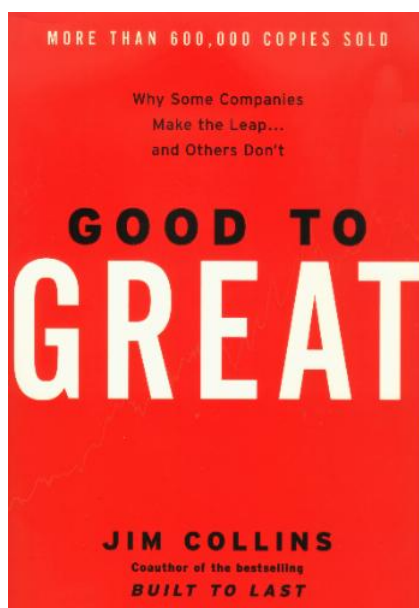


Freedom and Leadership

This is the week that we celebrate America's birthday and her Independence. This is a special holiday for me because I am such an advocate for freedom – to go and do what your God-given talents are, to be all that you can be. We do this with fun in the sun, barbecues, picnics, boating and some sporting events. As an entrepreneur, the freedom to explore opportunities, to go out and create, shows what this great country is about and is symbolic with our flag and this day. I want to wish this county a Happy Birthday and give a special thanks to all those who we have lost and to the families that have lost loved ones to keep us free, now and over our history!

Are You Confronting the Brutal Facts?



We have had a nice run in the markets over the past few weeks, hitting record highs for seven consecutive days. It would seem like good times ahead and I would so much like to jump on that bandwagon. I have seen this before and it makes me very cautious, given what is probably ahead. With any market and economic difficulties, there is always opportunity. The key signature of the DNA in a real entrepreneur is always being in search of opportunities in any

environment, and then acting on them.

When looking for opportunities, we must first practice the Stockdale Paradox, which is coined by Jim Collins in his book [Good to Great](#). In the book, Admiral Jim Stockdale makes observations of those that survived being prisoners of war in Vietnam and those that did not. Admiral Stockdale was there for eight years and endured the most brutal of situations.