



# The crumbling American dream: Atlas Shrugged shows how to change course

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**SAN ANTONIO, Texas, October 16** — In America today there is an overwhelming sense of hopelessness for the future. The American dream is slowly dying because of the gradual centralization of power in the federal government and the related erosion of freedoms and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution.

Politicians will never seriously consider the only real solution to the problem, because with the growth of the government comes the expansion of power for politicians in both parties; the vast majority of politicians are in politics for their own personal benefit.

Shrinking the authority of the government by returning to a true free-market system is the only way to turn around this failed progressive dystopia that President Obama, President Bush and other progressives have created.

A passage in Ayn Rand's 1957 book *Atlas Shrugged*, referred to as "Francisco's Money Speech," completely and directly addresses the causes of our current crisis, the way to fix it, and the consequences if we do not act to fix it. If the ruling class in this country does not understand and implement these ideas, the American dream will never be revived.

Two recent indicators quantify the extreme danger that America is in and the degree to which Americans have lost confidence in our economy, political system and the country in general.

First, an annual study which ranks every country based on how free their economies are was [released on Monday by the CATO Institute](#). America is twelfth on the list; as recently as in 2000, America ranked second. This study reflects the view by many Americans that rather than respecting the free market economy and the Jeffersonian constitutional republic that made America the most successful country that has ever existed, our leaders have decided to constantly interfere in the economy, resulting in greater and greater restriction of individual opportunity.

Secondly, an [August 2014 poll](#) released by the Washington Post showed that Americans are very pessimistic about the future of the country. According to the Post, "When asked if 'life for our

children's generation will be better than it has been for us,' fully 76 percent said they do not have such confidence. Only 21 percent did. That was the worst ever recorded in the poll; in 2001, 49 percent were confident and 43 percent not."

Some people, and particularly the left-wing media, seem completely perplexed as to why America as the "land of opportunity" has almost completely disappeared, while upward mobility on the social ladder has significantly decreased. These same people continuously bemoan the one thing that made America so successful until our leaders chose to abandon it: free-market capitalism.

Prior to America and the invention of free-market capitalism, the way a society increased its wealth was through conquest of other societies followed by the looting of their treasuries. Then the tyrannical leader, be it a monarch, a warlord or a federal bureau would control the production and distribution of services and goods to the citizens. Citizens were usually relegated to the position in society they were born into. Everything was done by force or by threat of force, and soul-crushing complacency permeated the entire society due to the lack of opportunity to pursue individual happiness.

America represented a drastically new development in the world. What made America different from every other country that ever existed was not the people, but an idea. That idea is that no man is above the law, and that equal opportunity is afforded to every American citizen to pursue his or her own happiness and freedom by choosing the way they want to make a living, with as little interference and coercion from the government and other citizens as possible.

Our country's founding documents recognize the natural rights granted to every person by his or her creator, while directly and greatly restricting the authority of the ruling class to impress their will on the entire society by trampling on these rights. This resulted in 200 years of the greatest prosperity and growth ever experienced by the world. This "American idea" morphed into what has become known as the American dream. It is the reason America was known as the land of opportunity.

At one point in his speech from *Atlas Shrugged*, Mr. D'Anconia eloquently describes how free market capitalism comports so well with human nature which resulted in such great success before our politicians decided government knows best: "And when men live by trade—with reason, not force, as their final arbiter—it is the best product that wins, the best performance, the man of best judgment and highest ability—and the degree of a man's productiveness is the degree of his reward."

America is facing close to \$18 trillion in debt, which Obama has promised to increase to over 20 trillion before he is out of office. By every quantitative measure, Obama's economy is still failing.

D'Anconia also describes how we can know that the American dream may never be revived, due to destructive interference by government in the market: "Money is the barometer of a society's virtue. When you see that trading is done, not by consent, but by compulsion—when you see that in order to produce, you need to obtain permission from men who produce nothing—when you

see that money is flowing to those who deal, not in goods, but in favors—when you see that men get richer by graft and by pull than by work, and your laws don't protect you against them, but protect them against you—when you see corruption being rewarded and honesty becoming a self-sacrifice—you may know that your society is doomed. Money is so noble a medium that it does not compete with guns and it does not make terms with brutality. It will not permit a country to survive as half-property, half-loot.”

Only a full and complete return to free-market capitalism will save us now or we all may find ourselves telling stories to our grandchildren about when America used to be free.

The point made by D'Anconia at the end of his speech should send shivers down the spine of any American who has honestly evaluated the situation the government has left our society in: “Until and unless you discover that money is the root of all good, you ask for your own destruction. When money ceases to be the tool by which men deal with one another, then men become the tools of men. Blood, whips and guns—or dollars. Take your choice—there is no other—and your time is running out.”