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Breakfast

RESULTS CONFERENCE SELF-EMPOWERMENT

It is always pleasant to be given the respect of others. But it is meaningless unless you first respect yourself, and that was an element of my long walk across America.

I certainly knew that Campaign Finance Reform was an important issue for America, if not the most important, and I knew that I cared enough about it that I should do something. I knew that if I walked far enough, at my age, some people might care to know what was worth this effort of mine.

That, of course, is what makes non-violent protest effective and ethical: we take the pain of social change upon ourselves, so that others will consider the issue more carefully. *as Gandhi & King taught us.*

That you might better understand how this kind of protest works, let me describe what happened to me again and again on my walk. When I got across the Mojave Desert in California, I found myself at the

Doris (pammyd) Maddock

And this is what you will be doing today. Meeting people men & women you do not know and who do not know you. This is a new and brave task that you are taking on the burden of change.

Best regards and a hub.

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Arizona town of Parker, on the Colorado River. The Mayor of that lively town is a wonderful woman named Sandy Pierce. Now, I don't know if Sandy cared for much about campaign finance reform before I got there, but after we met, and after people congratulated me for crossing that big desert where many others have died, and after Good Morning America and National Public Radio interviewed me, people were suddenly very curious about campaign finance reform.

Sandy introduced me all over town with a little speech like this: "Now I would like you to meet Doris Haddock. She has just walked here from Los Angeles through the Mojave." People's eyes would open wide. She would continue. "She is doing it to publicize the need for campaign finance reform.

She is upset that big money interests are calling the shots in our elections, and we no longer have much of a say. She thinks that this is a huge problem for us all. She says that all the people who have died in wars to defend our democracy would want us to defend it now, from those who are buying it from under us."

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Well, all I would have to do is smile and shake hands after that. People would immediately see that what I was doing did, in fact, relate to serious issues that disturbed them, too. But they wouldn't have thought about it at that time except for my sacrifice.

Also, local newspaper reporters would want to know about campaign finance reform. If someone would walk so far across that desert for it, it must be newsworthy. I would explain how there are laws limiting what a person can give to any one candidate, and that these laws are meant to preserve the health of the democratic system. I would explain that there is a soft money loophole that gets around those laws. The loophole allows corporations, unions and wealthy individuals to give unlimited amounts of money to parties. The parties can pass those dollars along to candidates. What is the point of contribution limits, if you can just use this back door? The reporters wrote it all down as I walked and talked.

Now, could I have done as well if I had sat back in New Hampshire and written letters to the editor?

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Probably not. People do respect serious and sincere sacrifice, and they will listen to you on account of it.

It has also been an education for me. I have learned more about my country. There were a thousand beautiful moments along my walk. Americans are truly kind, interesting, odd, beautiful and smart people. I recommend that, someday, when it is not escapism, you don a backpack and go see it all for yourself. You might think about doing it twice, once through the north, and once through the south. And leave time for the rest of the world, too.

On your walks, you will see how important political leadership is in the lives of the people. When we do not have leaders that care about fairness, and health, and the fulfillment of the educational potential of each person, what we get is what we have gotten: poverty, illiteracy, dysfunctional communities, and widespread emotional depression. I am not saying that it is the government's role to run our lives. I am saying that, especially in this nation, we are the government, and we run this country for our mutual benefit, unless powerful interests get in our way, stealing our common

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resources and our very lives.

When that happens, we must act, and that is what I am doing for myself and my grandchildren and great grandchildren, and it is what you must do for yourself, and your descendants. For this is your land. It is not someone else's. This is your life, not someone else's. Your freedom, and your position of responsibility as a member of a self-governing community, have been paid for in blood by many, many people who came before you. You owe it to them, but most of all to yourselves, and your descendants to sweep away anything that gets between you and your rightful place as the free member of a free community.

I am far from finished with my own work. I will be active for some time, God willing. This is serious and long term work. Our democracy, and even the biological survival of our planet, are in the balance.

But aren't we fortunate to live in a time when so much is at stake—when we each have such a fine challenge to our very souls? Thankyou