

Is the american  
dream achievable?



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The American dream came about during the United States Declaration of Independence where it was meant to be a land of freedom where prosperity and success to the people prevailed regardless of their social status or where or how they were born. All people were to be treated equally by having their rights exercised freely with their happiness. Children were to be given good education and career without any barriers. Everyone was to make his or her own choice without the obstacles of their class, caste, religion, race ethnicity (Kronenwetter, 1997). By this it meant life should be great, richer and be enjoyed to the fullest by everyone according to their opportunities and achievements.

Ever since independence, America has been seen to be a land of opportunity where good life can be achieved through your sweat, freedom of democracy is allowed and where everyone has a right to exercise his or her religion and moral beliefs. Equality was the in-thing. American Dream ever since has been operating under the principle of freedom but nowadays, much has changed in America. It has been born from a nation of freedom to a nation of materialism (Adamson, 2002). Before, one earned his living through hard work which was considered to be an achievement of financial success but nowadays people no longer look into the vision of the future which includes time, sweat and ultimate success but instead they sit in their comfort waiting for it to come true.

America being a nation of capitalism, the quest for money was part a way forward to achieve their dreams. Instant wealth to the Americans was never part and parcel to their success, working hard was always their dream.

During the colonization period, Benjamin Franklin counseled people on their

way to wealth, according to him, retiring early to bed and waking up earlier will make you healthier, richer and wiser (Adamson, 2002).

The American Dream education system has also been influenced towards not achieving the dream. One needs to qualify in a given area in order get an opportunity in the society instead of developing genuine competence and knowledge or show their interest. The poor who cannot afford education cannot fit in the system with whatever knowledge and experience they have because all this is left to the educated ones. Freedom of the people has also been altered because most of them nowadays have been turned into slaves to some people, the government and any other kinds of institutions. They have got no freedom of their own to rest. They work hard for other people instead of themselves. The achievement of security for all has also become a mirage with the United States topping the list of countries with the highest crime rates in the world. Crime rates heighten to new levels every day and curbing terrorism has become a hard nut to crack, increasing government spending and worsening the already bad economic situation of America hence hindering the achievements of the American Dream (Kronenwetter, 1997).

With all the above happenings, the American Dream can still be achieved through the norms that have been isolated. Norms such as old principles should be observed instead of being materialistic, the concept of being right or wrong, believing in inalienable freedom and the liberty of the individual. With the above, some achievements can be attained.

Adaptation to change in institutions, organization or the government can also contribute very much towards the achievement of the American Dream. Faithfulness in what the nation stands for, for instant obeying the rules or the constitution of the nation and being a good citizen rather than being an obligation to the country. Poverty, ignorance, oppression and those things which are meant to hinder the country's progress towards achieving its dream must be fought in all means (Lasch, 1995). With poverty, addressing the issue of inequitable distribution of wealth among the American people will solve the issue. This can be termed as a sign of justice and fairness among its people since there will be no favor or class of distinction (Adamson, 2002).

Education should be put into consideration because with the old principles forgotten, achievement in academic can lead to achievement of a dream, happy and prosperous life. Best education comes with hard work and with this, knowing the root course what is hindering the achievement of the American Dream today can be possible.

Economic crisis among the American citizen should be observed. Of recently, the Obama administration has been able to observe that by helping the needy through extending health and unemployment benefits and increasing food-stamp benefits. The problem of unemployment has been able to be addressed through the economic stimulus funding to the state and local government as they concentrate on other infrastructures such as repairing the aging transportation infrastructures.

Safety among the citizens should be observed. Violent crimes should be abolished. Instead of crime, good virtues such as peace and prosperity should prevail. With unity, the gift is happiness; integrity of the country is always showing true spirit of the citizen. Goal achieving has been part and parcel of everybody's life but obstacles at times do come on the way. Political instability in a country can affect one to achieve the nation's dream. If you want to start a business and the country or two groups are always at war with each other then your business will not grow either.

Lack of motivation and drive is a major and key contributor to the achievement of the set goals and dreams (Adamson, 2002). Intrinsic motivation for goal attainment increases once drive to follow through the plan. Developing a set of ambitious life dreams is one thing, but having the drive, motivation and determination to follow through and work toward making your dreams a reality is entirely different. Knowing the motivating factor and never losing sight of it aids in sticking to the action plans. Once motivation is not cultivated in ones inner being the spirit of making the first step towards achieving the dream is deterred and in the long run the dream shuttered. It's therefore a pre-requisite for one to set attainable dreams and walk the dream (Lasch, 1995). Flexibility in making decisions is another critical factor that impacts on dream achievement. Fixed mindedness is a deterrent factor since individuals are not allowed to think beyond in a wider context but rather follow the strict guidelines in achieving there set targets and as a result the spirit of invention and innovation is not appreciated. It is therefore upon every individual to look at various means of achieving the dream and the most productive decision empowered (Weir, 2007).

Skills and competences also sway once judgment in setting dreams. Having the skills to follow through with the desired action is an important factor to consider when elaborating your plan to achieve your dreams (Lasch, 1995). It is therefore once obligation to be handy in identifying his special attributes and align them with his dreams even if means developing the skills through training and research an example would be a carpenter will never achieve his dream of becoming the best unless he continuously improve on his skills.

Despite the above achievements and obstacles, they are those who have made the American Dream to become a reality. For instance Abraham Lincoln at some point was quoted saying “ Where is the American Dream ...” and this, he achieved. Kennedy Abraham Lincoln who was the 16th president of the U. S between 1861 and 1961 took over power when the country crisis of Civil War was on the rise with millions of the Americans already dead (Kronenwetter, 1997). The war was between two worlds with their own visions. These worlds were the Union states of the North and Confederate states of the South. This gave rise to the War of Succession or Civil War. This was a time when the unity of the U. S and its territories were at risk. Lincoln was determined to end this war through the means of unifying the nation. By achieving this, he arrested those suspected to be secessionists and put them under detention without trial.

Lincoln career as a president was a very humble person who never loved war. At one point, Lincoln became under attack by both sides of the Union states of the North and Confederate states of the South, Radical Republicans voiced for harsher treatment of the South while Democrats desired Compromise of which he fought back with patronage by making them feel

sorry for each other (Adamson, 2002). He had power in speech to convince the American people. For example, at one occasion when addressing the Gettysburg in 1863, he was quoted saying “-and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, will not perish from the earth” (Kronenwetter, 1997). This statement remained to be an icon of the America’s dedication to the principles of nationalism, equal rights, liberty, and democracy.

Abraham Lincoln dream came true when he abolished slavery in the U. S. With time discrimination and segregation came to an end. Racism only remained in many older North Americans while the young ones continued to interact with different races. Civil Rights Act allowed anybody from any race to study in the U. S with no discrimination. Equality was considered first. Most migrants moved in to the U. S in search of different freedoms and opportunities. Other intermarried for example the blacks and the whites. Then black man, Barrack Obama, with Lincoln’s footsteps came into being the president. Abraham Lincoln remained a hero and one of the greatest U. S presidents after giving freedom to the slaves (Lasch, 1995).

Martin Luther King Jr. was never left behind for fighting for the American Dream. Being a Baptist minister, he was in the war front fighting discrimination against the blacks. All he wanted was racial equality among the Americans. 1963 is the day to be remembered when Martin and his staff went to Birmingham Alabama and protested non-violently. This kind of behavior intrigued bad publicity, forced the white leaders of Birmingham to agree to some anti-segregation demands. He was later arrested and jailed.

This was the last time to be seen in public until the memorial of Abraham Lincoln (Lasch, 1995).

Here, he invoked the name of Lincoln in his “ I Have a Dream “ which was televised across the country. In his speech, he talked about slavery which Lincoln had fought for before. In his own word he said, “ I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood” (Lasch, 1995). All he meant was the equality among the American people. His speech of “ I Have a Dream” to the Americans has achieved the American Dream. The fight for the racism has been achieved equality between the blacks and the whites (Lasch, 1995). Black people are being offered same opportunities in the American at large.

Kings was against crime to the humanity, he was against the Vietnam War. In his speech titled “ Beyond Vietnam” he openly declared that he was against U. S involvement with the Vietnam War. To him, U. S was in Vietnam “ to occupy it as an American colony” and calling the American government “ the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today”.

He also didn't miss the wealth and poverty topic, to him, U. S needed some moral changes in which he said, “ A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look across the seas and see individual capitalists of the West investing huge sums of money in Africa, Asia, and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries (Lasch, 1995). Politically, his prediction about his four children



living in a nation where a black will rule came to be accomplished the Barrack Obama. Martin Luther King Jr. left a legacy behind for fighting equality and human rights.

Despite this kind of lives, the two leaders demonstrated leadership in themselves. Trying to look at their personalities and their achievements, we can see each having growing up to fight for the rights of the human nature. Their life stories, memorable phrases and quotes and incredible feats that give us a glimpse of what we already know. Their destinies were shaped by the obstacles but they managed to overcome it.

For instance, Born on February 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln came from a very humble family and made a living with simple jobs like cutting wood, failed merchant. With nine years old, Lincoln lost her mother due to milk sickness, and then her older sister died also when giving birth at a young age (Kronenwetter, 1997). His father re-married again of which his father's wife became very close to Lincoln despite the distance between him and his father. Slavery was part of their family. This haunted Lincoln very much with the kind of hard labor his father was going through due to lack of education. All chores expected of him as a male in the household such as building rail fences was his work. Lincoln worked so hard when he was young and whatever he earned, he gave his father and when he grew older, he at times loaned some money from his father.

His romance life was also full of obstacles, her first love died of typhoid fever before they could settle together. Her second romance didn't work either after courting for some time. At the end, he married Mary Todd Lincoln

whom they had children together who died later with different ages. This haunted both parents so much and at some point Mary was committed to a mental care asylum in 1875 while Abraham Lincoln suffered from “melancholy” (Kronenwetter, 1997).

Life went on with lots of ups and down until Lincoln became a legislator of Illinois, an advocate against the extension of slavery, later a candidate of the nascent Republican Party, later the President of the United States, and, finally, a man of principles who believed in the essential virtue of democracy for resolving conflict of which he fought for so much and at one point, he was quoted saying “As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy” (Lasch, 1995). Education wise, Lincoln was very smart. He observed nature with a lot of closeness which enabled him later to accomplish his American dream.

Living in Illinois opened his future of becoming a lawyer and this helped him sharpen up the skills of politics. Through politics he managed to become the president of the United States of America. Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, a well-known actor and confederate spy from Maryland in 1864. Martin Luther King Jr. was also assassinated in 1968 in his room that he had booked. He was born in January 15, 1929 as Michael which later changed to be Martin, grew up in a Christian family. His father was a pastor in Ebenezer Baptist church in Atlanta where he acted as a co-pastor. Martin was a learned man, he attended segregated schools in Georgia, graduated from high school at the age of fifteen; he received the B. A. degree in 1948 from Morehouse College, a distinguished Negro institution of Atlanta from

which both his father and grandfather had graduated. Three years after his theological study at Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania where he was elected president of a predominantly white senior class, he was awarded the B. D. in 1951 (Kronenwetter, 1997).

Later he married MaCoretta Scott, a young woman of uncommon intellectual and artistic attainments of whom he had two sons and two daughters with. He worked as a strong worker for Civil Rights for the members of the race. He fought for the equality of the American citizens. Left behind a legacy of predicting that one day the American will be ruled by the blacks. Of which it has been accomplished. This two leaders had some few things in common, the both fought for the humanity rights (Lasch, 1995). The both wanted America to be a land where freedom is exercised and opportunity citizen to both are adhered to. Through their fight for humanity, American Dreams have been achieved. Education wise, resources are being distributed freely to all the people.

In summary great people dream big, this can be translated to mean people will always try to get a good life. The Promised Land flowing with goodies will always attract masses; in view of this fact America has been seen by many as a country that promises the good life. What people do not realize is that the country was built through hard struggles and sacrifices to achieve the success. Successful people commit to achieving better than their peers. For them, commitment has becomes an instinctual habit they practice every day. However, commitment is not merely about the intention or the strength of your promises, it is all about taking action. Even the strongest commitment is just another broken promise unless a commitment to take

action occurs. In conclusion achieving once dream is a product of individual efforts and intrinsic power to venture into the world of unknown unveiling discoveries. America's top two icon leaders have lived the example and the idea of achieving once dreams made practical and many more yet to be unfolded.