

## ABOUT SOCIETY

**Journo:** *what do you love the most about America?*

**D.L.:** its people. I've come across a lot of people from all walks of life and all corners of the world. We are all different yet we are all the same. We all share the same dream: to feel loved and to be respected.

**Journo:** *what do you see as the challenges for America?*

**D.L.:** America is the lucky country and will always be the lucky country. Luck comes from both nature and nurturing. Our land is gifted by nature and our nation is nurtured by generations of hard working Americans.

But there are many challenges ahead. We live in a global village and there is a scarcity of economic resources. It's a catch phrase I learned in economics. Global competition is spreading and our nation must remain competitive if we are to maintain the high standard of living we have been used to.

**Journo:** *are we losing that competitiveness?*

**D.L.:** yes and no, America is blessed with technological advancement and leadership, as well as large primary export sectors. Our agriculture exports is in a positive trade balance and is a growing sector with 2021 trade data showing US farm and food products exports worth \$177 billion. However, our mineral resources sector productions are slowing down for a number of reasons resulting in decreasing exports of metals.

The main issue facing our economy is the manufacturing sector. Despite being the second largest manufacturing country, we are losing global dominance. The sector is shrinking and becoming less competitive. Factories and mills are closing down in your home town. Over the past 50 years, the manufacturing share of the GDP in US has shrunk from 27% to 12%. Between 2000 to 2010, US lost a third of its manufacturing jobs (nearly 6 million jobs). Even in advanced technology products, we were in a trade deficit of \$110 billion in 2017.

The middle class is slowly drifting on the crest of economic challenges. Dr. Love is not being pessimistic. He is merely reflecting the realities and challenging the nation to rise again to become the envy of the world. Mind you we should be proud we are still the number one economy in the world.

**Journo:** *can you give us some examples of challenges facing America?*

**D.L.:** well, housing affordability would be a good example of things to come. It won't be long before we have to spend over half of household income on mortgage. A lot of people probably end up doing one and half jobs just to get by, a kind slaving away.

For the next generation of Americans a large number of them simply would not be able to afford to buy a house or apartment. The lucky ones who can convince lending institutions into offering them a helping hand would tie themselves into a life-time mortgage. Some would have to pass the mortgage onto their own seedlings. "Mortgage inheritance" would soon become a catchphrase. The great American dream is fast becoming a nightmare for many young Americans.

**Journo:** *what's the solution?*

**D.L.:** I don't know if Dr. Love has the answers. The only thing he knows is that rich nations are knowledgeable nations.

You know America is a nation proud of its sporting heroes and rightly so. If we could become a nation that worships knowledge heroes as much as sporting heroes, we would be a much richer nation, on and off the field.

For that to occur it has to start at grass root level, a kind of shift in paradigm from a hard working nation to a hard working and hard thinking nation. Mums and dads would be just as keen to attend their children's maths competitions as their baseball games. I don't see why our future generations couldn't become champions at both fields of dreams.

**Journo:** *do you want to see a nation of nerds?*

**D.L.:** well, that's not quite what I have in mind, at least not a nation of nerds in the style of Dr. Love.

Nations advance through knowledge and technological advancement. By comparison with other nations, we spend much more on R&D in engineering, medical science and other fields of endeavour. We should be proud of our nation's R&D achievements. However, China's R&D expenditure has ballooned and is only second to US. It is clear production and R&D work in unison.

We are also lucky a lot of overseas scientists, PhD scholars and University professors further their careers in America, where the financial rewards are better. However when we look around there are very few knowledge heroes who are household names in comparison with sporting heroes and Hollywood stars. A night on the David Letterman Show would bring fame quicker than anything.

**Journo:** *is there any old sector which could be revitalised?*

**D.L.:** to revitalise the manufacturing sector is the challenge. It's a sector that's been in decline for the last 50 years as Germany and Japan followed by Taiwan, Korea and then China each taking a

lead in the global manufacturing hub. While we may not be able to compete with these nations in term of labour, material and production costs, we could develop and expand a niche market in hi tech end of manufacturing much like what they have in Germany, Scandinavia and Japan. Maybe the government needs to provide generous fiscal incentives to economic giants like Apple to bring some of its production facilities from China back to US. Could iPhone 15 be made in Winslow, Arizona?

**Journo:** *what would be the end result?*

**D.L.:** well, America should be able to achieve and sustain GDP growth in the order of 6-8% per annum, at least 50% increase on the current growth rate. It's a tough ask but it can be done. Rich nations have wealthy and happier citizens. Growing the pie bigger would be better for everyone rather than having to take a slice off one section of the community and give it to another.

**Journo:** *wealth creation at all costs?*

**D.L.:** no, wealth creation while conserving the environment. What we saw recently, before the economic downturn, was an oil crisis in the making with petrol price soaring to its peak at the pumps as the economic powerhouse of the world, China, was thirsting for oil.

There is no doubt the supply and cost of energy will be the dominating issue facing the world from now till end of time. An energy/oil crisis will come sooner or later, not to mention the green house effect, air pollution and traffic gridlocks. It's time to take action on the environment and climate change before it's too late.

**Journo:** *any comments about the gap between the rich and poor?*

**D.L.:** well, every generation like the one before have to deal with this issue. We are living in a capitalist society, not that it matters. The gap is there in all nations. Unlike many nations we are lucky to have a social security system and Medicaid system in place.

**Journo:** *any views on racial tension in America?*

**D.L.:** I'm not sure I'm the right person to answer that question. As a Chinaman, my views would be biased and I have to admit that by large people judge others by their façade rather than their character. However the gap is gradually narrowing as witnessed by the raise of Obama to become the president of United States.

**Journo:** *any chance of seeing Dr. Love in the White House?*

**D.L.:** not in my life time. Dr Love is a simple man, too simple for politics. Next question please.

**Journo:** *what's your opinion on gun control in America?*

**D.L.:** it's a complex matter. The statistics are out there. A quote from a 2021 article states: "The U.S. has the 32nd-highest rate of deaths from gun violence in the world: 3.96 deaths per 100,000 people in 2019. That was more than eight times as high as the rate in Canada, which had 0.47 deaths per 100,000 people — and nearly 100 times higher than in the United Kingdom, which had 0.04 deaths per 100,000."

I know in Australia, after the Port Arthur massacre in 1996 where 35 people were killed, the Government introduced a gun buyback scheme which was deemed to be a successful reform.

**Journo:** *let's have a break.*

**D.L.:** what's the score?

**Journo:** *does anyone know the score?*

**Waiter:** 11-6 (Los Angeles Dodgers against the San Francisco Giants). The captain struck two magnificent home runs in the dying minutes of the game. The balls cleared the fence by a country mile.

**Journo:** *mate, next time I'm going to do the interview after the game.*

**D.L.:** you can't. The corporate boxes get cleaned out 10 minutes after the game.

**Journo:** *there is no luck when I am hanging out with you.*

**D.L.:** I wouldn't say that. You know the Comedy Club at Echo Park is just short distance away.

**Journo:** *there will be a big queue.*

**D.L.:** I can get you through the back door.

**Journo:** *what do you know about the Comedy Club?*

**D.L.:** I think a few barmaids still remember Dr. Love when he was last there.

**Journo:** *that's if they still want to talk to you?*

**D.L.:** true, I think a couple of barmaids may want apply a chokehold.

**Journo:** *just a couple?*

**D.L.:** well, there is Lola and Almost Miss Love to start with.

**Journo:** *Almost Miss Love?*

**D.L.:** well, she almost became the first official Miss Love. She is a lovely lass and I don't understand why Dr. Love didn't embrace her. I wonder if she would give him a second chance.

**Journo:** *Gee, you walk fast.*

**D.L.:** with my short legs, I have to.

**Journo:** *which door should we use?*

**D.L.:** the one down the back leading to the dining room.

**Journo:** *where is the night man?*

**D.L.:** he's the manager now.

**Journo:** *let's go say hello to him.*

**D.L.:** that's if he'll let me in.

**Journo:** *no worry, a journo can get you through every time. Just say you are the camera man.*

**D.L.:** mate, I am going home, I can't face the humiliation. Taxi, taxi ... ..

(End)