



## INTRODUCTION



“If American liberty loses its luster, the dimming will come from within. It will be due to our own lack of attention and devotion. Without patriotism, there cannot be a United States. It falls upon us—upon you and me—to take care of this miraculous American democracy, to make it work, to *love* it.” (Dr. William J. Bennett and John T.E. Cribb, page xii Introduction, *The American Patriot’s Almanac*)

As parents, we are the role models for our children, our future. We show them what it’s like to love (or hate). Expressions of love come in different forms—love of parents, love of a spouse, love of siblings, family and friends, and love of country.

When we talk about how our government victimizes, terrorizes, conquers and destroys, we show our kids that this land is a land of hate. People at the highest levels of our own government have spent significant time apologizing to those who wish to hurt us. Maybe it’s because they believe we should not be the leader in the world.

That's not what is going to keep us great.

Showing our children what is strong about our nation, why we are the greatest nation, and who fought to bring this greatness and opportunity to them—that's how we show our love for this nation. That's how we express our pride and love of country.

Teaching our children to pledge allegiance, not blindly, but out of pride for a country so grand, so divinely inspired that we added the words "under God" to our Pledge of Allegiance only 60 years ago. That's what teaches them about why we are exceptional, why we truly are the "shining city upon the hill" as President Ronald Reagan famously referenced in his farewell speech.

Teaching about the Founding Fathers, the men who lost their homes, property, families and, in many cases, their lives, so that we can live in the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave. These are the stories that spark that flame of patriotism in a child's heart.

Do your kids think about these things? Probably not.

Why not? Because there's a good chance they don't even know about the struggles our founders endured for them, because many of our schools spend very little time on this subject. I guarantee you, when your children do learn, after you teach them, they will have a new found appreciation for their own freedom, the price of freedom and the long-lasting effect it has. I've seen this light dawn in my own children's eyes.

They will stop fixating on all the *victims* they learn about in school every day—the slaves, the oppressed, the victims of civil rights violations. They will start thinking about having pride in themselves, in their families, in their country and its history.

They might even make the ultimate choice as a patriot by putting their own lives on the line by joining the military. Putting themselves in harm's way just like our founders did, so that others might be free,

and sleep soundly at night, never wondering if they would wake to the sound of gunfire or explosions.

They most likely will never come to these conclusions on their own. You, as a parent, must help them discover these things within themselves, as individuals.

This book gives you, the parents, the tools you need to start your children, grandchildren, cousins, nieces and nephews, down the pathway of true and deep pride in our country. Through the words of 13 patriots profiled within these pages, you will hear what patriotism is about. You will learn how these patriots were raised, what they have done to raise their own patriots and what suggestions they give to you about how to raise your own patriot.

Their words will help you instill in your children the wisdom of our founders and the devotion so many have to this beautiful, divine country we have the privilege to call “home.”

In his introduction to *The American Patriot's Almanac*, Bill Bennett wrote these perfect words: “If the United States is not worth loving, then no country is.” He wrote, “Nobody wants the United States to be a republic of sheep. We need, in James Madison’s own words, a nation of ‘loving critics’ who use their free minds and free wills to examine the country’s actions closely and raise concerns when necessary.”

In recent years, some “loving critics” have gotten quite a bit of attention. This is why so much attention is being paid to the Tea Party movement. The giant awoke. It started to make noise.

National pride soared almost a decade ago when President George W. Bush, dressed in a flight suit, jumped down from a fighter jet that landed on the *USS Abraham Lincoln* as it returned from its combat mission in the Persian Gulf. We needed that pride after the horror of September 11, 2001. We need that again.



And no book about this great country's founding and principles would be complete without the mention of divine inspiration and providence. When you read *Red State* Editor Erick Erickson's profile, he references 1864 as a year that turned the tide for the Civil War. He also mentions his discussions with Vice President Dick Cheney and *The Weekly Standard* Executive Editor, Fred Barnes, about this specific year, and how, without divine intervention, the war would have turned another way and our nation may have fallen.

Jackie Gingrich Cushman mentions that President Lincoln was waiting for a sign from God to deliver the Gettysburg Address. He got it via the Battle of Antietam. She also mentions the incredible events that happened to General George Washington during the Revolutionary War—his horses being shot out from underneath him, bullets flying through his clothes, but not hitting him—as examples that God had a plan for General Washington, and He watched over him to make sure this plan was carried out.

Without some level of faith in a higher being, understanding this great nation's past and potential is difficult. The phrase "In God We Trust" is deliberately printed on our currency as a reminder of our founding. We must trust in God that our country will stay great in perpetuity.

In these pages, you will hear the words of 13 patriots who are also sons and daughters, parents, even grandparents. They all have very different backgrounds and life experiences. Not all are household names, but their intent and purpose all serve one goal—to raise good patriots.

I'm proud to say I spoke to each of them, listened to their stories, and was honored to hear about a small slice of their lives. I am privileged to write their words and give you their thoughts about what they learned as children, what influenced them as individuals, and what they have done or are doing to influence their children now.

Within each chapter, the contributors give their suggestions and tips to parents about how to raise good patriots, by speaking to them about fundamental principles such as duty, sovereignty and heritage.

It's interesting that no two people had exactly the same advice, but many mention common themes. For example, political pundit Kevin Jackson, author/pundit Rachel Campos-Duffy and author/columnist Jackie Gingrich Cushman, all mention that you don't have to be born in this country to be a patriot and love our country. Hilldale College president, Dr. Larry Arnn, and the Reverend Steven Craft, both mention that we must teach our children to seek truth, not simply allow them to form their opinion of truth. Campos-Duffy and Cushman also agree that most kids understand much more than we give them credit for, and that we shouldn't underestimate their ability to grasp the concepts we want to discuss with them.

Each one of the participants has his or her own opinion, which does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the others in this book, this author, or the publisher of this book. But as a collective, all the participants have the same thing in common—a great love of our country and for its founding principles.

This book is about teaching your children to be their own people, no matter where they come out on the scale—right, left, moderate, whatever. You simply need to encourage them to think for themselves, to be their own people, and to understand the great opportunity living in this country allows for them.

I hope what you read in this book helps you learn more about our country, and I hope you pass this along to your own mini-patriots so we can keep our Republic strong, our faith unwavering, and our flag flying proudly forever.