

THE GENERAL'S

spectacles



"I find that I have grown not only gray but blind in the service of my country." —GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON

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A leader stood up, pointed forward, and resolved to try. This is where victory begins.

One December, two amazing events. First doom, then hope. On December 18, 1776, George Washington wrote a despairing letter. "The game is pretty near up," Washington confessed. He meant that the American cause of independence was nearly dead, just days from the end. He wrote these words along the wind-blown banks of the Delaware River. Cold and defeat were all around him. On December 27, 1776, Washington rejoiced. Because of an incredibly risky surprise attack on Trenton, one that involved rowing wooden boats at night through the churning, ice-choked Delaware River, Washington and 1,000 soldiers scored a shocking victory at Trenton. They saved the American cause, pure and simple. Though eight more years and many more trials lay ahead, without success at Trenton, there would be no American nation. Washington's planning, fortitude, inspiration, and collaboration with local militia had made the difference.

We're mired in gloom right now. It won't be overcome in ten days or ten months. Nevertheless, single acts of individual leadership, particularly those that embrace bold risks, can have monumental effects. My advice: don't look at the water and ice, focus on the land beyond. Set the stage for final victory. •

The 1700s

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THE GENERAL'S S P E C T A C L E S

Desire and Decision: A Leader

He had the desire. He made the decision. And he was 18 years old

18-year-old Francisco Ramirez lived in southern California. He looked around his community and saw there were no Spanish-language newspapers.

The 1800s

Ramirez decided that it was up to him to write and publish one. He named it El Clamor Publico. The first edition, four pages long, featured an article about a controversial police killing of a local Mexican resident.

Not knowing what you don't know can be a good thing for a leader. Youth and inexperience can mix with leadership.

This was Los Angeles in 1856

Ramirez was a pioneer. He wrote about the need for racial understanding, the value of democratic government and citizen participation, and the intricacies of jury trials. He quoted Latin philosophers and poets, and translated the Declaration of Independence into Spanish. Ramirez's newspaper regularly offered stories of American history as a way of educating local Mexicans. He wrote, "It is necessary that there be union in this city in order to have security. Let us all work together in the same spirit to carry out the laws." Ramirez became a passionate opponent to slavery and sought to end lynching of Mexicans, blacks, and Indians. The newspaper ceased operations in 1859.



Francisco Ramirez was a leader

His experience reveals one of the most basic elements of leadership. Ramirez had an unshakable desire to fill a community need. Then, he decided to act. He didn't require anything else. The simple combination of desire and decision can propel you into leadership. •

Our Economy vs the 1930s Great Depression

Economically and financially, we're in a world of hurt. Experts predict more pain ahead. Everyone is nervous, some are terrified.

Let me give you a little context for the next so-called report from the media about our tragic condition:



Category	November 2008	Great Depression
Dow Jones Indus Avg peak	lost 50% from peak	lost 90% from peak
Nat'l Unemp. Rate	6.5%	25%
Banks closed	46 in last 8 yrs.	Almost 10,000 in 5 yrs.
% of homes foreclosed	0.6%	10%

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There's more. Far fewer women earned wages and salaries for households in the 1930s. A widespread fear existed as to the possibility of revolution. Scarcely any of the "safety nets" that we take for granted today existed 70 years ago. The range of jobs, careers, and occupations was a fraction of what we see. Death, in the form of killer maladies and illnesses, was more frequent.

I know things are bad now. I just want to remind you that our parents, grandparents or great-grandparents (depending on your age) endured far worse circumstances. Their experience in the 1930s was a key part of forging what some have called the "greatest generation." I want you to take heart. Keep perspective. You and I can make lasting contributions in our challenging times. It's our turn. •

The 1900s

Know your history—we've got a long, long way to go before we can say it's as bad now as it was then.

DIG DEEP IN THE SOIL

Dig Deep in the Soil



*Grow from
watching
history to
helping
make
history*

Make no mistake: we live in a fascinating historical time. A century from now, people will be reading carefully about our lives in the early 21st century. One of the biggest reasons will be that the United States elected its first African-American as the nation's president.

And yet there is a deeper story that you need to know, especially now, in historic times, in troubled times.

This story links tomorrow, today, and long ago. It is the African-American experience of change and leadership.

Not many Americans have done what I'm urging you to do — draw from that experience to strengthen both your present and your future, at work, community, and home.

I've designed a new session and series, entitled "Dig Deep in the Soil: The African-American Experience of Change and Leadership." You and I will follow the trail that runs from Frederick Douglass in the 1860s, to Booker T. Washington in the 1890s to 1910s, to Martin Luther King in the 1950s and 1960s, and now to Barack Obama in the early 2000s.

This is rich soil, learning soil, the kind where you plant and watch things grow. We're growing leaders to understand the stages of change, the step from diversity to organizational transformation, and the conversations that shape a new era of interpersonal relations in America.

Talk with your colleagues, customers, and contacts. If you decide want to know more about my new session and series, Dig Deep in the Soil, please contact me via my website. •

The
2000s

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DIG
DEEP
IN THE
SOIL

If you haven't visited recently, check out the newly re-designed website: www.historicalsolutions.com