

Introduction



INTEGRITY, PURPOSE, AND EXCELLENCE

*There are really three parts to the creative process.
First there is inspiration, then there is the execution,
and finally there is the release.*

—EDDIE VAN HALEN

My name is Thomas Davis Jr., but most people call me Tommy. As far as a career is concerned, I've done many things. More than any other line of work, I've been in the construction business. I've been pretty good at it, too, achieving a substantial measure of success. Some might say I'm a perfect example of the American dream coming true.

Now in my early seventies, I continue to work because I love what I do. I'm not a workaholic, though. I've learned

to stop along the way, smell the roses, and enjoy the fruits of my labor. My wife, Buttercup, makes certain that I do.

Life is good for my wife and me. Now semiretired, we have a great time eating out, traveling, and spending quality time with our friends and family. We're very social, especially her.

Having achieved prosperity, we live in a lovely, well-appointed home in Boca Raton, Florida. Not all that far from Mar-a-Lago, our home is located where many of the most well-to-do and influential people in America live. With both of us in good health, we enjoy the benefits of having reached the American dream.

Although I worked long hours and many years to become successful, experiencing several reversals along the way, we now live in an era in which being diligent, hardworking, and steadfast in purpose are no longer considered praiseworthy. For many in the United States, striving to achieve excellence is no longer lauded. Instead, it is ridiculed.

In this upside-down way of thinking, being fruitful has become reviled. The qualities necessary to achieve success are no longer considered estimable. Instead, they are scorned in favor of elevating mediocrity. Younger generations, the Gen Xers, Millennials, and Gen Zers, have an entirely different interpretation of what successful businessmen like me are really like. Criticizing us, they consider us to be callous, self-seeking, greedy villains. They refuse to believe we have achieved the fruits of our success legitimately. Dismissing our hard work and the values we've internalized to reach our goals, they believe our success is based on "white privilege."

Because of this privilege, the narrative asserts, we don't deserve the wealth we've accumulated. According to this Progressive way of thinking, the deck of cards has been stacked in our favor and against others. According to this worldview, we're oppressors. They insist it has always been this way, going all the way back to America's founding. Holding us in contempt, they reason we have used others unfairly. Having done so, our wealth doesn't rightfully belong to us. This makes us the benefactors of ill-gotten gains.

Millions of young Americans fervently believe this perspective to be true. Rather than aspiring to emulate what people like me have accomplished, gaining the same level of prosperity for themselves through diligence, they repudiate every aspect of the American dream. They resent people like me for being successful. They do this without having the slightest clue about who we are or what we are really like. They just assume that we don't deserve what we have, that what we have accumulated has been gained illicitly.

Embittered by the perceived disparity in our favor, they are convinced the system is rigged for us and against them. Repudiating the Judeo-Christian work ethic in its entirety—which is based on a worldview that has been adhered to by nearly all Americans since the days of the Pilgrims and the Puritans—woke Progressives now consider being an affluent white male a shameful thing. Consequently, men like me are depicted as unworthy of respect.

Based on this viewpoint, there is nothing heroic about me or others like me. Analyzing this perspective, the

question needs to be asked: Is it possible that their world-view is accurate? Are we oppressors? Do their pronouncements have merit? Are we what they consider us to be, or are we something entirely different?

To begin with, even though the Progressive world-view is puzzling, it doesn't anger me that many think this way, especially naïve young people. It's what they have been taught.

The problem is, I don't believe that what woke Progressives espouse is accurate or true. It's certainly not in my case, and it's probably not for many others as well. Our stories don't fit the narrative they have created for us. Mine definitely doesn't. To understand who I am and what has made me successful, one must first know and understand my dad and my grandfather's stories. This requires taking a deeper look at two earlier generations.

Generational sin is discussed in the Bible. It's described in several places in the Pentateuch—the first five books of the Bible. There is a verse that says the sins of the fathers are passed down to the third and fourth generations (Exodus 20:5). If this is true, and I'm convinced that it is, then the inverse is also true. It would have to be. The blessings of the fathers are also passed down to the children, the grandchildren, the great-grandchildren, and to subsequent generations after that.

These multiplied generational blessings, which go back to the settlers, are what have made the United States the greatest, most prosperous nation in the history of the world. These blessings are what transpired at the macro level, benefitting the entire nation.

To know my story, which is a story at the micro level, you must understand that my blessings weren't material. They were the values I learned and internalized from being my father's son. I didn't start out as a wealthy man. When I began my career as a young man, I certainly wasn't financially set for life or even close to it. Despite not being wealthy, I was blessed to have developed many estimable character qualities. These qualities were bestowed on me by my father.

Often learning lessons the hard way, like so many do, significant positive character qualities were instilled in me through my father's diligent efforts. He poured into me what he had to give: not money, but valuable life lessons. He did this for my three sisters as well.

Although I didn't start out affluent, I was rich nonetheless. I possessed a sense of purpose, a sense of direction, and a highly defined awareness of what was right and what was wrong. I knew who I was and who I aspired to be. Becoming wealthy was a natural byproduct of all of this.

I was my father's son. More than anything, I wanted to make him proud of me. I still do, even though he has been gone for more than half a century. I continue to seek his approval posthumously.

The character qualities I gained from being the son of Thomas Davis Sr. are what positioned me to succeed, not being the beneficiary of inherited wealth. White privilege was never involved, as *An American Hero* will attest.

What my father had to give—integrity, purpose, and a righteous worldview—he gave, but the questions need to be asked: How did my father obtain these qualities?

Where did he get them? Where did they originate? Did he obtain them from his father, or could there be another, more interesting explanation?

I suspect you might know the answer. It's how he gained these qualities that makes the following story so interesting. It's why I have written *An American Hero*.

I am who I am because of who my father was.

More than any other thing, what follows is the story of an American hero from the Greatest Generation. Thomas Davis Sr. was unique, and so was his life.

This is where the story begins. It started on a hot summer day in August, shortly after the end of the Great War, in the deep woods of Hanging Dog Mountain, located in the Appalachians in rural North Carolina.

*I know whom I have believed, and I am
convinced that He is able to protect what I
have entrusted to Him until that day.*

(2 TIMOTHY 1:12)