

mission statement

My actions should be self-explanatory, and since in our self-obsessed culture words seldom match the deed, writing a mission statement would seem questionable. So judge me by my actions. Maybe some will be scared enough to wake from their walking dream state - am I therefore a martyr or terrorist? I would prefer to be thought of as a 'spiritual warrior'. Our so-called leaders are the real terrorists in the world today, responsible for more deaths than Osama bin Laden.

I have had a wonderful life, both full and full of wonder. I have experienced love and the joy and heartache of raising a child. I have jumped out of an airplane, and escaped a burning building. I have spent the night in jail, and dropped acid during the sixties. I have been privileged to have met many supremely talented musicians and writers, most of whom were extremely generous and gracious. Even during the hard times, I felt charmed. Even the difficult lessons have been like blessed gifts. When I hear about our young men and women who are sent off to war in the name of God and Country, and who give up their lives for no rational cause at all, my heart is crushed. What has happened to my country? we have become worse than the imagined enemy - killing civilians and calling it 'collateral damage', torturing and trampling human rights inside and outside our own borders, violating our own Constitution whenever it seems convenient, lying and stealing right and left, more concerned with sports on television and ring-tones on cell-phones than the future of the world.... half the population is taking medication because they cannot face the daily stress of living in the richest nation in the world.

I too love God and Country, and feel called upon to serve. I can only hope my sacrifice is worth more than those brave lives thrown away when we attacked an Arab nation under the deception of 'Weapons of Mass Destruction'. Our interference completely destroyed that country, and destabilized the entire region. Everyone who pays taxes has blood on their hands.

I have had one previous opportunity to serve my country in a meaningful way - at 8:05 one morning in 2002 I passed Donald Rumsfeld on Delaware Avenue and I was acutely aware that slashing his throat would spare the lives of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of innocent people. I had a knife clenched in my hand, and there were no bodyguards visible; to my deep shame I hesitated, and the moment was past.

The violent turmoil initiated by the United States military invasion of Iraq will beget future centuries of slaughter, if the human race lasts that long. First we spit on the United Nations, then we expect them to clean up our mess. Our elected representatives are supposed to find diplomatic and benevolent solutions to these situations. Anyone can lash out and retaliate, that is not leadership or vision. Where is the wisdom and honor of the people we delegate our trust to?

To the rest of the world we are cowards - demanding Iraq to disarm, and after they comply, we attack with remote-control high-tech video-game weapons. And then lie about our reasons for invading. We the people bear complete responsibility for all that will follow, and it won't be pretty.

It is strange that most if not all of this destruction is instigated by people who claim to believe in God, or Allah. Many sane people turn away from religion, faced with the insanity of the 'true believers'. There is a lot of confusion: many people think that God is like Santa Claus, rewarding good little girls with presents and punishing bad little boys with lumps of coal; actually God functions more like the Easter Bunny, hiding surprises in plain sight. God does not choose the Lottery numbers, God does not make the weather, God does not endorse military actions by the self-righteous, God does not sit on a cloud listening to your prayers for prosperity. God does not smite anybody. If God watches the sparrow fall, you notice that it continues to drop, even to its death. Face the truth folks, God doesn't care, that's not what God is or does. If the human race drives itself to extinction, God will be there for another couple million years, 'watching' as a new species rises and falls to replace us. It is time to let go of primitive and magical beliefs, and enter the age of personal responsibility. Not telling others what is right for them, but making our own choices, and accepting consequences.

"Who would Jesus bomb?" This question is primarily addressing a Christian audience, but the same issues face the Muslims and the Jews: God's message is tolerance and love, not self-righteousness and hatred. Please consider "Thou shalt not kill" and "As ye sow, so shall ye reap". Not a lot of ambiguity there.

What is God? God is the force of life - the spark of creation. We each carry it within us, we share it with each other. Whether we are conscious of the life-force is a choice we make, every minute of every day. If you choose to ignore it, nothing will happen - you are just 'less conscious'. Maybe you are less happy (maybe not). Maybe you grow able to tap into the universal force, and increase the creativity in the universe. Love is anti-entropy. Please notice that 'conscious' and 'conscience' are related concepts.

Why God - what is the value? Whether committee consensus of a benevolent power that works through humans, or giant fungus under Oregon, the value of opening up to the concept of God is in coming to the realization that we are not alone, establishing a connection to the universe, the experience of finding completion. As individuals we may exist alone, but we are all alone together as a people. Faith is the answer to fear. Fear opposes love. To manipulate through fear is a betrayal of trust.

What does God want? No big mystery - simply that we try to help each other. We decide to make God-like decisions, rescuing falling sparrows, or putting the poor things out of their misery. Tolerance, giving, acceptance, forgiveness.

If this sounds a lot like pop psychology, that is my exact goal. Never underestimate the value of a pep-talk and a pat on the ass. That is basically all we give to our brave soldiers heading over to Iraq, and more than they receive when they return. I want to state these ideas in their simplest form, reducing all complexity, because each of us has to find our own answers anyway. Start from here...

I am amazed how many people think they know me, even people who I have never talked with. Many people will think that I should not be able to choose the time and manner of my own death. My position is that I only get one death, I want it to be a good one. Wouldn't it be better to stand for something or make a statement, rather than a fiery collision with some drunk driver? Are not smokers choosing death by lung cancer? Where is the dignity there? Are not the people the people who disregard the environment killing themselves and future generations? Here is the statement I want to make: if I am required to pay for your barbaric war, I choose not to live in your world. I refuse to finance the mass murder of innocent civilians, who did nothing to threaten our country. I will not participate in your charade - my conscience will not allow me to be a part of your crusade. There might be some who say "it's a coward's way out" - that opinion is so idiotic that it requires no response. From my point of view, I am opening a new door.

What is one more life thrown away in this sad and useless national tragedy? If one death can atone for anything, in any small way, to say to the world: I apologize for what we have done to you, I am ashamed for the mayhem and turmoil caused by my country. I was alive when John F. Kennedy instilled hope into a generation, and I was a sorry witness to the final crushing of hope by Dick Cheney's puppet, himself a pawn of the real rulers, the financial plunderers and looters who profit from every calamity; following the template of Reagan's idiocracy.

The upcoming elections are not a solution - our two party system is a failure of democracy. Our government has lost its way since our founders tried to build a structure which allowed people to practice their own beliefs, as far as it did not negatively affect others. In this regard, the separation of church and state needs to be reviewed. This is a large part of the way that the world has gone wrong, the endless defining and dividing of things, micro-sub-categorization, sectarianism. The direction we need is a process of unification, integrating all people into a world body, respecting each individual. Business and industry have more power than ever before, and individuals have less. Clearly, the function of government is to protect the individual, from hardship and disease, from zealots, from the exploitation, from monopoly, even from itself. Our leaders are not wise persons with integrity and vision - they are actors reading from teleprompters, whose highest goal is to stir up the mob. Our country slaughters Arabs, abandons New Orleans, and ignores the dieing environment. Our economy is a house of cards, as hollow and fragile as our reputation around the world. We as a nation face the abyss of our own design.

A coalition system which includes a Green Party would be an obvious better approach than our winner-take-all system. Direct electronic debate and balloting would be an improvement over our non-representative congress. Consider that the French people actually have a voice, because they are willing to riot when the government doesn't listen to them.

"Any people anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up, and shake off the existing government..." - Abraham Lincoln

With regard to those few who crossed my path carrying the extreme and unnecessary weight of animosity: they seemed by their efforts to be punishing themselves. As they acted out the misery of their lives it is now difficult to feel anything other than pity for them.

Without fear I go now to God - your future is what you will choose today.