

# Introduction

**“When the story of these times gets written,** we want it to say that we did all we could, and it was more than anyone could have imagined.” ➤ Bono

*Dream of a Nation* as a book and project was born out of faith and frustration. Faith in human ingenuity, common sense and compassion. Frustration with the fact that sometimes we get so bogged down in the fight and the spectacle that there is a collective blindness to our shared purpose and society’s real needs. But thankfully, it is ordinary people doing extraordinary things who are keeping the flame alive and charting a different path for our future. They are students and CEOs, political leaders and hip-hop artists, entrepreneurs and teachers, volunteers and big-thinkers who are rooted in creativity, positivity and hope.

Paul Hawken said, “Inspiration is not garnered from the litanies of what may befall us; it resides in humanity’s willingness to restore, redress, reform, rebuild, recover, reimagine and reconsider.” In a sense, this is what this book explores. When you flip the pages of *Dream of a Nation* they are meant to be both sobering and inspiring. Sobering because we face monumental challenges and don’t have a lot of time or infinite resources. Inspiring because there are people and organizations throughout the land that are dedicated to the virtues of stewardship and fairness, and future generations. The dreams of ordinary citizens and visionaries are what have made and still make this great country of ours. Ultimately, in this shared and ever-evolving society, our greatest strength lies in our ability to work together toward a collective purpose that is grounded in our common humanity.

As one of the most prosperous and free countries on the planet, we have a strong foundation from which to keep the dream alive and growing. At the same time, there are a multitude of compounding challenges that require vital focus, new ways of thinking, bold actions and greater unity in order to solve.

Many of the problems and related solutions that we face are interconnected. As we reprioritize what we spend on the military, for example, it frees up resources for education, health, job creation and building the green economy. As we support local living economies, it prevents the off-shoring

of opportunity and serves to reduce the growing economic divide. As the news media focuses more on constructive journalism and solutions, the spirit of collaboration is bolstered. As citizens are further empowered, communities across the land and democracy are strengthened.

*Dream of a Nation* reflects a growing movement that is relevant whatever your political persuasion or station in life. The work is full of contributions from visionaries and pioneering organizations that are committed to a common cause and to quickening the pace of change. While it doesn’t cover every important issue and covers some not nearly deep enough, it is a starting place. You won’t read it in a weekend; plan on weeks or months. And remember that the dream lives on in what you do with it.

More than a book, *Dream of a Nation* is an invitation. An invitation to explore issues that affect us all. An invitation to be open to possibility, to be part of the progress and the dream that is always unfolding.

Tyson Miller, *Editor*

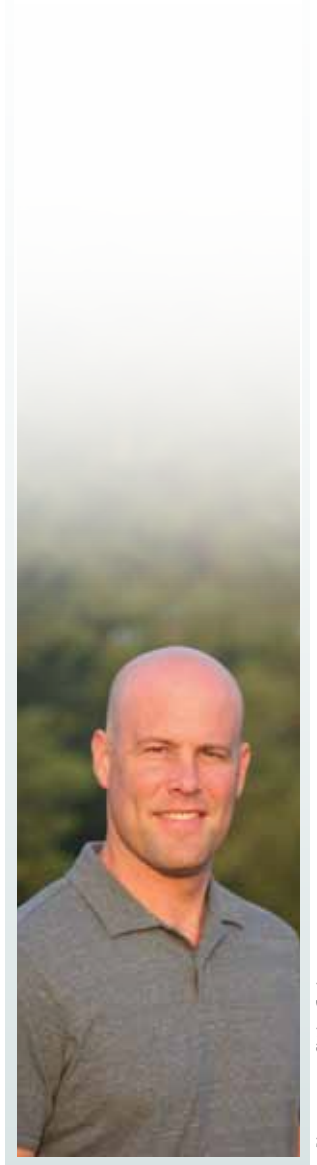


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