

Alamy

Speech Patriotic

Dear Dennis: Thank you. I feel like a whore! Here below I have bastardized a couple of speeches and put them together. See what you think.

It is hard to think clearly as we yet rock in the wake of last week's terrorist attacks on our cities and our people. But think clearly we must.

I speak for many common Americans who cannot see our flag without getting emotional with love for it. Our dream is that it should always represent the best that human beings can do on this earth. This is the time to rally around its best values and its highest dreams.

To the terrorists here is my message: you are not martyrs, but cowards. Your selfish ego-maniacal greed for a place in heaven cannot be purchased with the deaths of other people. Look across the Khyber Pass toward the land of Ghandi, who taught us that violence makes justice harder to come by, not easier. Today in America, the work of terrorists makes the work harder for those who want to reform America's policies and practices. You do not want to change American policies, or you would be using your millions to bring your message to us in ways that we can understand and act upon. You want only your shortcut to heaven. We have the same great God, the same Allah, and he shakes his head in sad disbelief at your spiritual immaturity.

The ultimate weakness of violence, Dr. King taught us is a descending spiral begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing it, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact violence merely increases hate...adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out hate only love can do that, ~~King said~~.

Now is the time for all of us to speak the truth with courage and hope. America is the best hope of the world. But we are a work in progress, and we all have some work to do right now...It is the work of peace, of frank education, of making our lives and our communities more sustainable, and of cleaning up a campaign finance system that will allow our elected leaders to represent out interests and values.

We must learn to understand the architecture of a good civic life and focus our repair work strategically. What indeed are the cornerposts that hold up our temple of democracy? I would like us to take a brief walk together around the great structure, poking here and there and making a brief list of needed repairs.

To begin at the founding cornerpost of our building is a stately Corinthian Column called Education. It is impossible to have proper self-governance, such as ours, if our people are not educated to the task. To participate in self-governance our people must understand the nature of human beings and they must come to love them in all their complex diversity.

Holding up another corner of our democracy is a great cornerpost that perhaps we can visualize as a great farm silo, for it represents the harvest plenty. Not only must we be free to think for ourselves, we must personally have leisure time and a modest financial surplus. Democracy thrives best in nations where there is a healthy condition of wealth spread throughout the people. Wealth is not defined by high consumption. It is a condition of surplus, of plenty. From plenty comes security, confidence, brave outspokenness and the ability to participate generously in a family and in a community.

At another corner there is a double-pillar called Equality and Fairness. As we fight for a broader new middle class, we must continue the hard and sometimes frustrating work of bringing all Americans along together. If we each take steps to affirmatively overcome all unfair handicaps we sow the seed of

success as a democracy. We must be prepared to bring groups into equal status for the good of our best dreams for our democracy. Mature well-educated minds must prevail if we are not to slip into a cruel and unstable past.

The most valuable asset that Americans enjoy, after each other, is our beloved Constitution. A system of fair rules, of justice, is what preserves us from the storms of history in the world around us. We must be daily defenders of social justice issues or we are not reformers.

The final column of our democracy is a marketplace where ideas and the powers of the people come together. We can visualize a great kiosk holding up the forth corner of our building, with great and colorful posters of candidates and ideas around it in profusion. If a democracy is a free market of ideas the ideas must all be seen and heard and understood by all.

When I was a little girl, there were great political speeches in the park, come election season. We all heard the speeches. Our town provided the stages for those debates and speeches, and we must now provide modern ways for candidates to have free and equal access to our ears and eyes come election season. Since we can no longer all fit in the park, we must provide a public financing system for candidates who wish to take advantage of it.

These may seem like dark days of democracy, but it always seems so. We are always in deep trouble. Thank God for that. Thank God we are each given such important work to do in our lifetimes, for the survival of our people and of our still brightly shining ideals of equality and mutual freedom. It is supposed to be like that. We are supposed to give ourselves body and soul to our beliefs, and we cannot do so where there is no challenge, no fight. Dark clouds are simply the proper backdrops for our best exercise of courage. Where but in battle, or upon its eve, can we feel such friendship and brotherhood—as many of us do this week in this country.

Throughout the coming year into the new century, let us not specialize too narrowly in our concerns. Let us work together to keep all the cornerposts of our democracy in good condition, by working as great friends, and in great coalitions as fellow Americans and as fellow citizens of the world. God bless us all and God bless America.

Thank you.

Dennis Burke wrote:

Doris,

I have Rosie O'Donnellized your website. We'll put the fire back in it in a few days.

Dennis

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