

American dream is still alive

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American Dream is Still Alive My whole life I grew up believing that there is such thing as the American Dream. The last couple years my faith in that has been tested for sure. Today there are many problems with the economy; there are many people out there who think there's no such thing as the American Dream anymore. " The creation of a government that is out of control, and thus out of touch, robs every citizen, preventing fulfillment of the original American Dream (Thomas 569). I agree with this, however I am still proud to be an American and I believe that no matter how hard it is, you can do anything you put your mind to. It's not going to be easy; in fact it will be much more challenging than it used to be when the economy was different. But that doesn't mean that the American Dream has been lost forever. The American dream may not be exactly what it used to be, and it may be harder to achieve than ever before; however, it is still alive. One reason the American dream is harder to achieve is because America is in a financial crisis.

Costly war after costly war is being fought. Our men and women are fighting wars in other countries and are gone for years on end...many don't return at all. Our economy has taken a nose dive, and at a rate that many wonder if there is any hope of it ever coming back up. It seems that more people are unemployed than working, and even those who were highly employable before can't seem to find a job anymore. The top 4 percent of Americans hold the largest amount of money, and is not trickling down. Many believe we are going through another depression. Children are starving and standards of living are lowering. Wherever you choose to look—at the economy and jobs, the public schools, the budget deficits, the nonstop warfare overseas—you'll

see a country in sad shape (Herbert 564). " It is evident that things need to change. The American Dream may be buried, but we can dig it up and find ways to make it live long and prosperous once again. The news shows that unemployment is slowly dropping, but I can't help but wonder if that is because those people who receive unemployment benefits are no longer receiving benefits, not necessarily because they have a job, but because their money has run out.

In order to make it at all we need to be earning an income. Not to mention the fact that when we are working, most people aren't even earning a living wage; but what makes matters worse, unemployment is so high these days, just finding a job is becoming next to impossible. The high unemployment makes things so difficult these days. So many people are scrambling to make a living or to make ends meet. With the economy as fallen as it is, even highly educated people are without a job. Many people are finding out that you can be too educated for a regular job.

Others are finding that employers don't want to hire you if you are unemployed. Again, others are highly trainable and would make excellent employees, but employers don't want to take the time or spend the money to train. During a recession like this, many people need to be working two jobs just to make ends meet. But even fast food restaurants have raised their standards so high that they expect a resume before they consider you. With so little people hiring and those hiring having such high standards, people are becoming desperate just to find a job. State and local governments, faced with fiscal nightmares, are reducing services, cutting their work forces, hacking away at health and pension benefits, and raising taxes and fees. In

many cases, the austerity measures are punishing some of the most vulnerable people, including children, the sick, and the disabled (Herbert 565). " These cutbacks have had many ramifications on the American Dream. People who were well on their way to achieving it had their dream snatched out from under them as employers let people go, lowered wages, took away bonuses, and raised the fees on benefits or cut it all together.

Suddenly new grads needed more experience and education to get their foot in the door while earning barely enough to pay their rent, let alone their student loans. America has recently fallen into a great recession, and though some claim we are no longer in a recession, our country and has never quite bounced back. Our economy is fragile and unstable. " In June 2009.... native born workers lost 1.2 million [jobs] (Herbert 565). " Businesses are afraid to hire more workers; for fear that consumers aren't comfortable spending money quite yet.

Consumers are afraid to spend money for fear that they won't be earning any more. People who were once financially stable are barely getting by, some even homeless. This recession has been said to be equal to, if not worse than, the Great Depression. " The human suffering in the years required to recover from the recession will continue to be immense (Herbert 565). " Recovery may be happening, but is definitely an unstable process. Jobs are still hard to come by and a living wage is still almost unheard of. " The U. S. needs to develop a full-employment economy that provides jobs for all who want to work at pay that enables workers and their families to enjoy a decent standard of living (Herbert 565). " In this day and age, it is as much

about earning a wage that pays the bills as it is to have a job. What's the point of working 45 hours a week if it doesn't pay all your bills? Many people are willing to work the jobs that they may have never considered before, but those jobs don't come close to paying a living wage. Potential small business owners are having a hard time starting up, as banks are uneasy about giving business loans, slowing job growth even more.

Another hindrance in the comeback of our beautiful country is the enormous gap between our wealthiest and our poorest. " As long as income and wealth keep concentrating at the top, and the great divide between America's have-mores and have-lesses continues to widen, the Great Recession won't end, at least not in the real economy. Weak national real estate markets, sluggish job growth, and slow recovery of liquid assets lost during the recession are obstacles to a full recovery (King 574). " There was once a time where you could not exactly be rich, but not exactly be poor.

You could afford to live, have a decent job, and even go on vacation. Maybe you couldn't afford to own two brand new vehicles and put your children in expensive private schools, but you had a savings account that had money in it and were happy with where your hard work had taken you. That, my friends, is what used to be called the Middle Class. It is quickly becoming something of the past, and without those striving for the American Dream, may become a mythical fairytale that we tell our children and grandchildren about. The importance of education has fallen to the back burner as cuts to public school become greater.

As the saying goes, children are our future. They are the people that will be, one day, running our government. When cuts are constantly being made to

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public schools, children aren't getting what they need to get the kind of education that allows them to grow up to be critical thinking adults. " A monopolistic government school system keeps the poor from achieving their dreams, as many remain locked, producing graduates who lag behind other nations in subjects that matter (Thomas 569). " The subjects children are taught were chosen with care.

Every child has different talents, and those talents need to be fostered. When subjects get cut from schools, many children miss out on learning what they need to learn in order to grow and become who they are supposed to do. " There was a time when the United States understood the importance of educating its young people and led the way in compulsory public schooling. It also built the finest higher education system in the world. Now, although no one will admit it publicly, we've decided to go in another direction (Herbert 566). " This is sad but true.

Somewhere down the line, we must have forgotten that a poor education creates a poor society. There is only one teacher per classroom, but each classroom has over two dozen children, each having separate learning needs, and each having different learning styles. With funding being directed places other than public education, the result is schools closing. All over America school after school after school is being closed. This puts hardworking teachers out of business and crams the classrooms even more with children who require a proper education that consists of one-on-one time. Public figures talk endlessly about 'transformative changes' in public education, but the years go by and we see no such thing (Herbert 566). " Lately, it seems the only changes we've seen have not been what are best

for our education system. “ School systems around the country are being hammered with dreadful cutbacks and teachers are being let go in droves, not because they are incompetent, but strictly for budget reasons (Herbert 566). ” This leaves kindergartens with waiting lists and parents who have to pay upwards of \$300 a month kindergarten fees.

Some children are put in part time daycare, while others get full time. However, both go to first grade. I can't help but wonder if one is more prepared than the other? But I believe there is a silver lining to all of this. The American dream is still alive there is always hope for a better future. The fact that there hasn't been an overturn of government proves that we are strong. We can adapt to new challenges that come our way. We may get knocked down a time or two, but it's that light at the end of the tunnel—the one some call the American Dream—that get us back up to try again. As a nation, we have dealt with economic downturns in the past, and the American Dream has faced trials and tests before...We have adapted the values contained within the American Dream to meet new challenges (King 577). ” Many people have been hit hard with the economic changes. They acclimated to new situations, new ways of living, reinvented themselves, and in doing so, they have found their way back on top. One way we can help bring back the American Dream to its full potential, is to support local business and buy locally.

Entrepreneurs create businesses, hire people; people get paid, people shop. People have nice things and money in their pockets, they aren't so scared to help pay taxes and fund good schools. “ I believe it is necessary and imperative to continue to support the business mechanisms that sustain our

economy (King 577). " Without a booming economy, we don't have a functioning society. We need to support our brothers and sisters. We need to help those around us, and not let it burden us. All this will help create more jobs, and will in turn help the community.

If anyone works hard enough, they can " climb out of hardship and achieve success (King 577). " Hard work is key. It pays off. Sometimes it takes longer than we want it to, but if we don't give up, we will reap the reward. If we have proven anything in this day and age, it is that we are persistent. " Despite the recent recession, many have faith that as long as people believe they have a chance of becoming better off than they are today, then the American dream is intact (King 577). " We all have the American Dream inside us, and we will work to achieve it, doing whatever it takes.

I believe the American Dream is very much alive. It may not look exactly like it did 50, 60, or 70 years ago, but it is here to stay. Society has adapted and changed, and so has the American Dream. No longer is it about becoming as rich as one possibly can, but about being financially secure, having a job that pays a living wage, as well as having a savings. Stability is more important than material wealth. It's a good dream. It may not be so easy to obtain, but it is within reach. With hard work and a positive attitude, I believe it is much closer than we realize.

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