

FOREWORD BY OLIVER DEMILLE

UNCOMMON SENSE

A COMMON CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO
REBUILDING AMERICA



STEPHEN PALMER



2ND EDITION, REVISED AND EXPANDED

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PRAISE FOR *UNCOMMON SENSE*

“Uncommon Sense is earnest, idealistic, counter-intuitive and vital; a Tea Party for the soul. At times it had my heart racing, and at times moved me to tears. This empowering work is elegant in its simplicity and profound in its potential to move the hearts and minds of our people to own their role as the Overseers of Freedom and to advance the cause of liberty.”

— **Oliver DeMille, Co-Founder of the Center for Social Leadership, Author of *A Thomas Jefferson Education*, Co-Author of *LeaderShift***

“Uncommon Sense is an uncommonly good work, and a most important one for understanding what we, at the individual level, can do to keep the flames of freedom burning. I absolutely loved it. Several times while reading it I stood right up and cheered, much to the surprise of the rest of the people on the airplane. It’s that good, and even more necessary.”

— **Chris Brady, Bestselling Co-Author of *Launching a Leadership Revolution*, Author of *Rascal: Making a Difference by Becoming an Original Character* and *A Month of Italy: Rediscovering the Art of Vacation***

“Uncommon Sense is packed full of common sense which, unfortunately, isn’t so common anymore. Stephen Palmer has a gift for taking complex political discussions and, through a mixture of stories, analogies, and logic, simplifying them for all Americans to join the dialogue. Accordingly, reading this book will help you become uncommonly informed.”

— **Orrin Woodward, Bestselling Co-Author of *LeaderShift: A Call for Americans to Finally Stand Up and Lead* and Author of *Resolved: 13 Resolutions for Life***

“I have never felt so inspired to make a difference in the world as I do after reading this great book. Palmer’s words have touched me to the core. *Uncommon Sense* is a much-needed modern-day classic. I commit as a common citizen to rise up as a greater social leader to restore America. I will urge my family, clients, and friends to study and ponder this book and learn how together we can do our part to revitalize this nation. *Uncommon Sense* provides the formula for citizens to become the founding fathers of the 21st century who can remedy our failing society.”

— **Kris Krohn, Founder of Strongbrook, Author of *The Conscious Creator: Six Laws for Manifesting Your Masterpiece Life***

“In an age in which societal problems are extraordinary and unprecedented, potential solutions must be just as unique... common sense is obsolete, *Uncommon Sense* is vital.”

— **Steve D’Annunzio, Founder of the Soul Purpose Institute, Author of *The Prosperity Paradigm***

“I just finished it, AND... thank you!!! It was a blessing and somewhat a missing link for me to my question of; what do I do to make a difference in the loss of our freedoms? How do I contribute or play a role in much needed change? Fun how your book just showed up in my life the way it did because, I’ve felt somewhat lost and inadequate in my search for this answer. Now I feel confident, and resolved. I know my role—submit to God and continue to prepare myself and my family until purpose manifests itself more and I’ll know. I’ll certainly be recommending *Uncommon Sense*.”

— **Sean Fleming**

“Once I opened the pages I could not put it down. This book and understanding the truths you spoke of freedom and the

responsibilities we as individuals must take to preserve those freedoms need to be a prerequisite to graduating high school. I plan to share this book with all I meet and my hope is that they grasp the importance each of us play in the preservation of freedom. Thank you so much for a wonderful and poignant reminder of our personal responsibility.”

– **Greg Johnson**

“Once I started reading it I couldn’t stop reading it. A very wonderful book, a must read for everyone. I too plan to share this with as many people as I can. It is important that all people understand this information and apply it.”

– **Drew Harvey**

“I always have 5-6 books going at a time. I rarely finish one in less than a month’s time as I skip around to each of them so often. However, I started your book on a Sunday afternoon and did not put it down till I had read the last page...I agreed with almost everything you wrote (a rarity when I read anything)...I just wanted to let you know that you have a fan. I love the way you teach and even more what you teach. We need more patriots like yourself as our country continues to slip away from the principles of our founding.”

– **Dustin Harris, Co-Author of *Restoring America: 12 Principles that Will Save Our Country, Communities, & Families***

“*Uncommon Sense* really does illuminate the most urgent needs of our time. It’s full of inconvenient ideas that truly are the only solutions to our modern problems. Stephen points the finger back at us as those responsible, not only for our individual shortcomings, but also for our nation’s failures. Most of us won’t like the answers to our world’s most pressing

questions, even when we know they're true. But these are the fundamental ideas and principles that will take us personally and as a society to a place more worthy of our national heritage and our individual divinity."

– Dave Wilson

"Stephen Palmer's book offers much needed direction to the many Americans rising up in favor of a restoration of liberty in the US. His book is simple and inspiring, suggesting real solutions to the complex problems in our government, homes and businesses. Starting with principles and taking us through practical solutions, Palmer doesn't avoid challenging freedom-loving Americans to do the difficult things that matter most. His writing is thoughtful and comes from a place of true conviction. He hits on the core principles needed to preserve what we have received from those who paid the ultimate price for freedom."

– Liz Kirk

"Stephen reminds us that before we march on Washington we should march to our bookshelf, and then march to our neighbor's front yard, and then march to the soup kitchen. We need a revolution alright, a revolution of reading, a revolution of serving, a revolution of getting involved, a revolution of true social leadership. Stephen is one of the clear voices lighting the fires of this revolution."

– James Ure, President & Headmaster of Williamsburg Academy

"Sat down to read *Uncommon Sense* and literally did not get up until I had finished the last page. Definitely a book to read, reread, ponder and apply. *Uncommon Sense* is right on

many levels. Got some clarifying history lessons, and new perspectives on a number of issues where I have previously been myopic. Central government of any size will never fix what only governing oneself can. *Uncommon Sense* reminds me that I am individually responsible to produce before I consume, to choose my words with care and mean what I say, and to think. JUST THINK. *Uncommon Sense* makes me think. Thank you Stephen, you have done a good work!"

– Sally Taggart, Co-Founder of Taggart Coaching

"We as Americans are all crying for change, we are quick to blame the government or others, and we want someone to do something about it. Stephen Palmer has in a few short pages made all of this easy to understand, with vignettes and stories he shows us why we are where we are, he gives us a clear vision of where we need to go, and an honest understanding of the real effort it will take to make the journey to the destination we all desire. America's journey back to greatness requires a clear and concise map – We as AMERICANS have just been given such a wonderful map. I pray that every American will read this book, don the same 'CAN DO' spirit that once made AMERICA great, then boldly and honestly step out onto this clearly outlined path and once more prove to the world and our posterity that 'WE THE PEOPLE' still have what it takes to be the real beacon of hope and change the world needs."

– Ken Waddell, CEO, Humanitarian Visions
International

"Stephen issues a recall on the faulty perceptions that have been instilled in us on our aging and worn out social conveyor belt. *Uncommon Sense* is a short, broad diagnostic, and a recall to basics. I appreciated the concise summary of principles that I have mulled over in my own education. More significantly, I

found myself sometimes disagreeing and having to write down why, that is evidence of a worthwhile book, one that draws a reaction. If you agree with the whole book you're missing the point (see the chapter 'People Who Disagree With You Aren't Stupid'). Thanks, Stephen, for putting your actions where your mouth is and inviting us to do the same."

— Joseph Sorenson

"Palmer's aptly named *Uncommon Sense* is directed toward freedom-loving Americans, but I'm not sure it's a message they want to hear. He doesn't bash Obama or whine about the deficit. But he does tell the truth about how real change happens. His message is an invitation to not just fix America, but also live a better life. Whether Americans are ready to embrace this message remains to be seen. Will you join him?"

— David Richins

"This is a profound and ultimately simple answer to the question that so many are asking right now: 'How do we save America?' If what makes America great is the goodness of her people, then your book is a call to arms for our citizens. Arms that encircle with love, arms that reach out to lift another, arms that hold up the weak, the feeble, the faltering out of a sense of love, compassion, and honor. You've hit at the heart of what freedom and patriotism is about; gratitude for where we've come from and a dedication to do our part to move us to where we want to be. Thank you for your words that peel away the layers of dogma, rhetoric, and partisan thought that have divided our citizens for too long and for getting to the foundation that will ultimately be what saves our nation... our daily individual decisions to perform acts of service and kindness that help real people. Across ethnic, cultural, political, and religious boundaries people are looking for a touch of

human kindness and a sense of direction. They are listening to the news, political pundits and commentary and coming away discouraged and saying 'But what do we do?' This book is another step in the journey of 'doing.'"

**– Vernie DeMille, Co-Owner of C'est Naturelle Farms
and Real Food Farming**

"Unfounded opinions fall from the sky so quickly that we can easily find ourselves cold and wet in a drenching downpour. Finding clear voices to help us navigate the storms of misinformation can be difficult to find. When you find a clear voice of reason, dig in and fill up like it's your last meal. Having worked closely with Stephen Palmer for several years, I encourage all readers to take his opinions to heart. His insights and writing aren't squawking and complaining but rather solutions to reclaim the American that we all love."

– Carl Woolston, Founder of KGaps Consulting

"'To thine own self be true.' Profound. Inspiring. Invigorating. We live in a society where everyone claims to be true to something; most claim to be true to themselves. But we have lost something even more fundamental than those wise words of Shakespeare. How can we be true to ourselves when we no longer know who we are? How can I be true to myself if I don't know who I am? Stephen Palmer challenges us to take a long, hard, revealing, and beautiful look at ourselves. He leads us on a journey of self-discovery into our personal worlds of family, community, education, spirituality, economics, and government; and he reminds us of the factor that each of these spheres has in common: Ourselves. We must know Ourselves – our true self – before we can act in accordance with what is good, true, and beautiful. *Uncommon Sense* is a summons to us. It calls us to know who we are in an increasingly large world. It

is from Ourselves that we can complete the rest of Shakespeare:
“This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow,
as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.”

– Eric Dowd

“I find it refreshing to know that someone other than I believes in individual responsibility for choices and actions. We live in a world where society as a whole is abdicating more and more responsibilities to anyone but themselves. The problem we face is that others, including governments, are very willing to step in and make choices for us, whereby our liberties are eroded a little each day. In *Uncommon Sense*, Stephen spells out the straight-up principles of personal responsibility and illustrates how applying those principles will allow us to reclaim and maintain our freedoms. With our freedom to choose comes the responsibility of choice. I hope that this work will be an inspiration for all who read it to sincerely reflect upon their attitude toward choice and accountability, and that they will then take action toward reclaiming their personal stewardships.”

– Angela Walters, Homeschooling Mother of Two Children

“Dennis Prager once said, ‘I believe the greatest threat facing America...is that we have not passed on what it means to be an American to this generation....A society does not survive if it does not have a reason to survive...Where there is a why there is a how....We have lost the why.’ Stephen Palmer’s *Uncommon Sense* strikes at the heart of the American problem: we no longer know who we are. This is a soul searching read and if you are honest with yourself—it will move you to be a better individual, spouse, parent and citizen.”

– Shanon Brooks, Founder & President of Monticello College

“Are you living by design, or by default?” Stephen Palmer inquires in *Uncommon Sense*. True to form, Stephen uses antiquity, anecdote and aspect to enlighten and inspire the reader. He takes raw information and distills it to relevant intelligence for the problems facing our nation. This book is as important for what it’s not as is for what it is. It is not a flowchart of political policy, but instead a call to the arms of self-improvement. The author makes a seamless connection between the heart and the NASDAQ and the only logical option is to agree with him. Like the scholars of former times, Stephen understands that nations are built and fortified in the hearts and minds of its people and not in the halls and offices of its government. Any American concerned with curing the cancers of our country would do well to get a copy of *Uncommon Sense* and devour it cover-to-cover.”

— **Aaren Carnline**

“Stephen Palmer has hit the nail on the head with *Uncommon Sense*. So many of our national and social ills are trumpeted in the news media on a daily basis. And although they seem like they are outside of our control, ultimately the solution is within each of us. If people truly understand the message that *Uncommon Sense* bears within it’s pages, it may set off the next, necessary, revolution of ideas that can provide for lasting, purpose driven change. So throw aside your partisanship, remove the fetters that bind you, and liberate your soul.”

— **Randall Hinton, Co-Founder of Pyrolitical**

“Stephen places the responsibility for our Nation’s woes precisely where they belong, while simultaneously expressing a message of hope and encouragement for each person to intentionally, and personally, overcome the challenges facing our Nation.”

— **Hyrum Lefler, Former Mayor of Leeds, Utah**

“I read *Uncommon Sense* when I was touring of some of the poorest countries in the world. My journey, simultaneous to my reading of this book, awakened my senses as I saw a marked difference an individual can make in his own life and in his own society. Those who had pride in themselves not only had greater happiness, but also greater hope for success compared to the known communist countries I was in where a heavy reliance upon government, and not upon themselves seemed to have defeated them before they even tried. Every citizen of this world regardless of their nationality, political or party affiliation and every person who earns or spends money should read this book. It made me feel a greater sense of personal empowerment to change my own circumstances and those of the world around me. It filled me with pride for my nation, for my family and for myself. Stephen Palmer bridges the gaps I believe a majority of individuals don’t see and aptly instills the desire for change that all begins at the most important source, each of us as individuals.”

– Greg Nielsen

“Stephen’s writing is full of principles that will make a great difference for good in the lives of those who apply them. The best thing about his solutions is that individuals have the power to implement them right away.”

– Nels Jensen, Co-Founder of Williamsburg Academy

“*Uncommon Sense* is an absorbing read for all Americans of any political bent who want to know what the Founders’ intentions were really all about and how America has veered off course. It gives both of the country’s political parties as well as the American people their fair share of the blame. Stephen Palmer is a bright 21st century Christian version of Thomas Paine. He courageously sounds the alarm while proffering the antidotes

to the malaise that encompasses the United States and its citizens at this time. And the antidote isn't what most people think. This powerful little book is well thought-out and clearly written. It's a terrific and easy must read for anyone who cares about America's future!"

– **Tag Taggart, Co-Founder of Taggart Coaching**

"Stephen's ability to speak purely and from the heart is rare in a world full of agendas and political correctness. This work will not only inspire you, but it will also force you to recognize your 'why' you are here."

– **Adam Hailstone**

"In *Uncommon Sense*, Stephen Palmer identifies the profound problems and provides simple solutions to the challenges Americans, and indeed all societies, face. However, unless one is willing to take a hard look at one's self, the solutions will be difficult to swallow. Mr. Palmer doesn't pull punches in helping us to recognize that the problems, and the solutions, are you and I. Blaming 'government,' 'Wall Street,' or the other issues de jour only hides for us the source of what causes and fixes the problem: changing who we are and how we behave, first as individuals, then as families, then as communities. Thanks, Stephen for sharing stories and analysis that help us come to a realization that 'Yes, we can,' for we are the only ones who can change our course."

– **Mike Wilson**

"Stephen Palmer presents a highly thoughtful perspective on the current state of affairs, and touches on topics ranging from abortion to economics. He employs frequent use of analogy to make his point, and although his analysis is inherently

cerebral he effectively translates difficult concepts into easily understandable terms for the layperson. Not content to merely complain about the status quo, Palmer urges us to educate ourselves and, with our faith appropriately placed in God, engage in our community. But in the final chapter/essay, he leaves us with this warning: 'Debating political philosophy is far less important than cherishing and serving all people as children of God.' Ultimately, the solution lies neither in government nor debate about government, but in our voluntarily living the role of proper citizens. Uncommon, but good sense."

—Holly Hansen

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FOREWORD

When Thomas Paine wrote *Common Sense* during the American Founding era, it captured the imagination of the people. This occurred because Paine's words were *actually* common sense. They took on the major issues confronting America at the time, and they provided the obvious, effective, and most important answers and solutions—backed by a deep understanding of the principles of freedom and a commitment to the idea that regular people can make all the difference.

Stephen Palmer's book *Uncommon Sense* does the same thing. In every way, it qualifies as a 21st Century sequel to Paine's classic. Stephen addresses our major national concerns one by one, applying realistic and common-sense solutions to things Washington D.C. has made unnecessarily complex. He tackles the problems we face with a refreshing, non-partisan spirit of American initiative, innovation and a get-it-done attitude.

I can only hope people today are as willing to read and apply his words as the Founding generation was with Paine's writings. If so, it will have a huge positive influence on the decades ahead.

Stephen is a generalist in the sense that he addresses America's deepest challenges—our values, our attitudes, our strengths and weaknesses. But he is also a specialist on specific proposals that can change our national dialogue, from immigration and health care to racism and fiscal policy. Stephen writes, as did Paine, with no claim to being an expert on any of these things, but with the voice of a regular citizen who deeply cares about the world we are leaving to our children and grandchildren.

This voice makes the book easy to read, fun and enjoyable, deep and yet engaging. I started reading at 9 p.m and literally

didn't stop until I closed the last page at 3 a.m. I simply couldn't convince myself to stop — it was too good to put down.

There is an underlying idea in Stephen's book, an undergirding assumption that shows up on every page: The idea that regular people are capable of great things, that you and I can have a direct and lasting influence on the future of our nation, that we have a lot more power than we think we do or attempt to use.

This view is, certainly, uncommon. But Stephen presents it so effectively that the reader clearly understands that it is the only sensible view. Of course the people have the ultimate power.

We seldom use it. We spend most of our lives focused on other things, while we leave the future of freedom and national prosperity to our "leaders." But, even so, the power remains in our hands. Stephen not only teaches this in an inspiring way, but he provides realistic ways for us to use our power more often — and more effectively.

The account of his visit to a Native American reservation during high school will remain ever seared into my mind. These few short pages may have more to say about current immigration debates than all the published reams of books and articles combined. Those who read it will never be the same. Indeed, this one chapter is worth the price of the book, and should be read and re-read in every classroom and boardroom in North America.

Another short chapter about a speech to a large audience, and how it never actually happened — but in fact happens every day — gave me a whole new view on leadership. It is more than profound. It is downright brilliant.

In truth, the book itself is brilliant. When I first read it, I wondered at the title. Any author who aspires to write a sequel to something as world-changing as Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* is either deluded and pretentious or deeply dedicated

and inspired. As I read, it became increasingly clear that Stephen is the latter.

Moreover, this book is *wise*. In an age where wisdom is seldom the goal, this is saying something. Allan Bloom noted in *The Closing of the American Mind* that in our modern world young people are taught to aspire to wealth, success, leadership and even fame, but they are seldom encouraged to seek what the great men and women of the past most desired: real wisdom. Stephen's words are, indeed, wise, and this puts *Uncommon Sense* in a genre shared by few books.

This combination of wisdom and readability make the book unique, fresh and innovative. If there is anything America needs right now—in order to gain back its once legendary leadership edge—it is innovation. Yet innovation is rare in our society, almost absent most of our schools and classrooms, and even missing in most of our corporations and other leading institutions. As long as we live on the successes of the past, American decline will gain momentum.

Uncommon Sense is one of the best manuals on innovation I've ever read. Again, I think it should be read and considered by every student and executive in our generation. This one thing would have a drastic positive impact on the American future.

Another striking element of *Uncommon Sense* is that every page is *relevant*. With the advent of the Self-Help and Leadership book section in every library and bookstore, modern readers have become accustomed to books that help us change our daily behaviors, habits and actions. In a sense, our bookstores and libraries house two kinds of books—the old, *informational* works, and the more current, patently *transformational* materials.

The old books are more difficult to read, yet full of God's and humanity's most important wisdom. In contrast, the new, current books are easier to read, often personally impactful, yet too frequently high on technique but a little shallow on principle.

Stephen's book bridges these worlds as effectively as anything I've ever read. It belongs on your special shelf along with Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, *The Federalist Papers*, *The Fourth Turning* by Strauss and Howe, *Resolved* by Orrin Woodward, *A Whole New Mind* by Daniel Pink, Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, *Rascal* by Chris Brady, W. Cleon Skousen's *The Five Thousand Year Leap*, and *The Weight of Glory* by C.S. Lewis.

Uncommon Sense is a great book. It is a moving book. It will move you emotionally and intellectually. And, most importantly, it will move you to action. In our day, when common sense is all too often most uncommon, this book simply makes sense. It needs to be read by every official in Washington and all fifty state houses. It needs to be considered by every father and mother, and passed on to their children.

Above all, though it doesn't say so on the cover, this is a book on leadership. It needs to be read and pondered by anyone who wants to lead, or finds themselves already in a position of leadership. The stakes are high: The future of North America, Western Civilization and the principles of freedom around the world are very much in doubt. The forces of decline are real and hard at work.

In this environment, where the stakes are high and regular people are the de facto leaders – whether toward triumph or mediocrity – there is a desperate and persistent need for wisdom, for innovation, and for uncommon sense. Any leader will be better armed for the challenges of our world with this book in their mind. No leader can afford to be without it.

– *Oliver DeMille*

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- What are the differences between inalienable and civil rights?
- What is the proper role of government?
- What is the American form of government?
- What are the four foundations of freedom?
- What is more important— culture, or politics and government?
- What are “legitimate foundation” and “legitimate authority” in political philosophy?
- What is the fundamental character of human beings?
- What are the seven major societal forms, or institutions, and what are the roles of each?
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Author's Note: *The following essays have been written over the course of several years. Although some of the content deals with specific dates and political events, my hope is that the principles and ideals will remain timeless.*

1



EDUCATION BEFORE ACTIVISM

"Force without wisdom falls of its own weight."

— HORACE

A few years ago I was teaching a class on the Constitution to a room full of people wholly dedicated to the cause of liberty. I started by asking the class, "How many of you agree with William Gladstone's quote that the Constitution is 'the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the mind and purpose of man'?"

Every attendee raised their hand. I told them to keep their hands raised, then asked, "How many of you have actually read it?" A few hands dropped.

"Of you who have actually read it from beginning to end," I continued, "how many have read it within the last six months?"

Still more hands dropped. I persisted. "Of those who still have their hands raised, how many of you can tell us what Article III talks about?" More hands dropped. By this time only about half of the room had their hands raised.

By the time I asked who knew the meaning of *habeas corpus* and what bills of attainder are, not a single person in the room had their hand raised. Mind you, these are the same people who had just said that they agreed with Gladstone's quote, yet very few of them could answer the most basic questions about the Constitution.

.....

**Is the depth of your education equal
to the fervor of your opinions?**

.....

What would you guess is the most recurring criticism I've received from readers over the years? Contrary to what you might think, it's not from people who take polar opposite positions from my views. It's from freedom-loving patriots who believe that my recommended action steps are "benign." For example, they tell me that reading classics will do little to solve our looming problems. I respect these devoted people. And I have a different perspective on what needs to happen for our Republic to be restored.

America is primed for a French Revolution scenario. Furthermore, we exhibit many of the qualities of German civilization prior to World War II. We're a highly-trained, yet poorly-educated populace. We've lost our understanding of true education. Furthermore, we have staggering discrepancies in wealth distribution. We're headed toward a lot of chaos and pain.

Plainly put, we don't have enough widespread education to sustain an anger-driven revolution. The People trying to fight Washington and other power interests right now is like replacing a strip club with a flea market. There's no use in fighting unless we have quality replacement options. It's not enough to just be mad; we must also be wise. And turning inward is the beginning of wisdom.

Confucius said it best in his classic essay *The Great Learning*:

“The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things.

“Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy.”

Not only does turning inward lead to wisdom, but it also leads to power. This is my core message: Fixing ourselves as individuals is what fixes the world. If this sounds “benign” to you, I probably can’t convince you otherwise. But I would point out that the most influential leaders, from Jesus Christ to Gandhi, have taken this approach. And they seemed to have done a pretty good job of improving the world.

There are others who say, “Yeah, we get it. But what do we actually do about it?” To those I humbly repeat, “Continue working on yourself and your education.” If our education were deep and broad enough we wouldn’t have to ask that question.

I accept that this message may disappoint many. It may seem too simplistic. It may seem to be too little, too late. To those familiar with my writing, I may sound like a broken record. But it's the light that animates everything that I do and everything I aspire to. It's the spiritual beating of my heart, the passion blood flowing through my veins, the mission muscles that give me strength to endure.

I'm fed up with the Federal Reserve. But I also don't have a complete grasp on how our monetary system should operate in the 21st Century, nor do I have a solid plan for making a transition. So I don't march on Washington to scream at the Federal Reserve; I stay at home and read everything I can find on monetary policy.

I'm sick and tired of weaseling, compromising, ignorant, money-and-power-grubbing politicians. So I prepare myself to be a leader with integrity, knowledge, and wisdom. I'm dismayed by the decay of the family. But I'm further dismayed by the times when I'm angry and impatient with my wife and children. So I focus my dismay on doing all I can to improve as a husband and father.

This is what I stand for. This is the message you'll hear for as long as I have breath. And when you see me march on Washington, it won't be because I'm "mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore." It will be because I actually have real, sustainable solutions and the ability to carry them out.

Until then, I'm working on myself. Care to join me?



STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

During Stalin's rule of the Soviet Union in the 1950s, Nikita Khrushchev was the leader of the Communist Party. After Stalin's death, Khrushchev visited the United States and gave a press conference. He was given a written question from a reporter, "Today you talked about the hideous rule of your predecessor, Stalin. You were one of his closest aides and colleagues during those years. What were you doing all that time?"

Khrushchev glared at the audience, his face reddening in anger. "Who asked that?" he roared.

Silence from the audience.

Once again he bellowed, "Who asked that?"

Dead silence.

After a long pause, Khrushchev said quietly, "That's what I was doing."

I scratch my head and wonder about the reporter who was bold enough to ask the question, but too afraid to stand up and own it.

A few years earlier, a Protestant pastor in Germany named Martin Niemöller was released from a Nazi concentration camp after seven years of imprisonment and wrote,

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out

Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out

Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out

Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me.

“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil,” wrote Edmund Burke, “is that good men do nothing.” “The world is a dangerous place,” said Albert Einstein, “not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.”

I hope to live worthy of the phrase I want chiseled into my gravestone: “He stood steadfastly against the tide.”

And when I pass to the other side, I’d love to have a chat with August Landmesser. A former member of the Nazi party, Landmesser came to oppose Hitler’s regime after fathering children with a Jewish woman. A picture snapped in 1936 at a crowd in Hamburg, Germany shows his brave rejection of the Nazi doctrine:



Landmesser was found guilty of “dishonouring the race” under Nazi law. He and his wife, Irma Eckler, were jailed by the Gestapo, their children separated and sent to an orphanage. August was freed from prison in 1941 but was soon drafted into the war. He was later declared missing in action and was presumed dead. But because he stood and was counted among the dissenters, he has not gone missing from the pages of history.

Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.” A picture hanging in my office shows the anonymous rebel in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square standing up to a line of tanks on June 5, 1989, protesting China’s communist rule:



People like August Landmesser and the unknown Tank Man provide inspiring examples to emulate. Yet defying tyranny, standing steadfastly against the tide in our day is done by much simpler, less public actions.

We stand up and are counted when we turn off the TV and pick up a good book instead. When we choose to not click that racy link. When we stop buying the plastic, processed junk sold as “food” and the pills peddled to mask the symptoms of the diseases caused by the junk we eat. When we reject the flimsy argument that we’re “throwing away our vote” and vote on conscience and principle. When we conquer fear and start a business. When we toss credit card offers in the trash.

There may come a day when our grandchildren ask us about the debt, taxation, pollution, widespread obesity and disease, and other problems they’ll undoubtedly be burdened with.

“You saw it all happening,” they’ll say. “What were you doing all that time?”

I hope our response is not silence.

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1. *The Federalist Papers* by Hamilton, Jay, and Madison
2. *Democracy in America* by Alexis de Tocqueville
3. *LeaderShift* by Orrin Woodward and Oliver DeMille
4. *FreedomShift* by Oliver DeMille
5. *The Coming Aristocracy: Education and the Future of Freedom* by Oliver DeMille
6. *1913* by Oliver DeMille
7. *A Thomas Jefferson Education* by Oliver DeMille
8. *Resolved: 13 Resolutions for Life* by Orrin Woodward
9. *Rascal: Making a Difference by Becoming an Original Character* by Chris Brady
10. *The 5,000 Year Leap* by Cleon Skousen
11. *The Law* by Frederic Bastiat
12. *The Second Treatise of Government* by John Locke
13. *The Conscious Creator: Six Laws for Manifesting Your Masterpiece Life* by Kris Krohn with Stephen Palmer
14. *Up From Slavery* by Booker T. Washington
15. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe
16. *Les Miserables* by Victor Hugo
17. *Magnificent Obsession* by Lloyd C. Douglas
18. *The Brother's Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoevsky
19. *As a Man Thinketh* by James Allen
20. *The Mainspring of Human Progress* by H.G. Weaver
21. *The Richest Man in Babylon* by George Clason
22. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*
23. *The Hiding Place* by Corrie ten Boom
24. *The Virginian* by Owen Wister
25. *The Other Greeks: The Family Farm and the Agrarian Roots of Western Civilization* by Victor Davis Hanson