



## COMMENTARY

# ESCAPING THE WONDER YEARS

**237 years later Americans  
haven't grown up**

*Commentary*

*by Laura Dawn Lewis*

*July 2, 2008*

*This commentary is inspired by the following column written July 1, 2008 by [Charlie Reese](#): The 545 People, which is included below.*

As Americans continue to feel squeezed, as the sins of our consumption, our arrogance and our elitism, the belief that we are somehow superior to all others and our way is the only way catch up with us, a growing sense of apathy prevails.

Like lemmings we ridicule and silence those who see through this, the Ron Paul's, Jimmy Carter's and even the Bill Cosby's of our nation. We allow others to sideline voices in the media that tell it like it is: Joseph Sobran, Chris Hedges, Pat Buchanan and the below Charlie Reese. In so doing we place nails deeper into the coffins of freedom, self-determination and democracy. Rather than act, we play victim. Rather than think, we vacillate in mindless entertainment and the tribulations of others who have no impact on our daily lives other than they give us something to gossip about.

Once a nation of self-starters we now look to the government to supply us everything we want from health to education and a forgiveness for our own folly in managing our finances. We prefer to blame others, rather than change ourselves and then we wonder why this delegation of accountability results in increasing chaos, hardship and malaise. When our collective self-esteem is bruised because others refuse to put up with our self-centeredness, we resort to brute force and kill, like the bully on the block. We choose violence to force our will rather than the tools of civilized nations and then pat ourselves on the back for succeeding in brutality. 'Do it our way or no way' we say to the world and within our self-righteous narrative, we think we've won. We haven't. Like that same bully we continue to isolate ourselves from others and the rest of the world watches. They fear us, but only for the moment. They've seen this before and

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know they don't need to destroy us, we'll destroy ourselves in good time for a house divided always falls.

We as a nation are divided. The tougher times get, the scarcer necessities, the more divided we will become. We have the power as Americans to reverse this if only we'd stop judging each other and listen. Once we listened. Today rather than listen to opinions and ponder ideas we segregate:

*'That is liberal, I'm a conservative so I won't listen'.*

*'That is fundamentalism, as a liberal I shall not listen'.*

*'What you say doesn't match the narrative I've created so you cannot be right.'*

This closing off of the free exchange and debate of ideas by categorizing serves only those profiting from ignorance; yet we as a people allow it and embrace it. Why think when others can think for us and tell us what is proper to think? After all, this was the foundation of empires and monarchies up until 237 years ago on July 4, 1776. It took thinking coupled with action to break from that then. It will take the same today. Are we Americans today a lesser people? The game is the same. Only the technology has changed.

The fact is America we've digressed as a nation. We live by labels and therefore excise ourselves from the primary responsibility of being free: accountability. Accountability requires vigilance. It requires work. It mandates we become involved and educate ourselves beyond what we are told. Accountability necessitates we seek out opinions different from our own, test them, ponder them and consider. It means we have the capacity to question, theorize and when necessary, admit our misconceptions, misinterpretations and folly. Accountability means we become involved, we become one of the 15%-ers who make things happen. This is the mark of mature person and a mature nation.

Given our conduct of late, America seems stuck in the wonder years, those years of childhood where a person is too young to be held accountable and decisions originate with adults, yet the child old enough for self-awareness and guarded responsibility. It is during this time his character is shaped and he is to learn from his mistakes by accepting accountability for his actions.

Perhaps it is time that as nation we grew past the wonder years. It begins by taking responsibility for the putting people in office who've failed us. It means being accountable for our part, each of us as Americans in allowing our nation to fall away from its defining ideals. It means exercising the actions necessary to eliminate those in office who negate these ideals and having the moral courage to place in office those who will champion us, even if what they say and do seems foreign to our beautifully conditioned minds. Do we have the strength as a nation? That depends. Patriotism's responsibility and its meting rests in our ability to hold accountable those we elect to office. Are we the people we think we are? Patriots do not stand on the sidelines and they are not counted by the number of flags they wave, wars they fight or toys they accumulate. They're identified by moral courage. Moral courage is rare. It requires the stamina to stand up, speak out and hold firm in the face of criticism, lampooning and slander. It requires self-sacrifice for the good of the whole. Ultimately it requires maturity. ###

## '545' PEOPLE THAT MAINTAIN A DYSFUNCTIONAL GOVERNMENT!

By Charlie Reese\* --

Politicians are the only people in the world who create problems and then campaign against them. Have you ever wondered why, if both the Democrats and the Republicans are against deficits, we have deficits? Have you ever wondered why, if all the politicians are against inflation and high taxes, we have inflation and high taxes?

- You and I don't propose a federal budget. The President does.
- You and I don't have the Constitutional authority to vote on appropriations. The House of Representatives does.
- You and I don't write the tax code, Congress does.
- You and I don't set fiscal policy, Congress does.
- You and I don't control monetary policy, The Federal Reserve Bank does.

One hundred senators, 435 congressmen, one president and nine Supreme Court justices - 545 human beings out of the 300 million - are directly, legally, morally and individually responsible for the domestic problems that plague this country. The plate is so full of problems its totally overwhelming.

I excluded the members of the Federal Reserve Board because that problem was created by the Congress.

In 1913, Congress delegated its Constitutional duty to provide a sound currency to a federally chartered but private central bank.

I excluded all the special interests and lobbyists for a sound reason. They have no legal authority.

They have no ability to coerce a senator, a Congressman or a president to do one cotton-picking thing.

I don't care if they offer a politician \$1 million dollars in cash. The politician has the power to accept or reject it. No matter what the lobbyist promises, it is the legislator's responsibility to determine how he votes. Those 545 human beings spend much of their energy convincing you that what they did is not their fault. They cooperate in this common con regardless of party.

What separates a politician from a normal human being is an excessive amount of gall, power, love of the lime light and perks. No normal human being would have the gall of a Speaker, who stood up and criticized the President for creating deficits.

The president can only propose a budget. He cannot force the Congress to accept it.

The Constitution, which is the supreme law of the land, gives sole responsibility to the House of Representatives for originating and approving appropriations and

taxes.

Who is the speaker of the House?

Nancy Pelosi, she is the leader of the majority party.

She and fellow House members, not the president, can approve any budget they want.

If the president vetoes it, they can pass it over his veto if they agree to.

It seems inconceivable to me that a nation of 300 million can not replace 545 people who stand convicted-- by present facts - of incompetence and Irresponsibility. Wake up America before its too late.

I can't think of a single domestic problem that is not traceable directly to those 545 people. When you fully grasp the plain truth that 545 people exercise the power of the federal government, then it must follow that what exists is what they want to exist.

- If the tax code is unfair, it's because they want it unfair or don't care.
- If the budget is in the red, it's because they want it in the red or don't care.
- If the Marines are in IRAQ, it's because they want them in IRAQ.
- If they do not receive social security but are on an elite retirement plan not available to the people, it's because they want it that way. Its a windfall for them. One term, and their set for life.

There are no insoluble government problems.

Do not let these 545 people shift the blame to bureaucrats, whom they hire and whose jobs they can abolish; to lobbyists, whose gifts and advice they can reject; to regulators, to whom they give the power to regulate and from whom they can take this power.

Above all, do not let them con you into the belief that there exists disembodied mystical forces like 'the economy,' 'inflation' or 'politics' that prevent them from doing what they take an oath to do.

Those 545 people and they alone, are responsible. They and they alone, have the power.

They and they alone, should be held accountable by the people who are their bosses - provided the voters have the gumption to manage their own employees.

We should vote all of them out of office and clean up their mess!

**\*Charlie Reese is a former columnist of the Orlando Sentinel**

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