



## See Your Future, Be Your Future

In one of the many memorable lines from the comedy classic *Caddyshack*, Chevy Chase's character instructs his caddy, "Danny, see your future, be your future."

Ironically this quote, from my high school days, became one of the most important principles in my life, an affirmation I still live by today.

It inspired me to start my own business, seek out my wife and soulmate, and purchase my dream log home in the woods of the Poconos and, on a micro level, to write this column. It has been said that we are the sum of all of our thoughts and, consequently, all of our successes start in our imaginations.

This meme also guided the hand of Thomas Jefferson when he wrote The Declaration of Independence. It is in the fabric and ink of our Constitution. It is in the inspirational words of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. It can be found in FDR's Four Freedoms. And it can be heard in JFK's voice when he said, "We choose to go to the moon."

***See your future; be your future*** is the underlying theme in every successful VC backed company. It can be found in every investment banking pitchbook. It is in the private placement memoranda of every PE and VC firm looking to raise investment capital. It drives the corporate culture of firms like Apple, Google, Cisco, Microsoft and GE as they strive to create a better world. It lives in the hearts and minds of every NBA champion and World Cup soccer player.

It also arises from the choices we make every day. From the cars we choose to drive to every plastic bottle of water we mindlessly drink and discard each day. From the cheap food we allow our government to subsidize to the resulting obesity epidemic crushing our healthcare system and our national spirit. And it is in the silly need to have big screen TV's in every bar, bank, Starbucks and every grocery store in the nation. (When I grew up, we had one black & white TV that we had to turn off when we were not watching it, electricity was expensive my father reminded me as he shouted, "Do you pay the electric bill?") These daily choices shape our future.

Our future will also be determined by our choice of energy. It is the unspoken reason for the ongoing wars in the Middle East and our dependence on oil means transferring billions of dollars to nations whose interests are at odds with our democratic ideals. It is buried with the dead Massey coal miners of West Virginia. It is in the acid that is destroying our oceans. It is in the torrential rains and record snowfalls that seem to drown and bury one American city after another. It is in the historic and relentless wildfires that rage across the globe. And it is in the oil that is destroying the beautiful Gulf of Mexico.

This week, my wife and I had an opportunity to preview a groundbreaking HBO documentary called *Gasland*. This powerful 2010 Sundance Film Festival award winner informs us of the 50,000 gas wells planned for upstate New York and Northeastern Pennsylvania. It explains how a new drilling technique called hydraulic fracturing (developed by Halliburton) is going to be used to fracture the land and pump tens of millions of gallons of water into the ground to extract natural gas. The water the gas companies plan to use is from the Delaware River water basin. The same watershed that provides clean drinking water for the 17 million people who live in NYC, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Shockingly these wells and the contaminated water they will return to the watershed will not be regulated by the Clean Water Act or the Safe Drinking Water Act. Actually, there will be almost no regulation or environmental oversight, but given what BP was allowed to do in the Gulf, who should be surprised?

I recommend you watch *Gasland* which premieres on HBO this Monday June 21st at 9:00 PM, to learn more about what the future holds for the watershed and the environment in the NY Tristate area, You can also view the trailer now at [www.gaslandthemovie.com](http://www.gaslandthemovie.com) and, in keeping with the Caddyshack theme, there is a Carl Spackler look alike (aka Bill Murray) who holds a lighter under his water faucet to demonstrate how much natural gas has contaminated his well and almost sets himself and his house on fire. A Cinderella story it is not.

So, the question is: What future do we want as we look forward to Independence Day? Do we want an economy powered by energy that is clean, safe, secure and stable? Do we want to be a leader in creating the energy technology jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? Do we want the VC, PE and banking jobs that will help create this future? Do we want clean air to breathe? Do we want clean water to drink? Do we want a stable climate? Are we willing, to see our future to become our future?

If we are, then we need to demand our leaders pass energy legislation now that includes either a cap and trade or an outright carbon tax. Yes, I said it, a tax. Don't freak out. Taxes have provided for our military, the interstate highway system, public schools, public libraries, the space program (and its eventual byproduct, the Internet), and the airports to name just a few of the benefits we all enjoy each and every day.

When used correctly, taxes do work, and in this case, a carbon tax is the only way we can create a level playing field for the private investment community to create competitive clean and renewable technologies. A carbon tax will allow electric cars, solar panels, batteries, wind turbines and energy efficient software to become cost competitive and will allow them to improve and rapidly become the industry standard. It would also inspire conserving the FINITE fossil fuels we are currently using at an unsustainable rate.

The money collected from the tax could be used to offset the deficit, rebuild our crumbling infrastructure and assist lower income people who would have difficulty with higher energy prices.

We have a choice; don't let our future be created by someone else.

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