

We The People

*Making America
America Again*

By Gaylon Kent

*Candidate for the Colorado Libertarian Party's
2020 United States Senate nomination.*

*Past nominee for the United States Senate and
House.*

We The People:
*Making America America
Again*

By
Gaylon Kent

We The People
Making America America Again

Copyright 2018 by Gaylon Kent

Freedom Train Books
PO Box 1642
Hayden, Colorado 81639

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced except in reviews without the written permission of the author.

Portions of this book originally appeared in The Liberty Handbook by Gaylon Kent

Also By Gaylon Kent

Novels

The Diary of a Nobody

The Regular Guys

Swords in the Narthex

Non-Fiction

The Liberty Handbook

Memoir

Backstairs at the Monte Carlo: A Vegas Memoir!

Columns

The Daily Dose

The Thought for the Day

The Bottom Ten

The Sunday Bottom Ten

www.gaylonkent.net

www.thefreedomtrain.com

@GaylonKent

This book is dedicated to you.

Introduction

2020 will be the fifth time I've run for either the United States House or the United States Senate. Every time there has been voter discontent, but it's peaking this year. I have never seen an electorate as angry or discontented – or divided - as they are now.

Us Americans have a couple of options: can either wallow in our anger and discontent and division or we can put it to work for us, making it the fuel for us to make America America again.

We should be angry and discontented because our country is a fiasco right now, a far cry from the American ideal many of us grew up believing in. By any measure our government is a partisan, fractured and bickering mess. We've been at war continuously since 1989 - three decades - our finances are a mess and our social divides are threatening to make the problems of the 1960's look like something out of Mother Goose.

Now, in some respects, this really isn't news. Throughout our history it has always been something. America was born in war, came of age in war and war has long been our calling card. We've been in debt virtually our entire existence and America has never had racial harmony.

But right now America is so far off its path our long-term viability is threatened. Between our perpetual wars, our mindless debt and our deep social divides I think America will be tossed aside the scrap heap of history before this half-century is out if concerned and conscientious citizens like you and me do not step and do something at the ballot box, because our country needs our help. It needs you and me - we the people to take charge.

America has always been as much an ideal as it has been a country, existing not only in fact but in theory, too. But the America that once meant something to the rest of the world is gone and the America that means something to Americans, too, is fading fast, too.

The good news is the solution to America's problems looks us in the mirror every morning:

There is nothing wrong with our country that concerned and conscientious citizens cannot solve. Collectively you and me - we the people - can make America America again.

In this book we will talk about the American Way, what made America America in the first place and what will make America America again both by looking at individual issues and the big picture.

Like you I want a country we can be proud of and a country the world looks up to again. It will not be easy. It will require us to shed the familiar and do some things we haven't done in a while. But it won't be the first Americans have shed the familiar and it won't be the first time we've redefined our country.

I believe it's a journey worth taking. It's one we must take together and it's one we must take *right now*.

Chapter One

The American Way: Liberty

Liberty may not be something you think about too much. After all, we live in America, we're free, and liberty is our birthright. Throughout history however, most humans have not lived in a free country. Liberty, the ability to do with our lives what we want, as always been a battle.

Liberty is what made America America in the first place.

For centuries, with a few exceptions here and there, people had no choice over who governed them. Very early those with land and money ruled those who had neither. As mankind evolved, individuals and families claimed dominion over territories and those who lived in them and thrones were claimed and then fought over. Some monarchs were benevolent, allowing their subjects to more or less go about their business as long as taxes and tributes were paid, while others were tyrants. Attempts to remove these shackles were costly and often unsuccessful.

Our first recorded attempt to govern ourselves came in ancient Greece, in the fifth century BC. Voting was for citizens, with citizenship reserved for – and this will surprise you – adult males, specifically those who had completed their

military training. Citizens voted on everything, both legislative acts and executive decisions, acting as a rather large legislature.

The English had one of mankind's earliest attempts at removing the shackles of monarchy. In the 13th century some English barons got their shorts in a knot over the reign of King John with their rebellion resulting in the Magna Carta, in essence a peace treaty that guaranteed, among other things, church freedoms, freedom from illegal imprisonment and limits on payments to the crown. Nobody really paid much attention to it, however, and over time it lost some of its practical significance.

But not its moral significance. The Magna Carta's influence continued over the centuries, including its profound influence on our own Constitution.

The United States, of course, earned its independence from Great Britain following the Revolutionary War. Ever since the word 'America' has been synonymous with liberty, representing not only a place, but the idea that all men are created equal, that we all have the inalienable right to do with our lives what we want, provided we don't bother anyone else while doing it.

What's funny is United States' record on liberty is decidedly mixed. For centuries blacks were held as slaves and for a long time the blessings of liberty were available only to white, land-owning males.

Not only does America as a nation have a mixed record regarding human liberty, so do some of this nation's most revered figures. Two of my favorite examples are Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln.

Thomas Jefferson, of course, was the author of one mankind's seminal works, The Declaration of Independence. He was also the third president of the United States, the founder of the University of Virginia and a slave owner.

That Jefferson owned slaves is not a bulletin. Like you probably do, I remember being taught this in school. We were told, well, yes, kids, Jefferson did own slaves, but that's the way it was back then: whites owned slaves and Jefferson didn't have much choice in the matter; he was merely a product of his times. Even modest reading into Jefferson the slave owner, however, shows this wasn't entirely true and significant reading makes it crystal clear: Jefferson worked his slaves hard, disciplined them as needed and generally used them to live a comfortable life.

Heck, Jefferson was not only a slave owner, he was a slave innovator as well, one of the first to use his slaves a collateral for a loan and to force his slaves to become skilled artisans and tradesmen, thereby further reinforcing their bondage.

The Declaration of Independence notwithstanding Jefferson, frankly, never did much of anything to either end slavery in his country or on his plantation. Despite the fact he used his slaves to build a comfortable life for himself, Jefferson remains a revered figure, regarded as one of History's preeminent spokesmen for human liberty.

Abraham Lincoln presided over one of this nation's most tumultuous times, the Civil War. From the start Lincoln decided he was going to save the Union and that he was going to do whatever it took to do this. And he did, both using and ignoring the Constitution as he saw fit

To save the Union Lincoln engaged our country in a brutal civil war. Lincoln realized the Union had significantly more young men to sacrifice than the Confederacy did and as long as he was able to keep General Robert E. Lee from visiting the White House he could continue to send troops into battle until the South ran out of men. The death toll on both sides remains a staggering figure.

Lincoln also ignored the Constitution when it suited him. Lincoln imposed martial where he saw fit, curtailed a free press and had arrested those he felt needed to be arrested and held them without trial, all measures not in accordance with human liberty and there have always been those who consider Lincoln to be nothing more than a despot.

Despite this, Lincoln also remains a revered figure, not only in the United States but worldwide, often thought of by those as the man who ended slavery in the United States. We can still remember seeing a statue of Lincoln in Tijuana, Mexico depicting Lincoln holding a broken chain in his right hand.

These examples were made not to disparage two former presidents, or to show that I've been to Mexico, but to illustrate the battles we have fought over the years. Despite every obstacle our country has mustered – slavery, discrimination, intolerance – America has always meant something both to her citizens and to the rest of the world, providing the opportunity to build a good life, the results dependent only on the effort you were willing to put forth into making something good happen for yourself and your family.

The American Way was and remains liberty. Incumbent in that are concerned and participating voters holding ourselves and our leaders accountable.

Chapter Two

The American Way: Responsibility

Former President Gerald Ford had a really good quote years ago. I stole it from a book called *Write It When I'm Gone*, by Thomas DeFrank, a reporter who had covered Ford as vice president. Ford said:

Government will continue to be about as good as concerned and conscientious citizens make it.

True enough. These words cut to the heart of our American experience because when concerned and conscientious citizens hold those governing accountable the people will generally be well governed. Those governing know if they do not govern well they will not govern for long.

Similarly, when those governing are not held accountable, they will tend to do whatever consolidates their wealth and power. When we citizens are not particularly concerned or conscientious no one should die of shock when they find themselves with a partisan, fractured and bickering government.

Which is what we have right now. We have not been holding anyone, including ourselves, accountable and as a result we are over \$20 trillion in debt with a tax code that even confuses the IRS.

There's more:

We are despised the world over.

A bit less than 15 percent of Americans need government help putting food on the table and a lot of our fellow citizens, perhaps even you, are either working one job that isn't quite full-time, or are working a couple of jobs to make ends meet, something I've found myself doing at times the past few years.

I believe you and me – we the people – are entitled to better.

We are entitled to a country that has a flourishing economy anchored in low taxes and free markets.

We are entitled to an income tax experience that does not fill us with dread and take too much of our money.

We are entitled to a country other nations respect.

More than anything we are entitled to good government because good government will make everything else happen.

We don't have good government right now and we are not going to have it until we start demanding it on Election Day. We have a collective responsibility – to ourselves, to our country and, really, to a world waiting for an America it can respect again – to become demanding and participating voters.

Friends, I love our country and our fellow citizens as much as you do but, frankly, we are not a demanding and participating electorate right now. For proof we need look no further than the 2014 midterm elections.

On November 4, 2014 a bit more than one-third of United States Senators and all 435 members of the House of Representatives were up for reelection and the United States Congress had an approval rating of about eleven percent. This means almost nine of the ten people surveyed disapproved of the job Congress was doing and if you've taken the time to read this far that figure probably includes you.

Despite this, 96 percent – *96 percent!* – of incumbents were reelected. America took a flier on demanding better government, just like we did in 2016.

It is popular around election time to blame incumbents, the media and lobbyists but the bottom line is when the time came to cast our ballots, we were the ones that did the voting. There were no obstacles between us and the government we wanted. Nobody filled our ballots out for us; the responsibility for our government is ours. We will continue to get substandard government because if we're not demanding change, why should Congress deliver it?

The American Way has always been personal responsibility. When we start holding ourselves and our leaders accountable on Election Day we will find the country and government we want is there for the taking.

Chapter Three

The American Way: Peace

Peace - or, rather, our lack of it - is the biggest issue facing our country. A violent American government is the cause of our violent world and our violent country.

Not only is America at war right now, we have been at war every day since 1989 and the consequences have been as tragic as they have been far reaching

because both here and around the world the carnage simply is not stopping. Except for our world wars, our planet may well be the most violent it's ever been.

I believe this is America's fault. We have produced a planet mired in violence, hatred and destruction because of incessant US meddling. Domestically, our country has become a shooting gallery. We have an entire generation of Americans that have never known their country at peace.

As long as we insist on creating misery for other nations, other nations will continue to create misery for us. They will behead our citizens and fly airplanes into our buildings.

We will not have a peaceful world without a peaceful America.

History is a relentless instructor. More than anything it has taught us that American meddling does not work. From Korea to Vietnam to the Middle East all we do is wreak havoc, pain and destruction while solving nothing. It is a lesson history offers us every time but one we refuse to heed. If America had been at peace every day since 1989 we would have a vastly different world: 9/11 would not have occurred and ISIS would not exist. It's all our fault.

War is not working. Anyone who tells you that drone strikes and other violence will produce peace is either deluding themselves, trying to delude you or, as likely as not, both. It is beyond comprehension that an America that continues to meddle violently in other nations will ever produce a peaceful world.

America must allow other nations the dignity of conducting their affairs without US interference.

A peaceful American government will produce dividends at home, too. Mass shootings have become so frequent they are part of the American fabric now. The only question is when and where the next one will occur and how many will die. Mass shootings are so random none of us can say for certain the next one won't affect us in some way. One may have already affected you.

I believe we have mass shootings because we have violent citizens. I believe we have violent citizens because we have a violent American government, a government that has been at war continuously for almost three decades, since we invaded Panama in 1989.

That was a long time ago. I don't know where you were in 1989, but we were a couple of years out of the United States Navy. It was a time before we had an email address or a mobile phone. Postage was a quarter and gas was 93 cents a gallon. We looked it up. Our national debt was about \$3 trillion. We looked that up, too.

To expect a violent government to produce peaceful citizens is folly. Our government's policy of violently interfering in the affairs of other countries has knocked America so far its national path we don't even recognize their country anymore. Violence has become the go-to reaction for both America's government and her citizens.

The sooner we start treating other nations with respect, the sooner we allow them the dignity of conducting their affairs without the benefit of US interference, the sooner America will be at peace with both the rest of the world and with itself.

Now, an America at peace with itself is not going to put a halt to every gun tragedy, of course. Those truly intent on causing mayhem and tragedy are going to cause mayhem and tragedy. It's the way the world is built.

But a less violent American government will result in a less violent American people.

The American Way is peace. No nation has survived perpetual warfare and America will not be the exception to that. The only dividend war produces is more war.

Our country and our planet deserve to see the world produced by an America at peace.