

When We Lose Our Heroes

By Anna Von Reitz



Today, one of our beloved local Talk Show hosts is retiring, and people from all over Alaska are calling in and expressing their thanks to him for discussing things that others were bullied or paid NOT to discuss, for saying the things that others were afraid to say, and for providing a calm and steady voice of reason in the midst of so much insanity.

Some of his listeners wept and told him how much his broadcast had meant to them over the course of years he has been on the air. A woman on the edge of sobbing described how he had been her early morning comfort, a ray of hope and common sense for years as she got up each day and packed her husband's lunch.

I could put myself in her place and teared up for her loss.

In keeping with our January Mission to face our trauma, pain, and losses, we need to face the loss of our heroes, both the homely heroes of our own lives and the heroes of our national history.

I grew up in a community that hosted "Lincoln Day Dinners". Every [February 12th](#), the banquet rooms and church basements were full of those gathered to remember Lincoln, to applaud his moral clarity, to celebrate the end of slavery. And that is all well and good, until you realize what actually went on and the part that Lincoln played in the so-called Civil War.

Some heroes come into our lives like the early morning Talk Show host, and some come to us as part of the National Mythology, and either way, it hurts when they are gone. Sometimes this loss is echoed in the empty air space on a radio dial and sometimes it is reflected in a profound loss of faith and trust.

Even Lincoln's nickname, "Honest Abe", turned out to be a snide comment by insiders who knew how crooked Lincoln was. It turned out that "the Great Emancipator" was

actually emancipating the Southern Plantation owners from any legal obligation to feed and house their slaves. And the consecration of the Gettysburg Address, like Franklin Delano Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address, hid a venal commercial purpose far at odds with what the ringing words appeared to say.

All that good fellowship and celebratory spirit of the Lincoln Day Dinners that I remembered as a child turned bitter and sad; I finally knew the truth about Lincoln -- and I felt lessened and weakened by that, as if a major ally in life's battles had left the field in disgrace, leaving me that much more alone and my task, to tell the truth to other Americans, that much more thankless.

Who wants to know that their heroes aren't heroes, after all?

But there is this much to be said for losing our heroes -- whether it's an early morning Talk Show host with the courage to engage social controversy, or a towering hero from a National Mythology -- when we lose our heroes, we are challenged to become our own heroes.

We suddenly realize that it's up to us to fulfill that void and take up the torch and carry it onward with as much courage and commitment as we can muster.

Think of the heroes you've lost along the way --- the Fathers and Mothers who didn't fulfill their role, or equally, the wonderful parents we had who are now gone, the teachers, the preachers, the national icons, the religious idols, those who rose up and "went over the top" when the chips were down, and those who failed to do so.

Examine who your heroes are and why. Give it some honest thought. Let the emotions attached to them, both good and bad, rise up.

I have long ago forgiven Abraham Lincoln for being what he was -- a British sympathizer and Big Business shill. I've put him in perspective, in the context of his times, within the framework of his profession and his own ambitions --- and let him go, in peace.

It doesn't matter what Lincoln did or failed to do. The past has a way of receding into the distance, leaving us with whatever good or evil inheritance it bequeaths to us.

What matters is who we are in our own lives and what we do with our inherited legacy now.

Do we condemn slavery in all its forms with all our hearts? Then it doesn't matter that Lincoln betrayed our hopes over a hundred and fifty years ago. Here and now, we have it in our hands to be our own heroes, and put an end to slavery, once and for all.

Are we appalled by Lincoln's deceitful over-reaching, his usurpation against the powers of the lawful government? Then let us be appalled, and let us correct it, even at this late date.

Most of all, use this time to cut yourself free from the illusions and dependency of hero worship and idealization. Let go of any blame or anger over what someone else could have or should have done, because it all comes down to me and you, here and now.

We are the heroes, or not, if we fail to be; this is our inheritance, Lincoln's Legacy, and it's up to us to rise up on wings of eagles, or plow our noses into the somnolent dirt, forgetting the true and unsung heroes of our country and our own lives, shying away from the challenge that they present to each one of us.

Will we be the heroes of our own lives?

Will we pass on a legacy that runs true "from sea to shining sea"?

No more lies, no more excuses, no more hero worshiping, no more hero blaming, either. Just the cold clear and beautiful winter day, letting the past wash away, until we all stand together in this one eternal moment called "now"--- and decide to be our own heroes.

See this article and over 3900 others on Anna's website here: www.annavonreitz.com

To support this work look for the Donate button on this website.