



## The American Dream

By Rod Blum

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Our Declaration of Independence states simply yet powerfully: “that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” To my knowledge, no other nation on this planet uses these words as the foundation for their society. I believe this language also serves as the basis for the American Dream given that it emphasizes our individual capabilities – what each of us can achieve if we put our minds to it, regardless of whether or not we were born into a prosperous family. Millions of immigrants have come to our country to pursue the American Dream, for they knew you could go as far as you wanted to in this country. Sure there were hurdles to overcome, but with commitment, hard work and perseverance it could be done.

Even most of my liberal friends agree that these attributes are what made this country great and their common thread is the simple truth that you, as an individual, must take responsibility for your actions. In other words, you are what you are by the choices you make. We should not blame someone else if we’ve not lived up to our potential. To blame others for our unhappiness or station in life is to fall prey to being a victim. But sadly, this is the direction our country is being led.

Today many citizens view the American Dream as more of an entitlement than something to work towards – they wrongly believe there exists a shortcut to self-esteem and success. And our pandering politicians, led by Barack Obama, relentlessly tell Americans that they are victims; that their station in life is not their fault. It’s big business’ fault. Or it’s the Republicans’ fault. Or it’s special interests’ fault. Democrats always create a mythical boogie man – someone to blame; someone to be the bad guy. Then they divide Americans into groups of victims and bullies. Democrats pit American against fellow American. They want citizens to believe that those who achieve have done so at the expense of those who have not. They tell the “victims” that it’s the boogie man’s fault that they have not lived the American Dream. Of course the answer to the victims’ problems is more government.

Obama must have decided that the American Dream was dead. Lucky for us, he has something much better - it’s called the “American Promise”. His American Promise speaks of “collective sacrifice” – these are code words for socialism. Socialism is the doctrine that man has no right to exist for his own sake, that his life and his work do not belong to him, but belong to society. In other words, the exact opposite of those tenets our Declaration of Independence guarantees us. Aside from our founding documents, each of us should ask the question: Do you believe that it is moral and ethical for one person to be forcibly used to serve the purposes of another?

Instead of a government that encourages dependency and rewards mediocrity, let's create an opportunity society where each person is incentivized by our government to work hard, play by the rules and achieve. Then let us celebrate and REWARD their achievement, not penalize it. Let us, once again, celebrate American exceptionalism! This is the only way America can continue a leadership position in a highly competitive global marketplace. No one would argue that it's a tough economy at present and many citizens are nervous about keeping their jobs. But my Grandmother always said: "If you're looking for a helping hand, it's at the end of your arm." In other words, the only real change in your life is the change YOU decide to earn – the government can't do it for you.