

## REMEMBER LEE IACOCCA

Remember Lee Iacocca, the man who rescued Chrysler Corporation the first time from its death throes. He is now 82 years old and has a new book entitled: "Where have All the Leaders Gone?" Lee Iacocca says:

Am I the only person in this country who is fed up with what is happening? Where the hell is our outrage? We should be screaming bloody murder? We have got a gang of clueless bozos steering our ship of state right over a cliff, we have got corporate gangsters stealing us blind, and we cannot even clean up after a hurricane much less build a hybrid automobile. But instead of getting mad, everyone sits around and nods their heads when the politicians say: 'Stay the course'.

Stay the course?? You have got to be kidding. This is America, not the damned Titanic. I will give you a sound bite: "THROW THE BUMS OUT."

You might think I am getting senile, that I have gone off my rocker, and maybe I have. But someone has to speak up. I hardly recognize this country anymore.

The most famous business leaders are not the innovators but the guys in handcuffs. While we are fiddling in Iraq, the Middle East is burning and nobody seems to know what to do. And the press is waving poms poms instead of asking hard questions. That is not the promise of the America my parents and your parents traveled across the ocean for. I have had enough. How about you?? I will go a step further. You cannot call yourself a patriot if you are not outraged. This is a fight I am ready and willing to have. The biggest "C" is CRISIS.

Leaders are made, not born. Leadership is forged in times of crises. It is easy to sit there with your feet up on the desk and talk theory. Or send someone else's kids off to war when you have never seen a battlefield yourself. It is another thing to lead when your world comes tumbling down.

On September 11, 2001, we needed a strong leader more than any other time in our history. We needed a steady hand to guide us out of the ashes. A hell of a mess, so here is where we stand. We are immersed in a bloody war with no plan for winning and no plan for leaving. We are running the biggest deficits in the history of this country.

We are losing the manufacturing edge to Asia, while our once-great companies are getting slaughtered by health care costs. Gas prices are skyrocketing, and nobody in power has a coherent energy policy. Our schools are in trouble. Our borders are like sieves. The middle class is being squeezed every which way. These are times that cry out for leadership. But when you look around, you have got to ask: 'Where have all the leaders gone?' Where are the curious, creative communicators? Where are the people of character, courage, conviction, omnipotence, and common sense?

I may be a sucker for alliteration, but I think you get the point. Name me a leader who has a better idea for homeland security than making us take off our shoes in airports and throw away our shampoo? We have spent billions of dollars building a huge new bureaucracy and all we know how to do is react to things that have already happened.

Name me a leader who emerged from the crisis of Hurricane Katrina?? Congress has yet to spend a single day evaluating the response to the hurricane or demanding accountability for the decisions that were made in the crucial hours after the storm. Everyone is hunkering down, fingers crossed, hoping it does not happen again. Now, that is just crazy. Storms happen. Deal with it. Make a plan. Figure out what you are going to do the next time.

Name me an industry leader who is thinking creatively about how we can restore our competitive edge in manufacturing?? Who would have believed that there could ever be a time when “the Big Three” referred to Japanese car companies?? How did this happen, and more importantly, what are we going to do about it?

Name me a government leader who can articulate a plan for paying down the debt or solving the energy crisis or managing the health care problem?? The silence is deafening. But these are the crises that are eating away at our country and milking the middle class dry.

I have news for the gang in Congress. We did not elect you to sit on your asses and do nothing and remain silent while our democracy is being hijacked and our greatness is being replaced with mediocrity. What is everybody so afraid of?? That some bonehead on CNN will call them a name?? Give me a break!! Why don't you guys show some spine for a change?

Had enough?? Hey, I am not trying to be the voice of gloom and doom here. I am trying to light a fire. I am speaking out because I have hope. I believe in America. In my lifetime, I have had the privilege of living through some of America's greatest moments. I have also experienced some of our worst crises: The Great Depression, World War II, the Korean War, the Kennedy Assassination, the Vietnam War, the 1970 oil crisis and the struggles of recent years culminating with 9/11.

If I have learned one thing, it is this: You do not get anywhere by standing on the sidelines waiting for somebody else to take action.

Whether it is building a better car or building a better future for our children, we all have a role to play. That is the challenge I am raising in this book. It is a “Call to Action” for people who, like me, believe in America. It is not too late but it is getting pretty close. So, let's shake off the crap and go to work. Let's tell them all we have had enough.

Make your own contribution by sending this everyone you know and care about. It is our country and it is our future and our children's future that is at stake.