

A thought for 2017 on the Independence Day in America



Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the US by Howard C. Christy

On July 1, 1776, debate on the Lee Resolution resumed as planned, with a majority of the delegates favoring the resolution. Congress thought it of the utmost importance that independence be unanimously proclaimed. To ensure this, they delayed the final vote until July 2, when 12 colonial delegations voted in favor of it, with the New York delegates abstaining, unsure of how their constituents would wish them to vote. John Adams wrote that July 2 would be celebrated as the most memorable epoch in the history of America. Instead, the day has been largely forgotten in favor of July 4, when Jefferson's edited Declaration of Independence was adopted.

(ref. <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/congress-votes-for-independence>)

These are the days we reflect on who we are, what we have done, and what we have planned for the future. This is our Independence Day. It is a day that we celebrate what we call freedom. It is not just a day for family fun, hot dogs and beer but also a time to look up and recognize what the flag symbolize.

Today's differences are magnified by polarizing media, leaving us with the reality that suggests the fundamentals that made our country great

no longer reflect the American mentality. Could this be a time when differences can unite a divided nation?

It could be a time when difference unites. We as Americans have more in common than any other group of 300,000,000 plus. We live together representing all cultures, ways of thinking and we desire a common reality.

We are not uncommon in that desire or aspiration. What makes us uncommon in the world is our willingness to insist that freedom is not just a word, it is a way of life. It has almost become a cliché that when one of us is not free none of us are free.

In the tribal system old people were free because they lived under a system of commonality. The tribal leader was the one who allegedly had the most wisdom, not the most money. The tribe was an extended family and money had less meaning than relationships with each other.

Our country started with many of the premises held by the ancient Greeks about democracy. Washington DC is enshrined with these consolidated thoughts in the constitution and his statement regarding our inalienable rights.

Have we as a people degraded into a self serving, divided gang who goes to Washington after being elected? Are we just parroting the wisdom and truths of those who were willing and did, fight and die to make cherished words a tangible reality?

Freedom is a concept with wheels. It is dynamic embracing the notion of unity. It means that we hold onto the notion that difference generates curiosity and not violence. It seems that difference generates healthy competition and not a need to disgrace and destroy.

We lose our freedom when we allow others to define it. We lose our freedom when we abandon critical thinking, and let others convince us they know best what is right for us as individuals and a people.

We lose our freedom when we relinquish our humanity with short-circuited thinking and two-valued logic. The idea of right and wrong is a concept about a perception not a hard and fast truth.

If we are to live together then we must embrace the difference in a different way. It is in fact *true united we stand and divided we fall*. We can embrace this notion by a heightened sense of awareness of those things that we have in common.

Family and friends are generally united around common perceptions and values. On this Independence Day perhaps it is time to look up from a cold cider or hot dog at remember we have more in common than that which divides us.

You cannot walk in another's moccasins or shoes if you do not have the means to buy them or know where they are sold. We as Americans are a generous people. Our reactions to crisis, be it personal or national, is one of the things that divides us from a selfish world.

We need to remind our representatives that we sent them to Washington to discover common ground, and not to divide the ground we have in common. This believe will unite us if we can embrace this thinking not just on Independence Day but, every day of our lives.

Have a fabulous 4th!

Barry A. Goodfield, Ph.D.

©July 2, 2017 Goodfield Institute LLC