction no matter who is in office.

Although I have been blessed personally with a beautiful family and a thriving business, what will that matter if freedom disappears from neglect? What kind of country will my children and grandchildren live in if leaders don't begin to arise in our generation—as they did in the founding era?

This is my problem. It is. In fact, this is everyone's problem. It's the biggest problem of our lives, and the more successful we've been, the more our leadership is needed. We don't need more watches or cars, or more taxes and regulations. We need leaders.

We need a nation of citizens who are leaders.

David's thoughts turned more personal. For whatever reason, God has blessed me with the ability to identify the underlying systems of decline in corporations and then the ability to initiate a turnaround by redesigning the flawed systems. I've made millions doing just that.

I know the answer. Since America is my home, I know I have to get involved in its turnaround. I spent the first half of my life achieving success in the corporate sector, so why not spend the second half influencing the public sector to ensure the same opportunities for future generations?

So many of my colleagues are building homes in other nations: New Zealand, Monaco, Costa Rica. They see the same problems in America, and yet they use their money and leadership to get away. Permanent vacations, I guess.

Now that he had taken on this project, David applied the same intense focus that had made him so adept at seeing through business

failures over the years and understanding what was needed to turn a company around.

It usually only took a few key changes, and then relentless execution in following through. And that always meant the right kind of leadership.

What are the key changes needed in America?

David began to analyze with his trained expertise. For him, this was a discipline, an art and a science all rolled into one.

First, America's original foundational principles are in various states of disrepair through ignorance and neglect. They must be relearned and rebuilt.

David drew a deep breath.

This certainly won't be easy. In fact, even though I have had plenty of tough assignments in my life, this will be my biggest undertaking by far.

With so many Americans looking to the government as a nanny to take care of them, liberty is on its last legs. Running against the current is never an easy task, but when it's necessary, leaders must do it. Like one of my first mentors used to say: when the going gets tough, the tough get going. America is in a tough spot, and the tough need to get going.

David reflected on what he called the Five Laws of Decline (FLD). He had seen these in action in his work with a number of corporate clients.

Similar to how gravity must constantly be overcome in order for a plane to fly, each entity must overcome its own FLD to grow. In truth, it's not too much to say that this systematic approach to analyzing corporations is what has catapulted me to the top among turnaround specialists.

While it used to take me months to identify the root causes of a company's decline, now this can be accomplished in just a few weeks or less, simply because these principles are based upon human nature—human nature that hasn't changed at all in recorded history.

Now, apply these same principles to the nation. History is full of examples of empires that violated the FLD and fell over time. Greece,

Rome, and the British Empire are three applicable case studies. Thankfully, one doesn't have to read the thousands of history books, economics books, and political tracts to capture the essence of the FLD. The United States today is experiencing all Five Laws of Decline. It's time to figure out what is needed for effective turnaround.

David stopped to reflect. *Okay, time to let in the emotion. My walk this evening has filled me with a sense of responsibility to apply the FLD to our own country before it's too late. Actually, I've been feeling this way for a long time. But whom should I talk to? My consulting work has kept me too busy to develop a bunch of relationships in the political camps.*

Will my information even be welcome? Probably not. Most turn-arounds fight the truth at first. The last thing I want to do is be a modern-day Cassandra—Homer's young lady of Troy who was cursed by the gods to speak the truth and yet be ignored as their city fell. Or Virgil, who warned of Rome's decline but whose words fell on deaf ears until it was too late.

That's the big one, David thought to himself. What if it's too late?

Okay, enough emotion.

Despite my fears, I feel compelled to act.

2

“Mr. President, we . . . may . . . have . . . found someone.”

James sat up in bed. “Come in, young man. Tell me about it.”

“I’m sorry I woke you, Mr. President, but you told me—”

“None of that, none of that,” James cut him off. “Who is he? Or she? Which continent? How well prepared? Come on, man, speak!”

It was too early to call for breakfast, or even to risk waking up Amy by rattling around in the kitchen. But David was absolutely starving.

He glanced at the clock behind him, though he knew perfectly well his laptop would tell him the time if he just looked down at the corner. He liked the big clock over the mantel, however, right above the framed pictures. His favorite was the famous photo of Vince Lombardi. Anyway, his habit was to use the big clock to check the time, and he wasn’t going to go all digital now.

Five fifteen a.m. Still too early. I’ve been writing since two. This should be a good writing day, Marcus isn’t expecting to hear from me until two or three this afternoon. David dismissed his growling stomach and turned back to his screen and keyboard.

He reviewed the PowerPoint he’d used hundreds of times to teach the Five Laws of Decline. His main point to his corporate

clients: *ignore any one of these laws, and your company will start its decline.*

As he pulled up each slide, he reread the outline of his customary FLD speech:

The first law of decline knocks leaders out of the “coma of complacency.” In our egalitarian times, we like to feel that everyone is equal and that there isn’t any difference in the results from one person to another. But in reality, nothing could be further from the truth. In the same vein, it’s just not effective leadership when people are promoted based on how nice someone is or how long they’ve been at a company rather than upon specific results.

To help illustrate the point that too much corporate emphasis is on making people feel good rather than emphasizing real leadership, let’s discuss Sturgeon’s Law—that 90 percent of everything is simply crud.

This usually got a few snickers of laughter, but David was dead serious.

That’s Sturgeon’s Law, which at Indytech we call the first law of decline. As far back as 1870, Benjamin Disraeli wrote, “Books are fatal: they are the curse of the human race. Nine-tenths of existing books are nonsense, and the clever books are the refutation of that nonsense.”

This concept is crucial in helping companies turn around. Since 90 percent of anything is crud, likewise 90 percent of the alleged leaders in a company are producing cruddy results. It’s not that the people are crud. In fact, they may be part of the 10 percent in other areas, but not in their current role or field.

Understanding Sturgeon's Law helps us study the leadership teams honestly and not be fooled by the endless talk with no results. "When all is said and done, much more is said than ever done." The 10 percent walk while the 90 percent talk.

David looked up from the computer screen, then he stood and stretched. He went to the water cooler and filled a large water bottle. He stood for a moment watching the light begin to rise in the sky.

After another long drink, he sat down and went back to the PowerPoint slides.

When a company fills its leadership team and has no sorting mechanism in place, it is poised for a rapid decline. One of our first tasks in a turnaround is to develop a scoreboard that helps separate the 10 percent from the 90 percent.

Some fields are easier than others. Sales records, for example, quickly identify those who get results from those who don't. The people one may think would be successful are not always the ones who sell. Without a scoreboard, it is practically impossible to separate the two groups. It's not like a leader can go ask the people, because self-delusion is so common that many in the 90 percent emphatically believe they are part of the 10 percent. Only hard-core results reveal the truth.

David closed his laptop and walked around the pool area. *I need to think. Who are the 10 percent? When we're talking about freedom, prosperity, and national leadership, we can't just list out any class or group of people as the 10 percent. We certainly don't want to go back to aristocracy or become even more elitist. We're too far down that path already.*

We need a scoreboard, a way of effectively measuring who are the

leaders of today's America—the ones who are most likely to turn things around. Who are they? What's the scoreboard?

David found himself walking over to a small pavilion with running water next to it. He had built several pavilions of different sizes and styles around his estate, some for personal reflection and others for small or larger groups to meet. He loved this small pavilion and the sound of the water cascading over the stones in the nearby fountain. And unlike most of the others, this one was entirely surrounded by trees and shrubs and therefore fully secluded. It was almost something of a personal shrine for him.

Who are the 10 percent? And how can we find them?

4

The two men waved at Josh, then walked out of the screening room and climbed the stairs to the tower. They stood at the railing and scanned the large mall full of buildings. Since all the walls were made of glass, they could see thousands of workers in many rooms.

In the distance they could see the complex dedicated to science, in the other direction the buildings focused on the arts. James nodded toward the large group of buildings they had just left. “We have so many people trying to help spread freedom. But sometimes it seems we accomplish very little. Do you think this time will be different?”

John shook his head. “I don’t know,” he said slowly. “Change is hard. The history of the world drags on for centuries with little change, then we see major shifts that occur in a few short years. It’s hard to predict.”

From their vantage point in the tower, they could see hundreds of large screens in the rooms of the buildings. James sighed. “Workers are watching screens, studying everything in history and all that is going on in the world today like it was a modern movie. We can fast-forward or rewind, zoom in, and even see into the thoughts of people. But we can’t just reach down and fix things.”

“No, but we can keep trying. If you keep an eye on David and send down thoughts and suggestions, he might just rise to his potential. That’s what we do all day. And let’s be honest, we actually have a lot more influence on building freedom than we did in our time. Admit it, Madison,” John said with a dry smile, “being an angel has its perks!”

James grinned in surprise. “Yes, it does,” he said with a laugh. He cocked his head to one side. “I wonder if we’re using all our resources? I mean, what if it’s me who isn’t quite living up to my full potential? What if we can do more to reach down and fix things?”

John lifted his gaze and locked eyes with James. Both sensed that this was a significant moment.

The Founders got it wrong. I mean, they got so much right, but somehow they thought that creating the right political and legal systems was going to be enough. But they needed to mix the right economic system into the governmental structure.

David was up again the next night at two a.m., reading through his library and writing his main thoughts. Now that he was openly committed to this project, he found that thoughts kept coming to him in a stream throughout the day and night. He needed to get these thoughts down on paper.

The Founding Fathers believed in free enterprise, thankfully, and they helped the process of ending the landed and monied aristocracies that ruined nearly all nations of history; but somehow they needed to work economic freedom more directly into the system.

But how?

David pulled up his Five Laws of Decline PowerPoint and picked up where he had left off the day before.

The second law describes humanity’s desire to satisfy their wants by doing the least amount of work possible. True competition against other companies is the only way to ensure that everyone is working together within a company to satisfy their customers.

If, through guarantees, monopolies, or socialism, one's paycheck is ensured without effort, the majority will do the minimum possible to continue to receive the reward. We first discovered this in Frédéric Bastiat's book, *The Law*.

Bastiat wrote: "Man can live and satisfy his wants only by ceaseless labor; by the ceaseless application of his faculties to natural resources. This process is the origin of property.

"But it is also true that a man may live and satisfy his wants by seizing and consuming the products of the labor of others. This process is the origin of plunder.

"Now since man is naturally inclined to avoid pain—and since labor is pain in itself—it follows that men will resort to plunder whenever plunder is easier than work. History shows this quite clearly. And under these conditions, neither religion nor morality can stop it.

"When, then, does plunder stop? It stops when it becomes more painful and more dangerous than labor."

Plunder can be as simple as receiving a check without working, or as big as one country invading another to receive the fruits of another's labor. Either way the desire is within the heart of man and must be accounted for. In other words, each system must be designed with this inherent attribute in mind, or the organization will decline when people find ways to resort to plunder rather than productivity.

In short, having competition and a scoreboard against other firms is the only way to ensure a team is performing rather than plundering.

David stopped reading the slides and turned his thoughts to modern America. *Clearly, we have become a society addicted to various kinds of plunder. Government entitlements and programs are literally*

bankrupting our nation, and they keep growing no matter what happens in elections. Whether Republicans or Democrats are in office, government spending consistently increases.

And sadly, many of the people, for their part, are committed to plunder as well. If they think there is an easier way than working, such as going on a reality show or entering a lottery, they flock to it. For most Americans, education is now less about learning or gaining knowledge than about ensuring higher pay and better perks of employment.

If we are going to turn America around, we've got to address this reality. As long as our system encourages various types of plunder rather than making work the easiest way to succeed, we'll continue to decline. No politician or political party can do anything against this truth.

David looked back at his screen:

The third law of decline works closely with the second. When the second law is violated, the third law, Gresham's Law, becomes automatically engaged.

Thomas Gresham, an English financier, first elaborated Gresham's Law as it pertains to money. He taught that when a government uses force to support one kind of currency over another, the bad money drives out the good.

But Gresham's Law applies to more than just money. In short, when a bad behavior is rewarded, more of the bad behavior will be done, and that in turn will drive out the good behaviors.

In the leadership field, this is displayed when bad behavior is rewarded. For example, if someone can sit at their desk all day watching movies and get paid, this will cause others to choose this simpler method of making money (plunder).

Rewarding bad behaviors either converts others to plunder or drives them out of the company as they seek a firm that rewards people based upon productivity, not

plunder. In any case, over time, all that is left at the company are people who choose plunder over productivity—and Gresham's Law strikes again.

These laws (Bastiat and Gresham) must be neutralized or they will quickly strengthen and reinforce each other, and make everything worse.

America is a living example of Gresham's Law, David pondered. And both Bastiat's Law and Gresham's Law make it a lot harder to identify the 10 percent who have leadership power and can turn things around.

David pushed away from his desk and climbed the stairs to his deck in the clock tower. He sat on a couch and scanned the horizon. He loved this vantage point, mainly for the view but also for the quiet—no phones, computers, television screens, or other electronic distractions.

As he looked out above the tops of the trees and across the bay, he came back to his earlier concern.

How can we get the 10 percent engaged?

Yes, we have hurt the American monetary system by going off the gold standard, and yes, we have hurt the American work ethic by allowing various kinds of legal plunder to spread in our society. We have also become a nation that rewards lazy or, even worse, unscrupulous behavior in many ways.

All of that is true. But the 10 percent leadership solutions aren't going to be found in Bastiat's Law or Gresham's Law. Plunder is our symptom, not the cause of our national decline. In the case of modern America, the lack of great leadership is clearly the most glaring problem I've encountered so far.

That said, I've learned something in my decades of doing turn-arounds: the leaders are always there. We just have to find them and get them to find the courage to step forward and lead.

Where will the leaders come from in our time?

LeaderShift is the story of how David Mersher, the successful CEO of IndyTech, sets out to discover why the United States is losing its leadership edge and many of its freedoms, and what he can do to turn things around and make America truly great again.

In the process, Mersher and his team learn how 5 Laws of Decline are eating away at our economy—secretly tearing down government, businesses and nearly all big institutions—and what citizens and leaders can do about it.

Above all, they discover something few business leaders or citizens of free nations have yet realized: The world today is on the verge of a momentous *LeaderShift*, one which will reframe the 21st Century and significantly alter the way we do business, family, career, education, governance and leadership.

When Mersher and his team get help from a surprising source, the result is both unexpected and stunning, and it's one that concerned Americans will want to think about for decades to come.

The next *LeaderShift* is almost here.

Are you ready?

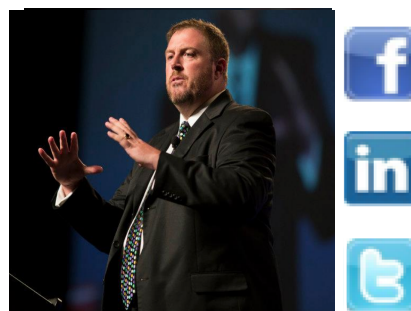
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Connect with us:

Orrin Woodward



Oliver DeMille



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