

Rebuild the Dream

Van Jones

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"Van Jones is one of his generation's most eloquent spokespeople about social justice."—Al Gore, *Rolling Stone*

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Van Jones

Former Special Advisor to the Obama White House



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Van Jones : Rebuild the Dream before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rebuild the Dream:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Van Jones speaks sense to the disappearing American Dream. By tomp55555 Van Jones, the controversial and colorful character most notable for his ascension into a position of prominence within the early Obama Administration, has something to tell us in this book and we, as concerned American citizens, should listen. In the earlier parts of the book, Jones just how and why the ideal that is the American Dream has died and is on life support from many others. Make NO mistake about it, Jones exclaims, the American

Dream, roughly defined as a decent education, home ownership and upward mobility in our society has, indeed, perished. The rules of the game have changed and DON'T include the struggling and disappearing Middle and lower classes. Statistics abound to fortify his strong case and, although stats are often manipulated to prove one's view, the end results are clear. Widespread unemployment well above the national figure of 8% and, realistically, approaching 15% has had its effect as industries and, the jobs within, have been completely outsourced entirely. Income inequality, as we've heard from many sources, is at its widest gulf since the Great Depression. Despite this plethora of doom and gloom, Jones firmly believes that we, as Americans, have within our grasp, the means to extricate ourselves from this economic abyss. We can't do this as we have, though, by placing too much trust and faith in the almighty powers of the free enterprise system, Jones attests. Regulation and responsible ARE necessary despite what libertarians and anti-government types trumpet. We need an internal movement, a grassroots expansion of the Occupy movement well-directed and orchestrated. The corporatists have succeeded in wresting government's function from We the People are we NEED to get it back. But it won't be easy. Nothing worthwhile is. In one notable section, Jones speaks about cheap patriots vs. deep patriots. Cheap patriots are those who profess allegiance and wave the flag to be conspicuously viewed by others while setting up offshore tax havens bilking their government and their nation from billions of tax receipts. Many of them are also "chicken hawks", heaping mountains of praise upon those who served in wars where, of course, they were able to sidestep due to privilege and bloodlines. Deep patriots are many of those from the less-privileged classes who actually DID serve, pay their full tax share and love their country by questioning authority for the good of many. Jones's book is a call to action and not outside reality. In fact, he insists, it needs to happen to recapture our government's function, restore it to the people and slowly, by steadily, Rebuild the Dream before it becomes a quaint memory. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The call to span our political abyss By Stephen G By now we have loads of reviews about Van Jones' newest book, and not surprisingly they tend to line up neatly with the "side" of the polarized US political culture with which one stands. Since leaving the White House over the "distractions" caused by Glenn Beck's strange accusations, Jones has sought to constitute a movement to "rebuild the dream" by prioritizing policies and action to address current social and economic situation in which the US finds itself. Notable here is the agenda, established in Jones' previous book, to address our energy system. Reliant as it is on fossil fuels, multinational corporations, heavy capital investments, and foreign countries, Jones is well-known for advocating a more carbon-neutral system that requires public as well as private investment, relies on US ingenuity, involves greater decentralization, avoids offshoring of jobs, and seeks to offset longstanding US alliances with dictatorships in countries with oil. If you buy independent analyses of all this, the proposal is important if insufficient; but if you still buy the polarized discourse out there, then you either love this stuff because it's the answer to several major problems in the US, or you hate it because it threatens the US way of life, which like fossil fuels will of course last forever. Jones tries hard to navigate all this, arguing strenuously that polarization has to be overcome and policy proposals have to serve the 100%, not the 1% as conservatives are routinely accused of favoring, or some fragment of the other 99% as the fragments of the left favor. This book provides a useful analysis of the social movements behind the rise of Obama, and especially social movements of various stripes since the 2008 election. More could be said about all of this, but Jones provides one of the few analyses out there of both the Tea Party and Occupy/the 99%. Not surprisingly, Jones criticizes the Tea Party and its "cheap patriots" for offering proposals that in practice will not benefit many people and thus weaken the country. But to his credit, he recognizes that the Tea Party has an electoral agenda and has been very effective at advancing toward its goals insofar as its candidates have won elections and it has colonized the Republican party. On the other hand, Jones organizes a large portion of the book around the logic of Occupy, which suggests favoritism, but Jones also acknowledges that Occupy has explicitly disdained and avoided electoral politics, seeking deeper and more fundamental change. How that will play out, and whether it will have a chance if the Tea Party continues to get its candidates elected, remains to be seen. Jones also provides some useful analysis via Grid Theory to make the point that in politics, having stories that yank our emotions matter, in addition to clear policy proposals. As critics of this book have noted, this point is itself not new. Nonetheless, it is especially important in the current political moment, given the irrational hysterics on Fox News and right-wing blogs about the Obama Administration, as contrasted with the administration's dry and technical responses to the economic crisis. Similarly, the logical fallacies of the Tea Party haven't blunted the impacts of their effective use of info-bites, images and stories; interestingly, Occupy has sought to combine hard facts with their own turns of phrase, images and stories. Despite these similarities, Jones recognizes, the impact of the first is so far much more evident than that of the second. For me the most important passage in the book is on pp. 233-235. Here, Jones makes the case for why Occupy/the 99% needs to define itself and practice as "the 99% for the 100%". Jones draws crucial distinctions here. It is not wealth per se that is the problem, it is cheating to get it and pretending that the system is a meritocracy. A market system is vital, but becomes dangerous when it is rigged and yet our elected representatives pretend it is not. And the 1% per se is not the problem, but rather a system that protects the 1% when they risk and lose and expect others to bail them out. These points build bridges among elements of ostensibly adversarial politics by bringing together traditional conservative values such as personal accountability with liberal values like equal treatment. If somebody can take that ball and carry it, then there is hope. Jones includes not a little self-promotion in this book, but

he also makes clear that this is not his ball to carry; it will require a movement, and that sentiment is consistent with the logic of advocating for the 100% of 0 people found the following review helpful. Practical ways to RebuildBy CatVan Jones has enlightened me on several concrete ways to change the direction of this country. As with our forefathers and foremothers knew all so well that you have to fight collectively for fairness. He describes the difference between deep patriotism and cheap patriotism - it's something easy to spot in others if you know what to look for. He spends time writing about President Obama's mistakes. What President doesn't make mistakes? But he uses Obama's examples to help forge a way to making the people's voice heard. He writes about strategy that groups can take to change America for the better. Overall - a educational book.

In Rebuild the Dream, green economy pioneer Van Jones reflects on his journey from grassroots outsider to White House insider. For the first time, he shares intimate details of his time in government ndash; and reveals why he chose to resign his post as a special advisor to the Obama White House.Jones puts his hard-won lessons to good use, proposing a powerful game plan to restore hope, fix our democracy and renew the American Dream.

ldquo;Van Jones has made it his lifersquo;s work to speak truth to powerrdquo;