

Foreword

"For those serious about making the most out of life, Solid Ground will be on the list of consequential books that help you do just that."

Doug Ducey

Around ten years ago, I met Tom Lewis through an organization of which we were both members-the Young Presidents' Organization. YPO brings chief executives together to share best practices and seek out advice on everything from business to personal matters.

Even among this group of distinguished and accomplished leaders, Tom stood out. By the time I met him, already Tom had achieved immense success through his business, T.W. Lewis Company, which had been recognized nationally for the company's commitment to quality and customer service in the homebuilding business. But there was more.

What really differentiated Tom had nothing to do with business. Even with the demands of his career, Tom dedicated significant time to community organizations. He took an active interest in issues of local and national importance. And it was clear he had his priorities straight; he and his wife, Jan, had been married nearly forty years and raised three accomplished young men.

Tom's success was not by accident, and as our friendship grew over the years, my appreciation for his values-focused approach to life grew with it.

For many people, it's easy to see how life's unceasing demands and complications can cloud the things that really matter. Sometimes having a guide to point you in the right direction is all it takes.

That's where Tom's book comes in.

In Solid Ground, Tom offers a blueprint for living a good and meaningful life, while tackling the myths that too often lead to disappointment and regret-myths like 'happiness comes simply from doing what you love' or 'success is only for the lucky.'

Tom's lessons don't fit into 260 characters. And you won't find them on Instagram, written in the sky against a glowing sunset. Instead, his lessons stem from something deeper and more real-hard-earned experience.

Tom was born into a middle-class family from eastern Kentucky. He's experienced life's high points and many of its lows.

He's had jobs that were successful and some that were not, but each required grit and hard work. He built a business from scratch to peak success, while weathering the turbulent years of the Great Recession.

Tom fought cancer and beat it, only to have it come back years later in a more aggressive form-and he beat it again.

As a successful entrepreneur, Tom shares his knowledge, experience, and wisdom, making *Solid Ground* a must-read for any young person looking to enter any business. But his book isn't about simply making money. That topic has more than its share of titles, most of them not worth the paper they're printed on.

Instead, Tom offers something more meaningful-the building blocks that lead to a truly fulfilling and purposeful life.

Solid Ground couldn't come at a better time. Studies show that Americans are increasingly less happy and more anxious about life. For young people, the statistics are striking. Over half of workers under the age of twenty-three report feeling anxious or nervous due to stress. Nearly one out of every three millennials feels lonely.

Tom cuts through the vanity and superficial clutter that too often cloud people's perspectives. He focuses on the values that aren't measured in dollars and cents-values such as integrity, hard work, honesty, discipline, persistence, and drive.

Through *Solid Ground*, you will find new appreciation for the truisms you've been told all your life-ones that show there are no shortcuts in life and remind you that it's not how many times you fall, but how many times you get back up.

These are the things that build character, the most important currency there is.

Many people have shared their prescriptions for a successful life, but few have done it with the insight, honesty, and completeness that Tom offers in *Solid Ground*.

His insights are grounded in truth. And they're the insights upon which I've relied to start my family, build my business, and serve the people of the state I love.

For example, Tom's emphasis on setting specific goals and measuring progress is one that businesses, organizations, and governments across the country-including Arizona-have adopted to achieve real results. In fact, through such an approach, Arizona has been able to eliminate inefficiencies, improve services for our customers, and save taxpayers dollars. And we've done it not through Hail Mary passes, but inch by inch, on the ground and in the trenches, one improvement at a time.

So whether you're a CEO looking for the next challenge or a student unsure about your next step, Tom's timeless wisdom offers a guiding hand. For those serious about making the most out of life, Solid Ground will be on the list of consequential books that help you do just that.

Doug Ducey
Governor, State of Arizona