



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

"Dads and Grads." Use a search engine, and you'll raise about 9,290,000 results on that combo. Dads get it over with quickly; it was yesterday (*did you call yours?*). Grads spread it out for weeks...

I'm more than a little hurt that I've never been invited to do a commencement address for grads. I had my speech ready this year, just in case: *"Ditch your credit cards. Get a haircut. Wear a watch. Pull up your pants. Tuck in your shirt. Arrive early. Pay your dues. Ask her to marry you. Don't expect an IPO before you're 40. Say 'thanks' to your parents for spending more on your college degree than they did their first two houses."* Maybe they'll ask me next year...

Inspired graduates used to be under the impression that they will trade their cap and gown for an invitation to management in their first-pick employer. For the Class of 2009, internships have been like hens' teeth... and job offers have been even scarcer. The Path to Power now has a locked gate blocking the entry of the oncoming brightest and best, who find themselves arriving at the Main Event at the same time that Recession '09 is evacuating mid lifers from the Marketplace. What to do?

If I could afford it, I'd buy cases of Seth Godin's book **Tribes: We Need YOU** to



Lead Us to airdrop on this season's graduation stadiums.

Godin isn't an academic reporting on his research, nor is he an old-school smoke-stack industry executive waxing about the good old days. Founder and CEO of a direct-marketing company that sold to Yahoo a decade ago, he has authored 10 books in 15 years. Rather than *thick and boring*, think *short and sweet*: he frames radical ideas and makes his case in readable and rational fashion.

If one conceives power as the prize at the top of an organizational chart, the climb up the pyramid will exhaust the seeker. In the new era - where the concept of retirement has now been retired - the positions of power by authority within organizations are now in the custody of long-termers who no longer plan to leave.

In **Tribes**, Godin paints the possibility of the practice of power apart from

organizational appointment. Authority grants power to a select few, but Godin recognizes influence as the desirable alternative, available to all who can refine the ability to exercise the power of influence with the community that surrounds them. Those communities are modern-day tribes: *"It's simple: there are tribes everywhere now, inside and outside of organizations, in public and in private, in non-profits, in classrooms, across the planet. Every one of those tribes is yearning for leadership and connection... With tribes flourishing everywhere, there's a vast shortage of leaders. We need you..."*

If you wait to be appointed to lead, you may be waiting awhile... If you buy into Seth Godin's perspective, you'll recognize that leaders can emerge without ever being appointed by the hierarchy... and their leadership can make the difference: *"Leaders have followers. Managers have employees. Managers make widgets. Leaders make change..."*

Some books I love because they give me a radical new idea. Some books I love because they affirm my preexisting radical ideas. **Tribes** is the latter; I found myself "seconding" Godin's positions on every page.

Care to infuse a movement with momentum? Long to lead, no matter what your title? Invest \$19.95 (*retail*) in yourself (\$13.57 at Amazon; \$9.99 as a digital download for your Kindle). Think about enhancing your influence on a world desperate for someone to point the way...

Bob Shank

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