



**PART-TIME**

**NATION**

**How America's Relationship with  
Work is Changing Forever**

*"This book hits the nail on the head and is a warning to  
all that the road to hell is paved with bad public policy"*

**ED WILLING**

*Dedicated to the one who sees who  
I was made to be, and expects nothing less  
And to my mother, who forced me to learn  
my grammar and practice my writing  
Yes, it took me 20 years to admit that.*

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# FOREWORD

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When Barack Obama chillingly promised to “fundamentally transform America,” few understood what he meant. Even those who feared his election the most could not have predicted what he had in store: to transform America from a productive society to a dependency society, to effectuate massive transfers of wealth, and to displace massive parts of the private sector while subsidizing others. His performance has been a tour de force, in all the wrong ways.

The core of this epic transformation involves the traditional role of work in American society. For hundreds of years, Americans have not only been the most creative, hard-working, and productive people in the world, but we have also taken enormous pride in that distinction. Hard work and self-sufficiency are central parts of the American identity. We also have been an aspirational society, not just in promise but reality. Every American has enjoyed the opportunity to prosper and achieve more than those who came before.

Until now.

The elixir of the age of Obama is getting something for nothing. It is about taking from the successful and giving to the less successful, whether they have tried to succeed or not. It is about imposing an anvil of debt upon future generations to finance the profligacy of the present. But the

elixir is snake oil. Even our brightest college graduates today have few prospects for successful careers.

Through a variety of government policies, most notably Obamacare, our economy is shifting away from full-time work toward multiple part-time jobs or a combination of work and welfare. Obamacare alone is estimated to be destroying two and a half million jobs, as companies move toward part-time employees in order to avoid crushing financial penalties, and workers gravitate toward part-time work in order to retain their healthcare benefits. Meanwhile, federal tax and regulatory policies treat wealth as a crime to be punished.

In this short but excellent book, Ed Willing is among the first to recognize this devastating phenomenon. He focuses on work and the work ethic as the centerpiece of a successful economy, and chronicles the deliberate and wholesale destruction of work and the work ethic by the Obama Administration. Most important, he presents a series of policy changes that could alter this dangerous course and restore the values of work and enterprise that have made our nation great.

To that list I would add immigration reform. Few people realize that the U.S. is the only nation on Earth whose immigration policy is based not on work but on family preferences. Two-thirds of the one million legal immigrants who enter our country each year come through a system of extended family preferences (called chain migration).

Meanwhile, because our population is aging and our schools are pumping out poorly educated graduates, we are exporting high-tech jobs to countries with more enlightened immigration policies. Returning to a work-based immigration policy would foster enormous economic growth.

As a constitutional lawyer who has spent much of his career challenging regulatory barriers to free enterprise, I know there has never been a shortage of government-imposed obstacles and favoritism. But now it is worse than ever. Whereas entrepreneurs traditionally have fought and surmounted those barriers, now the incentive is to simply give up. The safety net is so ubiquitous that it is becoming a noose. But as Margaret Thatcher sagely observed, “The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other peoples’ money.”

I hope this book will help jumpstart a conversation that we urgently need to have. Are we prepared to sacrifice work and the work ethic without a fight? Are we prepared to take a strong moral stand in favor of freedom and to aggressively fight for the policies necessary to sustain it? The answers we give to those questions today will determine whether our nation’s best days are before us or in the past.

# PREFACE

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America used to be great. Maybe we still are, but the great are becoming outnumbered by the uncaring: many believe the days of a household income are for the privileged few, and if you want to work full time with one income in the home, good luck.

Today's politicians celebrate an airbrushed unemployment rate below 8% and "economic growth" that barely paces the rate necessary to support population growth. Many are beginning to despise the success of others because it is increasingly difficult to achieve it on their own. And if they do, they are a despised 1%'er. Many others fail to understand that those who find success usually do so *despite bad public policy*, not because of special treatment. Countless politicians support this attitude, and it causes too many Americans to look down upon success as "unfair," as we strive for simple financial comfort like it's a luxury.

To make matters worse, many of us have stopped looking for work, because it is either too difficult, or no longer necessary. Since 2008, the percentage of Americans employed has dropped from 63% to just below 58%.<sup>1</sup>

In this book we will discuss the harsh realities we endured, ones that led the American people to a place of apathy and economic stagnation. We haven't seen this kind of indifference since the generation of President

Jimmy Carter, who used the term “malaise” to describe the national condition. But this is still unique. Not until today have we seen a permanent transition to a wide-out, dependent workforce, indifferent to the true reasons for their struggle. Our working classes today are tomorrow’s civic leaders, and yet they appear increasingly unsuited for true leadership.

Our expectations are different now: the college-option, where we work and how we work have all been redefined. Our daily work is no longer necessary for a happy and productive life. Or so we’re told. *Who we are* is divorced from *what we do* and *how we live*, even though these three are naturally connected.

I felt compelled to research this dilemma, and discover why my generation has become what it has; I wanted to believe that it is not merely laziness, but in my journey I have no desire to abdicate responsibility, either. Mine is a generation that will be the first to have virtually no need for work as a way of providing for our families. I wasn’t raised much differently than most of my peers, yet I have a higher sensitivity to creeping dependence, a characteristic I was taught from an early age. My upbringing was very ordinary and without privilege, and I had family in need of social services. But they hated it, and got off of it. Work ethic and a conservative philosophy still thrived in my family that I learned an ideal many today do not.

But many other factors have made me what I am today. I was born and raised in the industrious neighborhoods of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and came of age with the pioneer spirit found in the beautiful hills of Portland, Oregon. I attended a Christian college in Oregon, and in 2001, upon graduation, I started what would prove to be the first of several business adventures (some say “flops”). From these, I gained a lot of experience, all

while dabbling in local and national politics. I wrote, spoke, knocked on doors and did what I could to learn how governments, and people operate.

I realized the flaws in people transfer to the governments they run, and I started to talk about it. I discovered my love for writing at this time, and started a blog in 2003 on issues of faith, politics and business. In 2004, I moved back to Wisconsin and started a family. My greatest learning experiences have included both heartbreak and failure, personally and professionally, but the greatest personal development has come through fatherhood and being a business owner with employees.

My experiences have made me more sensitive both to people's needs and their predispositions. I grew tired of nothing moving in the direction I hoped it would, and always watching the world I dreamed of moving further from reality.

I decided to ramp it up. There was no dramatic moment to write about, or epiphany upon which I could credit my conversion to public activism. But I had reached an end, and determined to do my part to make the world different, better, stronger. I have no illusions of nobility, only duty. We all do. My vision is that I am one of millions doing the same in their world.

I wanted to return my community to its roots, believing that the nation eventually reflects its local communities. I sought out to restore the roots the Founders of America envisioned would flourish when they assembled a great framework, informed by history and proven by fire for over 100 years before it became diluted. I challenged myself to learn and apply lessons from American history at a new level, began to reach out to others who thought the same way, or at least seemed open to change. As I helped to recruit people for local offices – I became involved myself in 2012,

running for a local position myself. I believe in practicing what we believe, no matter how small the role may seem. I have since run again and won a seat on the local village board.

Employing up to 20 people at a time has allowed me to see how good leadership can make a difference, and a lack of leadership can affect not just the employees, but how they live their lives. I deepened my knowledge about our nation's Founders, their philosophy and developed a new appreciation for the miracle of this great experiment too many take for granted. There is a connection to them, because their vision on a general basis succeeded only upon the basis of a shared philosophy locally.

This led me to open up to my community and teach about what I learned. If I couldn't get the schools to teach the Constitution the way the Founders intended it, I would take the Constitution, and the reasoning behind it to them. Some friends and I started a non-profit dedicated to this purpose, FoundersIntent.org, and we have made great progress so far. I have had the pleasure of teaching in public schools and other venues, future leaders as young as 8 years old, and even civic leaders looking to remind themselves what made us great.

Today I am a small business owner, political activist, blogger and teacher and now, with this book, a published author. But most importantly, I am a father. And that has everything to do with what I believe in politics and economics. Yes, your perspective changes. The greatest lesson parenting has taught me is that everything I want to see come to fruition in the world means less if it's not for the future of that person I helped bring into this world.

One of the most tragic effects of government dependency is that of a parent losing their purpose in the life of his or her child. Once you alter that natural purpose – or center – many parents lose all instinct to achieve a wise, balanced, productive life. Government takes the place of provider, protector, teacher; safety nets take the place of real-life motivations. One’s natural desire for success becomes greed; the instinct to be a provider for those around you is corrupted by “benefits” given freely. A God-given need for work becomes scheming to get ahead on someone else’s labor; the sense for safety and protection becomes a demand for new “rights” and “privileges” that never before existed. Human nature breeds this entitlement mentality.

Deep in these pages we will see how politicians on both sides of the aisle have abandoned the tested principles of Natural Law for the known perils of human instinct, resulting in a fundamental change in how we relate to our chosen work, and our government. A philosophical religion has taken over, and it is not the one we were founded upon.

In his 1850 book, “The Law,” Economist and Political Theorist Frederic Bastiat wrote:

*We hold from God the gift which includes all others. This gift is **life** – physical, intellectual and moral life. But [because] life cannot maintain itself alone, the Creator of life has entrusted us with the responsibility of preserving, developing, and perfecting it. In order that we may accomplish this, He has provided us with a collection of marvelous **faculties**. By the application of our faculties to these natural resources we convert them into products, and use them... **Life, faculties, production** – in other words, individuality, liberty, property – this is man. And in spite of the*

*cunning of artful political leaders, these three gifts from God precede all human legislation, and are superior to it.*<sup>2</sup>

We have perverted the natural order of things for the sake of temporary, *compelled compassion*. And instead of the desired results, we have seen the opposite... we are faced with higher living expenses, less access to basic services, lower quality of everything government touches and of course, greater stress – and still not reaching the originally stated goal, eliminating poverty and need.

What should be a simple concept – prosperity – has become a false hope. The days of working as a teenager and learning the fundamental principles of hard work and persistence – which, for many culminates in a paid-for college education and a skilled job after college – are long gone.

We now regulate low wage jobs out of reach from teens. We make college too expensive; many students work only to play, and mount massive debt with federal subsidies. And now we have forced companies to provide crippling benefits or face steep fines. We no longer expect to work to live, but rather live to work, and barely get by, unless we get lucky. Naturally, we've now become dependent upon governments to fill the gap and assure our happiness, in a way never seen before: the relationship between our labor and us is different. The truth is, the work of our hands and minds provides far more than monetary reward. The dilution of it robs us of far more than financial independence.

As we've descended into an entitlement mentality, the government has altered our way of thinking about this relationship. The internal motivation of our workforce and expectations the American people have gradually changed because of bad public policy. Hiring and maintaining

employees has changed from an asset for companies to a liability, due to thousands of laws and subjective rules. The government has made those job creators change the way they think about this relationship too, by altering the natural rules of the free market.

Because of Progressivism, we have now become a Part-Time Nation, both economically and psychologically. We are not the first nation to do so, but we don't have to be the latest. Time is running short to make the changes necessary to reverse this process. Like a metastasized cancer in our culture, Progressivism is eating away at our learned, cultural principles 24/7, even when we may not be paying attention. So if we are not moving forward, we are losing ground. This book is my step forward, and your embrace of its message is our stake in the ground.

Apathy is our greatest enemy and it exists within us. The evidence of it can be seen in our absurd but persistent trust of those who deceived us the last several decades. As a result of the initial betrayal, cynicism set in. That cynicism paralyzed us from taking risks, which required a belief in others and ourselves. This only further cemented our apathy, for a new generation. We must act before this generation becomes our next crop of leadership. And the battle will be fierce, both in Washington and here at home.

But we can succeed, and we will if this message gets out. Raise the standard! We must expect more from ourselves, our culture and yes, ESPECIALLY our youth! Insist on doing the hard things that make us better, and join me as we embrace hope, which includes the harshness of life, in the open, where changing our situation means we must embrace those tried-and-true principles that make us stronger. Yes, they make us a bigger target, too.

Only when we make this shift to passionate and public activism will we have the maturity to move upward, culturally and otherwise, the way we were intended to by nature's God. We have a great opportunity, living in a nation such as ours and at a time such as this. To sit back and wait for the other foot to drop is neither intelligent nor patriotic. Screaming rhetoric also ignores reality, and while soldiers fight the war, generals must win it, with reason, education and strong leadership. We are by nature a visceral people, keenly aware of when we're being played and how to handle adversity. So let's deal. No tap outs allowed.

*Part-Time Nation* finishes with a checklist of common sense reforms that are both CONSTITUTIONAL and EFFECTIVE, with quotes from business, academic and government leaders who understand the problem, actually believe it should be dealt with, and have common sense solutions we can support. Fortunately, our culture still bears extreme prejudice toward control and loss of freedom. Even so-called "liberals." This is a good thing. So, in this book you will learn how we can harmonize that impulse with actual policy that moves us forward, and restores faith in the American Dream. A dream I believe is far more down to earth and achievable than most: the ability to become what you want through hard work. So let's roll up our sleeves and see what we can do about it.

# CHAPTER ONE

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## AMERICA'S "ORIGINAL SIN" AND THE FALL OF ADAM (SMITH)

*It would be impossible, therefore, to introduce into society a greater change and a greater evil than this — the conversion of the law into an instrument of plunder.*

- Frederic Bastiat

*It was the best of times.* Unemployment was near 4%<sup>3</sup>, the American workforce was growing by thousands each day. Everyone could afford to buy a home and our foremost economic concern as a country was supplying enough labor to fulfill demand<sup>4</sup>. It was the mid-00's and most people felt happy.

I would be remiss to deny that "the best of times" may also have been *the worst* for some. Wall Street hedged both sides of the aisle. Politics was, well, politics. The Constitution was reduced to a mere guide for fear-driven national security policy. The President encouraged people to engage a housing industry that acted more like a stock market than a modest investment vehicle. Underneath all the glamor, good times, spiking 401Ks and full employment lived a deep-seated fear. Yes, we all felt it. *Greed has its price.*

We are now becoming a part-time nation, with a larger percentage of the nation not working than at any time in the industrialized age. Millions are discouraged, and nearly every job created in the last five years has been part-time, a dramatic historical shift. Where did it begin?

Before 2008, leaders on BOTH sides of the aisle “abandoned free market principles to save the free market system.”<sup>5</sup> Those were the words of our President, rationalizing why he made such a dramatic policy shift under financial pressure. Perhaps it was less of a shift, and more of an admission. With the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008,<sup>6</sup> President Bush signed away \$700 billion in public money (that is, debt) and set the table for similarly audacious acts, and continuation of others. We heard from our leaders that capitalism failed us.

Many have believed it.

Skip forward a year to 2009. The auto industry received a \$24.9 billion bailout from the EESA (Emergency Economic Stabilization Act) money. Everyone else who donated to a supporting politician received parts of an additional \$787 billion with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 under President Obama.

Are you using a calculator yet?

This determined new President and a compliant Congress set out to alter the American economy in a way not seen since the mid 1930's. Mr. Obama promised to “fundamentally transform America” through already-failed policies tried under past presidents and empires. Those empires were built upon grand promises, but faded for the next empire because of excess and decay.

The age of Milton Friedman and the Chicago School of Economics had come to a close.

I do not believe most liberals are “evil” or “Marxist,” per se. The road to hell is simply paved with good intentions that devolve into bad public policy. Then the failures that usually result solicit the need for more laws to fix what the previous laws failed to do. In 2009, dozens of new agencies and enforcement departments came raining down on a market that needed to correct itself naturally. In the summer of that year the American people felt tired and shell-shocked. Millions had lost their jobs since the contraction, and the media parlayed the unemployment drama into something cataclysmic.

On the advice of Rahm Emanuel’s “never let a crisis go to waste,” a blue Congress took advantage of this fatigue to pass health care reform by unconventional means. Financial industry reforms followed after that. Then in 2012 as the crown jewel of the Progressive agenda, Congress allowed income tax rates to increase on the richest Americans.

Atlas didn't merely shrug, he shuddered. And for good reason.

The pillars of a community don't need appeasement. They persevere, find a way and rise above obstacles despite the cards stacked against them. They prune the dead weight, adjust to changing factors and improve their products, systems or pricing to become more competitive. These are the characteristics of a free market and the values that breed success. These also bring the consumer a net benefit through improved quality and increased access through better pricing.

But in today's economy, large corporations sit on billions of dollars in assets and fattening profits, while continuing an anemic hiring policy with