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The Leader We Wish We All Had Is YOU: Insights from the COVID-19 Pandemic

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THE OLIVER C. SCHROEDER, JR.
SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE LECTURE:
THE LEADER WE WISH WE ALL HAD
IS YOU: INSIGHTS FROM THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Amy Acton, MD, MPH[†]

CONTENTS

OWN IT.....	362
BRUTAL HONESTY.....	365
VULNERABILITY.....	369
EMPOWERMENT.....	370

March 2020 was the beginning of our journey together. It was such a shock when *The New York Times*' video "The Leader We Wish We Had"¹ came out in May 2020. The video is available at <https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000007111965/coronavirus-ohio-amy-acton.html>. The *New York Times* meticulously analyzed seven weeks of the daily press conferences that Governor DeWine, Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted, and I held during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. As someone not officially media trained, I originally comforted myself by thinking, "Nobody watches the Ohio News Network at 2:00 p.m.!" Our press conferences have now been widely studied. We created what one Kenyon professor called a "mediatized sanctuary."² And if you think about it, in the world we live in right now, it is so rare that all of us show up in one place at one time.

In the very first press conferences at the Ohio Statehouse, we were with staff and reporters, living the history together as it unfolded. By the end, we were sequestered because of security and infection risks.

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1. Sanya Dosani & Adam Westbrook, *The Leader We Wish We All Had*, N.Y. TIMES (May 5, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000007111965/coronavirus-ohio-amy-acton.html> [<https://perma.cc/6D4A-NXJ7>].
2. Celso M. Villegas, *Performing Rituals of Affliction: How a Governor's Press Conferences Provided Mediatized Sanctuary in Ohio*, 8 AM. J. CULTURAL SOCIO. 352, 352–383 (2020).

We found ourselves hidden away: the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, myself, and a single cameraman named Eric. If you have never done media, imagine that the camera lens is a big blank circle; I found myself trying to reach through that darkness to connect. By the end, on the other side, you could literally feel that it was all of us. It was very moving.

I am going to share with you today a little bit of what happened behind the scenes. I will tell you about how we ended up doing daily press conferences, our decision-making process, and the legal quandaries we were facing. Then, I am going to explore the three leadership qualities that I learned along the way. I would love to say that I specifically chose my words, but I was not formally media-trained, and I was completely unscripted. If you know anything about politics, that *never* happens. I will also share with you my thoughts about the time we are living in now. How do we emerge from all we have endured and move forward? As individuals, there is no person who has not been touched or unmoored by the pandemic. But also, how do we move forward as communities and as a democracy.

OWN IT.

Before *The New York Times* authors discussed leadership, they subtly spoke to the importance of “owning the crisis.” And as any leader knows, you never lead alone. In fact, I am an ordinary person who found herself in an extraordinary moment in history. My job was to help all of us own our new reality and lead from where we all sat. My goal was to arm those listening to my press conferences with the courage and know-how to innovate and solve problems so they could become leaders. This led to the sentiment that “Not All Heroes Wear Capes,”³ which highlighted the importance of each person donning their own kind of “cape” so we could solve this problem together. I hoped being brutally honest while showcasing some vulnerability would help convey this empowering message.

You never know what will evoke your leadership, and COVID-19 asked more of all of us. People often wonder how I came to this moment. I did not know the Governor prior to interviewing for this position. Throughout my career, I stayed decidedly non-partisan. I had an early mentor, Dr. Antoinette Eaton, the first female president of the American Academy of Pediatrics and an avid child advocate. She taught me the art of convening and working across the aisle: how to bring diverse people, talents, and sectors around the table to solve our toughest problems. My goal as a doctor in Preventive Medicine and Public Health is to address health and well-being by creating community conditions in which we can all flourish and reach our fullest

3. *Not All Heroes Wear Capes*, HOMAGE, <https://www.homage.com/products/not-all-heroes-wear-capes> [<https://perma.cc/QEC5-JRKY>].

potential. And I have done this work in traditional medicine, academia, global public health, government, nonprofits, and philanthropy.

I was working for The Columbus Foundation when I met Ann O'Donnell, one of then Attorney General Mike DeWine's closest advisers. It was a thought-provoking hour-long meeting, and then she mysteriously disappeared – in retrospect to work on his campaign. In February of 2019, Governor DeWine had already picked most of his cabinet, and my husband and I were taking a drive for a weekend away when I got a call out of the blue. O'Donnell said, "The Governor and I are standing here in the basement of the Statehouse parking garage, and the Governor really wants to meet you." For the students here, I share that you never really know who or what will change your trajectory.

Fast forward to meeting the Governor after this call. He walked into the room and everybody stood up and then sat around a table. He proceeded to pull out a crumpled brown paper bag and started eating his lunch. In a very disarming way, he asked me to tell him about where I grew up and my childhood. That is the only question he ever asked. Although I did not often talk about this, I shared with him that I had a really rough childhood in Youngstown, including homelessness. I was removed from that setting at the age of twelve. I was literally moved a mile away from where I last lived, but I got to go to a completely different school and, for the first time, gained stability. I stayed in one school for seven years, and my life trajectory took such a different course from that of the kids I left behind, who were just as smart and just as nice as the kids in my new school.

Social determinants of health are of tremendous importance. People's zip codes can indicate a great deal about how long they are likely to live and their quality of life. This impact on Ohio's poor health outcomes has been documented recently in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*.⁴ While discussing this topic with the Governor, I got so excited that I grabbed him by the arm at one point. As a doctor, and as the *New York Times* video showed, I sometimes use emphatic hand gestures when making a point. Everyone gasped in the room, and I literally reprimanded myself out loud: "Oh my God, Amy, do NOT touch the Governor." As I walked away, I remember thinking, "They would never want to put me in front of a camera!"

Half an hour later, they texted that the Governor wanted to meet again. When he was a U.S. Senator, Governor and Fran DeWine lost a

4. See Lauren Weber et al., *How Red-State Politics Are Shaving Years Off American Lives*, WASH. POST (Oct. 3, 2023, 6:00 AM), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/interactive/2023/republican-politics-south-midwest-life-expectancy/> [<https://perma.cc/4RFD-HJYY>]; Hiroko Tabuchi & Henry Fountain, *Your Zip Code and Your Life Expectancy*, N.Y. TIMES (May 20, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/climate/nyt-climate-newsletter-pollution-coronavirus.html> [<https://perma.cc/DC2V-6XD2>].

young daughter, Becky, in a tragic car accident at the age of twenty-one. In their grief, they began to build schools in Haiti in her honor with Father Tom Hagan of Princeton. The Governor was very passionate about public health, which he had learned about firsthand in Haiti from Dr. Paul Farmer, one of the founders of Partners in Health and a global health hero of mine, who recently passed away. He had asked Dr. Farmer what to look for in order to address Ohio's poor health outcomes.

The Governor hired me because he felt that Ohio needed a public health doctor to lead the Department of Health. I often joke that I was the "Ted Lasso" of politics because I was as much a novice and as hopeful as his character. And in the first year of our work together, we made tremendous progress.

In my first testimony on the state budget, which for the Ohio Department of Health was a 1.3-to-1.6-billion-dollar biannual budget, I went off script for the first time. I recognized no one was paying attention – they were all on their iPads as we talked about endless numbers. So, not knowing any differently, I started trying to translate the numbers, teaching as though this were my 101 class in Global Public Health at Ohio State University. I told the legislators that we gained, on average, 30 years of increased life expectancy in the last century, but only five of these additional years can be attributed to the high-tech medical advances I learned in medical school. The other twenty-five years came from measures we can only undertake collectively, like clean water, safe food, health labor laws, child labor laws, and safety laws, to name but a few. Sadly, our life expectancy is going in the opposite direction, and this generation may be the first to not live as long and not be as healthy as their parents. Eighty percent of what affects our quality of life is not in our individual control. While we must do what we can to maximize our health individually, the truth is that we are interdependent and must create the conditions for our well-being collectively. I think of all policy as health policy – an opportunity for discovering solutions together. Nothing could show us more than a global pandemic how absolutely interdependent every system we have is.

The Department of Health had a great year in 2019, with a record-setting budget. We passed Ohio's Tobacco 21 law,⁵ and I also dealt with a few crises, including a concern about uranium in an Ohio school and Legionella outbreaks. It was a whirlwind, and then, at the very end of the year, I heard an epidemiologist from the World Health Organization on the news talking about a "weird pneumonia" in China. I was

5. *Tobacco 21*, OHIO DEP'T. HEALTH, <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/tobacco-use-prevention-and-cessation/tobacco21#:~:text=Ohio's%20Tobacco%2021%20law%20requires,under%20the%20age%20of%2021> [https://perma.cc/YAF2-8MR3].

concerned as I watched thousands of students, faculty, and businesspeople returning from travel in Asia (it turns out that Wuhan is Ohio's sister state). I watched footage of the empty streets of Wuhan and recognized the illness would not be isolated to that location, so I went to our chief epidemiologist, and we started preparing for the worst in early January. We did a tabletop exercise and a big disaster preparedness drill in early February because I was very concerned the virus was already here by then.

As the virus spread, we watched countries like Italy and cruise ships become overrun, and then the United States had its first case in Washington. I talked to my colleagues there, and they told me of the rescue efforts at the first affected nursing home. All the firefighters ran in to help, and then they all got COVID, so the town did not have a fire department. It was the beginning of understanding this interdependence – my first understanding of cascading consequences. We have emergency preparedness for disasters that tend to be very focal. In the case of Hurricane Katrina, for example, we were able to send all our nurses, supplies, and service providers to affected locations to help. But I realized that the entire United States was going to be impacted at the same time.

BRUTAL HONESTY.

During the last week of February, as the stock market crashed for the second time, I was at the White House as a Health Department Director representing the entire Midwest for the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO). Mick Mulvaney, the President's Chief of Staff, and some of the best people who have served multiple presidents were in attendance. One bioterrorism expert was literally shaking. But they were still not talking about the disease on the news. Even though I had taught global health for years, I Googled the word "pandemic." I could not understand why we were not using the word. We went around the room, and each person gave their best virology and epidemiology advice. When it was my turn, most had been said, but I was struck by what was not being said to the country. Just like everyone else, I was longing to hear the hard truth. So I told Mr. Mulvaney, "Please tell the President that this is the higher angel's moment. The people need to hear from him." This is that FDR, Winston Churchill moment where communication is vital, and my gut sense was that we really needed the President to make meaning out of all we were facing. To help us bear the shared sacrifices, we needed someone to lead the war. Only this time, the entire world was on the same side.

In fact, the United States invented the pandemic playbook that is still used all around the world right after 9/11.⁶ The strategy began when George W. Bush read John Barry's *The Great Influenza*,⁷ and Homeland Security recognized a global pandemic as one of our country's gravest security risks.

I kept thinking about those four days right after 9/11 when nobody was a stranger. I never felt anything quite like it – everything fell away. Sitting in the White House, I knew we were on the precipice of that kind of moment. In fact, that sense of camaraderie throughout the United States and beyond lasted almost six weeks. The virus was the common enemy of the entire planet, if only we had clearly named it so. COVID-19 would prove as bad as our worst science fiction nemesis as we waged war on an invisible foe. Without a leader narrating clearly, our unprecedented circumstances were nearly impossible to comprehend.

While in D.C., I was in constant conversation with the Governor's team and flew back to meet him at MetroHealth in Cleveland to tour our Ebola unit. There, we held our first press conference and made a key promise: to tell the public what we knew as we knew it. From that point on, given all the unknowns, we decided to pick 2:00 p.m. at the Statehouse as the time for press conferences so that the media could easily attend and get to press for the evening news cycle.

Driving back to Columbus, we began to take action. With the Arnold Classic coming, we had to make our first decision regarding mass events. The Arnold Classic is a sporting event that brings 250,000 spectators from eighty countries to Columbus and generates fifty million dollars for the local economy. Yet, the first step in the Pandemic Playbook is stopping mass events to prevent disease spread. This is one of the layers of what is known as "the Swiss cheese model"⁸ that combines non-pharmaceutical interventions. None of the strategies alone was a comprehensive solution, but when combined, like layered slices of Swiss cheese, they could decrease viral spread and provide almost vaccine-like levels of protection. Executing the playbook was the only way to prevent our hospitals from being overwhelmed and the economy from crashing while buying crucial time to learn how to

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6. See EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, PLAYBOOK FOR EARLY RESPONSE TO HIGH-CONSEQUENCE EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASE THREATS AND BIOLOGICAL INCIDENTS, <https://stacks.stanford.edu/file/druid:hy459js4845/Pandemic-Playbook.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/4U6D-UVAZ>], as an example of a playbook.
 7. JOHN M. BARRY, *THE GREAT INFLUENZA: THE STORY OF THE DEADLIEST PANDEMIC IN HISTORY* (2005).
 8. Siobhan Roberts, *The Swiss Cheese Model of Pandemic Defense*, N.Y. TIMES (Dec. 7, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/05/health/coronavirus-swiss-cheese-infection-mackay.html> [<https://perma.cc/55Q2-MX6G>].

manage the disease and save lives. Because the entire country was on fire at the same time, unlike in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we had to mobilize with scarce resources. What you saw was us intentionally and deliberately pulling the emergency break.

Surprisingly, there is no reverse throttle guidance in the playbook. But Ohio was ahead on that as well. We began formulating a re-opening plan in March 2020, about a week after the Arnold Classic decision. We wanted to keep the shutdown as short and focused as possible. The key was gathering the best people available around a table to make those decisions quickly and in rapid succession. Governor DeWine deserves a great deal of credit for his courage in making tough, early decisions.

The playbook, passed from President to President, was envisioned as a federal response protocol. Michael Lewis's important book, *The Premotion*,⁹ critiques the pandemic response and its breakdown. But in the early days of the pandemic, even without clear central leadership, there was an extraordinary amount of cooperation at the state and local levels. Several Republican governors got together outside the White House and shared what they were learning from experts at the nation's best academic institutions. They included Governor Larry Hogan working with Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland, Governor Charlie Baker working with Harvard, and Governor DeWine working with Ohio State and the Cleveland Clinic. We also reached across the aisle to Gretchen Whitmer from Michigan and Andy Beshear from Kentucky. Everyone in the Midwest started working together. All the political noise we hear daily fell away in the face of such a life-and-death situation.

One of the toughest decisions for us related to delaying Ohio's primary election. The election was a classic example of trying to calculate tradeoffs. How can an election be safe when you cannot have mass gatherings and people crowded together? Additionally, we were concerned about those who worked the polls, mostly elderly folks, who were already at risk. We worked tirelessly to keep the election on schedule, but the CDC eventually determined that gatherings should be limited to ten. We recognized that we would be pitting Ohioans' right to vote against their health. The Governor's own daughter was running for office, and he was tasked with making these decisions for the state's well-being. Ohio's primary election was delayed and turned into a vote-by-mail election that was held until April 28th.¹⁰

Other hard decisions related to schools and medical facilities. Hospitals indicated they could not handle the influx of patients, so we

9. MICHAEL LEWIS, *THE PREMONITION* (2021).

10. Zach Montellaro, *Ohio to Run All-Mail Primary Through April 28*, POLITICO (Mar. 25, 2020, 6:17 PM), <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/03/25/ohio-vote-by-mail-primary-election-149012> [<https://perma.cc/D2M3-WHVT>].

built field hospitals and stopped elective surgeries. Every sector was at the table, making recommendations based on their industry.

The Governor had an amazing legal team. They had to interpret public health law powers that had existed for over a hundred years but now had to be applied to the pandemic. Historically, the Director of Health is the only person authorized to sign orders in an effort to depoliticize them. In addition to the press conferences and policy decisions, most of the time, I was dealing with practicalities, such as how to move a ventilator from a vet office, put a bar code on it, get it to the Cleveland Clinic, and then ensure that it gets back to the vet office. We also worried about procuring enough embalming fluid and managing the Hunger Games-like environment for masks, where hospitals and governmental agencies were attempting to outbid one another. Those were the kinds of problems we solved in the background while the lawyers crafted the health orders.

Health communications during the pandemic are now a topic that is broadly studied. Driving to the Statehouse for a press conference in heavy Columbus traffic in early March, I wondered, “What are the words for explaining to people that their lives will no longer be the same? That in two weeks, the streets of Ohio would look as empty as the streets of Wuhan?”

I spent an hour and a half each day at the press conferences. I must tell you that I was not extensively schooled in public communications beyond the basic C’s: ensuring communications are clear, concise, credible, and consistent. But as serendipity would have it, the week I was supposed to go for specialized training in the fall of 2019, I tripped over a dog gate and fractured my pelvis. Missing the training turned out to be a blessing in disguise because I ended up communicating differently from highly trained and disciplined individuals. I did not “spin,” but rather, as my kids would say, I spoke “just like mom,” more like a physician talking with a patient. We prized authenticity and honesty and took hard questions for an hour and a half. I have since learned that “Wine with DeWine” became crucial to leaders in every industry and people all across the country and the world.

That is what you saw. We are now learning that people were yearning for truth and trustworthiness. A calm, determined, authentic communication style is effective at helping people face hard truth at a pace they can tolerate.¹¹ Typical political spin does not work during a humanitarian disaster of such scale, scope, and duration – one in which we lost more people than in all recorded wars combined.

11. See MARTIN LINSKY & RONALD A. HEIFETZ, *LEADERSHIP ON THE LINE: STAYING ALIVE THROUGH THE DANGERS OF LEADING* (2002).

VULNERABILITY.

Somewhere around mid-April, tensions started rising and matters became more politicized. Around Easter and Passover, the Governor told me he hoped I would have a nice virtual Passover seder. My husband is Episcopalian, and I am Jewish. I joked with the Governor on air about how I make “a mean bowl of matzo ball soup.” At the very next press conference, there were screaming protestors in Guy Fawkes masks with assault rifles standing pressed against the Statehouse’s thin plates of glass, less than 6 feet from the Governor. Although one could not open carry inside the Statehouse, I quickly learned one could do so standing right up against it. I remember saying on air that it was hard to hear me because I had to speak over the voices of those protesting.

In March 2020, I was given the same executive protection as the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. Initially, I thought it was because they wanted me to keep working while they were driving me. I later learned they were following activity on the dark web. As we now know, some of the folks who participated in the January 6 riots were based in Ohio and scheming against Governor DeWine, Governor Whitmer, and me. Ultimately, armed protestors showed up in my front yard. I live in a very ordinary neighborhood with no gates in a small house, so my whole neighborhood was under siege. We had 24/7 state highway patrol in our driveway. Antisemitic and anti-women comments were also a common occurrence. Legislators called me a globalist and a witch, going as far as to say that I was casting spells on the Governor. My family was stalked. Matters were not helped by President Trump’s mid-April tweet of “activate and liberate.” So yes, there was hate, and it was very real.

But I need you to understand: **THE LOVE WAS SO MUCH GREATER THAN THE HATE.**

No order could flatten the curve. Ohioans flattened the curve by what they did for one another. The health orders were guideposts. Everyone in every position, whether you were at home with your family or running a business, hospital, nursing home, or meat packing plant, had to solve problems in ways no one ever had before. We could never possibly order our way through the pandemic. The orders were there to help us lean in the right direction. We now have data that shows Ohio flattened the curve. That was the goal – we slowed transmission rates so hospitals could handle patient loads. The mortality rate in March 2020 for patients hospitalized with COVID-19 was in the high 40s. By June 2020, three months later, that mortality rate had dropped to 5 percent. We were buying time to learn and strategize more, and Ohioans, working together, were able to flatten the curve.

Ohioans rallied. When we had these press conferences, we realized our shared vulnerability. We were reminded of what we could do for one another. I suggested that people check on their elderly neighbors or watch the child of a neighbor who was a nurse while she worked that

second shift. There was a 92-year-old woman named Bonnie Bowen who painted watercolors every day. That empowered her to make a difference. She shared them on Facebook, and people were viewing them from all over the world. She was painting to keep Ohioans going, and when she got COVID-19, tens of thousands of people sent her prayer messages, helping her on her road to recovery.

During one press conference, I mentioned a Colbert episode that featured Michael Stipe, the singer from R.E.M., who had written a beautiful ballad called “No Time for Love Like Now.” Later, Michael Stipe called me and asked how he could help. There was also a mom and her sons who painted a sign that said “ACTon Love, Not Hate,” a play on my last name, Acton. Those signs started to appear everywhere and eventually were mass produced. So we embraced the saying “ACTon Love, Not Hate” and “ACTon Kindness, Not Fear” as an antidote. We learned there is something far more contagious than a virus, and that is the fear, anger, and intolerance of ambiguity that we all experienced.

Kindness is not niceness – you cannot fake it. Kindness is not weakness. Kindness is an age-old, enduring principle that every religion and society across time has adopted. Kindness is really about the God in me seeing the God in you. It is honoring the humanity in one another. This is what Mr. Rogers and my husband, a kindergarten teacher, try to teach children, and we wanted to inspire all Ohioans to focus on pulling one another up on the life raft during the pandemic. So, we brought the scientific benefits of kindness to bear. No one order could flatten the curve. Ohioans worked together to help save each other.

Fast forward to June 2020, when I stepped down from my position. Like many health directors around the country, I was being pressured by the legislature to sign orders that did not make any scientific sense as we were beginning our re-opening plan. One particular order related to allowing 15,000 spectators to attend an event just as we were beginning to open businesses safely. In the end, this pitted my Hippocratic oath against my intense wish to serve the people of Ohio. We all face moments in which we need a strong compass, and I am grateful, as painful as it was, that I listened to mine. So, I resigned as Ohio Health Director, but stayed committed to advising the Governor and continue to do so.

EMPOWERMENT.

Of all the leadership attributes *The New York Times* described, the one I was most conscious of using was empowerment. I knew that we all wanted our leaders to ask more of us. And I witnessed Ohioans rise to the occasion.

Make no mistake, we are at a major inflection point in this country. In 2020, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences published a project titled “Our Common Purpose,” which posited that this might

be the fourth founding of our democracy.¹² It is vital now more than ever that we all start to become involved and recognize our common humanity to become the leaders we wish we all had.

I sense that everywhere I go, people are still deeply unmoored. The question is: how do we heal? We have not done a 9/11-style commission on the pandemic in this country because it is still too sensitive of an issue. There will come a day soon when we must revisit the playbook and study what went right and wrong. We are at risk of losing the ingenuity and innovations we discovered. We need StoryCorps to capture our history and lived narratives to humanize our collective experience.

We will need to mourn all we have lost. We will need to memorialize all we have learned. And we must make meaning of all we have endured.

Humans are meaning makers. We must have purpose and know we matter. The Surgeon General just came out with an advisory on the epidemic of loneliness, diseases of despair, isolation, and the profound need for human connection.¹³ We all find ourselves in moments where we must face things we cannot unsee – little things and big things. But science shows that exhibiting patience, mercy, and grace to those having a bad day or going through a difficult time can heal us.

I call today's young people Generation C, not just because they have seen COVID and chaos. I believe they have a real commitment to community. They are not afraid of having hard conversations and solving problems. They are change agents and catalysts.

One point I made during the pandemic is that we must say “yes” to life. This message was conveyed in Victor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*,¹⁴ a book I mentioned during a press conference that a psychiatrist wrote after emerging from a concentration camp at the end of World War II. Joseph Campbell, a scholar who studied world mythologies, also articulated this message. His work influenced many, including George Lucas, who created Star Wars. Campbell said that we all go on a hero's adventure in life, and nobody gets through this life unscathed.¹⁵ We all face times when we have to enter the dark woods to slay a dragon or two. But if we are lucky, we take the pot of gold and bring what we learn back to our community.

Every crisis has the seeds of the next opportunity if only we can see it.

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12. See THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, *Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century*, <https://www.amacad.org/ourcommonpurpose/report> [<https://perma.cc/G6M3-UJYM>].
 13. OFFICE OF THE U.S. SURGEON GENERAL, *OUR EPIDEMIC OF LONELINESS AND ISOLATION: THE U.S. SURGEON GENERAL'S ADVISORY ON THE HEALING EFFECTS OF SOCIAL CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY* (2023).
 14. See VICTOR FRANKL, *MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING* (1946).
 15. See JOSEPH CAMPBELL, *THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES* (1949).

The leader we wish we all had is, in truth, YOU. I am truly a very ordinary person who found herself in a unique moment in time. And it was the honor of a lifetime to serve as the doctor for 11.7 million patients. Witnessing how we rowed together, I could not help but fall in love with the people of Ohio. As we emerge from the pandemic, we must intentionally co-create the world we want to live in. If *enough* of us do the right thing, *most* of the time, *all* of us get through.

I look forward to our journey ahead.