

## Living Your Life in Difficult Times: A Speech by Tucker Carlson

What exactly is going on here in America? And I'm not-- We do a show every night so I'm paid to think about it, but there's so much happening that it's hard sometimes to get the overview when you're caught up in all the details and people are, you know, texting you this outrage or this abomination, and you sort of don't have a chance to pause and add them all up. I grew up in a world-- I'm 51-- so America in my youth was really simple ideologically. There was the Soviet Union which was Left, and then there were the normal people who are Right. And one side was for centralized control and communism and the other side was for market capitalism and freedom and Christianity and, you know, all the good things. It was Left vs. Right. And so it's with that framework that I kind of assess what's going on in the world. And I began to change my mind Memorial Day weekend when everything started to fall apart. And this group of people-- Oh yeah-- This group of people kind of like all of a sudden flooded into the streets and started breaking things. And so I called a bunch of friends of mine who were there covering this, and I said, "Who are these people?" I mean there was this well-publicized death of somebody in Minneapolis, and that was the pretext. But obviously there was something bigger going on here, and I called a bunch of friends who were covering this and I said, "Okay, what exactly is going on? Why are they breaking things and setting things on fire and hurting people?" And he's like, "Well, these are avowed Marxists and they're taking on capitalism. And then allied with them is another group that hates law enforcement, and they're trying to end the rule of law." And I'm like, "Okay, that makes sense." Like, you know, radical leftists, nihilists, whatever. But they have an agenda. They're against capitalism and they're against law enforcement. Okay. I mean, I'm not for that, but it kind of made sense. So I watched this thing unfold over the subsequent weeks and I noticed something really weird. The people who are against capitalism were destroying the smallest businesses in the country. They were going after, like, pizza places, and liquor stores, and camera shops (assuming any of those still exist). And dry cleaners. And car dealerships. And I was like, "Okay," you know, I guess that's capitalism, but in 2020, we have bigger examples like Apple and Google. The richest people in the world are capitalists, purportedly. They're the Tech monopolies. And not only are they not getting their windows broken, they're funding it. So like wait a second! How are the anti-capitalist people ignoring the actual capitalists? And then I look over at the other group and they're like, "We're against law enforcement!" I'm like, "All right, well, you can make the case that not all law enforcement is great. There's the biggest law enforcement agency in America called the FBI. And I think you could make a solid case that, you know, that they do good but they've also, you know, done some things for which they should be deeply ashamed. Because they were abuses of power. Including things that I saw personally. So if you're against law enforcement I suppose you're gonna be calling the FBI to account for its abuses of power. But no. Instead they went after the beat cop, the guy who's paid fifty-five grand a year to trudge through the most dangerous neighborhoods in the country, arrest criminals, help old ladies get cats out of trees or whatever, like do the retail end of law enforcement. This is a guy who may not have a college degree, who's not making any money, who has precisely zero power in American society. And this guy is the villain. Just like the random cop. Trust me. If you intersect with American law enforcement, you hope it's a random cop and not the FBI. I mean, he may take your beer but he's not gonna tap your phone or put you in prison the rest of your life for a thought crime. But for some reason the people who are against law enforcement completely ignored this. And I began to realize maybe what they're saying isn't what they actually mean. Maybe they're not telling the whole truth about their motives. Maybe the people who say they're against capitalism aren't. Maybe the people who say they're against law enforcement aren't. Maybe this is part of a larger trend where the big things are getting bigger, the powerful are getting more powerful, and everybody else is getting the shaft. Maybe what we're watching is a consolidation of power, and maybe the people who have it are using these forces as their kind of shock troops in order to get what they want. So if you're a huge corporation you want less competition. Monopoly is what you want to be. And maybe they're paying

for these vandals because they know in the end it'll make them more powerful. This occurred to me in, like, June, because I'm slow. And then I see the numbers. I see that—the money numbers—which are always like some of the most revealing numbers but they're the ones we never talk about because somehow that's like irrelevant. When everything is political and everything is ideological you kind of miss the obvious points, which is if you want to know who's in favor of the way things are, look at who's getting richer. And you see the numbers and you see that Jeff Bezos, who has been paying for this, has benefited wildly from it, you think, "Wait a second. Maybe there's something else going on." So that's a long preamble to the following point. I used to see the world in terms purely Left and Right, and I was and will remain on the Right. But I'm starting to think that's not exactly the way I need to understand what's happening in the world. Maybe it's a matter of the big vs. the small, the powerful vs. the powerless, the corporate vs. the independent. And that's another way to put it. The good vs. the bad. People who want to think for themselves vs. people who want to demand you think the way they tell you to think. Maybe that's what it's actually about. So then I reassessed a lot of the things I think are the worst about American society, and I began to realize those things aren't necessarily left-wing values. They're corporate values. So if you're running a company, what do you want? Obedient workers. You want people whose first loyalty is to you, who show up on Monday morning, who work through the weekend, who give you their all, who give you their lives. And in return you give them a paycheck but you give them no loyalty and no promise of long term commitment. It's a continuous one-night stand. You're just hooking up. You're being used. That's true. Contrast that with the relationship you have with the people you love--your best friends, your family, the people with whom you have, like, sincere intimate personal relationships. They're there for you no matter what. And when you get the diagnosis, or you get laid off from your job, or when things turn bad, when you have to wear a mask 'cause you ride your bike, or the world falls apart, those are the people who are there for you. Those are the people--[aside to audience member] you're freakin' me out, dude--[laughs]--this man's whispering sweet nothings to me from the front row. Those are the people who care about you, who actually care about you. They're not the ones who are telling you, "Oh we really care about you because of the way you look and we're on your side." These are the people who are actually on your side. Who are gonna loan you money or let you sleep on the couch or talk you through a tragedy in your own life. Those are the relationships that matter. They're the only relationships that matter, and they're almost never the relationship you have with your employer if you work for a huge company. I'm sorry, it's just true. So what you're seeing-- what you're seeing—and you see it up and down American society—is the triumph of the values of those people over the values that we hold and that made this country great. And if you're wondering why American families are falling apart, and if you're wondering why every directive you hear from Washington divides you from your family, that's why. Because they want your first loyalty to be to them. So the question in a circumstance like this is what do you do about it? How do you respond to it? And the first—the first thing you need to know is what's actually happening. This is not, you know-- Your enemy, as horrible as they are, is not some crazed ideologue wearing black spray painting statues. That person is loathsome and should be in jail, trust me. I call for that nightly. But your actual enemy is the person who's funding him and making that kind of behavior possible. And doing it for a very specific reason. To tear down the past, to destroy the past. Now why do they want to destroy the past? **Because when you destroy the past you eliminate all reference points. If you have no idea what came before you, you have no idea what normal is.** And you cannot understand the consequences of what's happening now if you can't look to the past and understand the consequences of the same behavior in another time. Right? The root of wisdom is knowing what happened before. I mean, that's the road map. So when you destroy that, you have an entire country that is very easily manipulated. Okay? So the first thing to know is that's what's going on.

The second thing to know is that small is almost always better than big. That's the truth. The circle of people in your life who care enough about you to help you when things go wrong is really small. There are a lot of people—your friends [with] Instagram or Facebook or whatever in the fake digital world that we've been lulled into participating in-- But the actual number of people who will take affirmative steps to help you is very, very small. It's not 350 million. That's how many people are in this country. It's not seven billion. It's like eight. So your loyalty always has to be to them, to your family and your closest friends above anything else. Period. And anyone who tells you otherwise-- Anyone who tells you that your real loyalty's gotta be to some larger group of people, some political group or some group of people who look like you-- Give 'em your middle finger. Those are your enemies. I'm serious. I'm serious. They are trying to destroy the fortifications that will protect you through life which are the people you love and who love you back. Okay? So that's the first thing to know. Small is always bigger—better. Be distrustful of concentrations of power. They can be easily misused. This is like a basic life point that we seem to have forgotten. They can be easily misused and often are. So if something is enormous, it's a threat to you. Period. Whether it's a giant boulder you're standing under for your Christmas card picture that could topple over and flatten you or whether it's Google, the largest and most powerful company in human history. Google is a threat to you because it's so powerful. It's a greater threat to you than the U.S. government. It has more power. And it uses it in ways that are hidden, and it is totally unaccountable to you. As frustrating as the federal government can be, and I spent my life raging against it, at least on a theoretical level you could vote them out. Power from a company like Google is completely resistant to your views. They don't care what you think and they have no reason to care what you think. Okay? So here's the way I think about it. All this stuff that's going on—there's very little that we can actually control. Let's just be totally honest about that. And by the way, you should always keep that in mind through life. You have less control than you think you do. You didn't control your birth, you can't add an hour to your life. You just can't. No one can, no one's ever been able to, no one ever will be able to. So if you want to be wise and make clear headed decisions, just remember there are a lot of things you can't control. Focus on some of the things that you can control. It's like the famous [...] quote. The thing that you can control is whether your personal life is happy, productive, and has inherent meaning. Period. And no one wants to say that because it never increases their power to encourage you to have a normal happy personal life. It never increases their power at all. In fact, it detracts from their power because you're gonna wind up, finding someone, getting married, having kids, and being more loyal to them than to your political or corporate leaders. And that's why they work against it. In fact, that is the main threat to their power. And if you're wondering why big companies across the country are now offering to freeze the eggs of their female employees, it's not because they're compassionate. It's 'cause they're demanding that you give them the best years of your life to serve them. That you put off the thing that gives our lives meaning above all else, which is passing on your genes, having children—that's the core meaning in life—that you put that off so you can sell more widgets for them and juice the stock price. And in return you get what? Nothing. They don't know your last name. But they'll freeze your eggs because, "We're a compassionate and enlightened company." Yeah. No. 'Cause they want total control. And it shows you. Why are the big companies so in favor of social policies that degrade the family? Pretending that men and women are exactly the same. Which they are not. They are not. They are very different, and they need each other. They need each other in order to be whole. That's the truth. They fit together like a jigsaw puzzle, physically and spiritually, for a reason, which is they complement each other, they need each other. We need each other. And anyone who tells you we don't is your enemy. So the point, in case this isn't clear, is that what actually matters-- I mean I could-- Trust me, I could bore you for four hours on the intricacy of this or that policy, but I was just brooding on this in the car, drinking my Perrier-- I'm Tucker Carlson for Perrier-- so pause to refresh [...]-- like what actually matters? What can you actually control? Very little. And so you should focus on the things you can and you should recognize what's going on here and who's your friend and who's your enemy. Anyone who encourages you to

think for yourself, to be more independent-minded—and economically independent—not just have an independent conscience and think whatever you want—but be able to support yourself and your family-- Anyone who encourages that is your friend. Anyone who tells you, “You can’t live without me, you need me-- you need to be loyal to me-- give me your everything,”-- that person is a false god. And do not worship that person. I don’t care who it is. It’s true. ‘Cause there’s a reason. There’s a reason for that. So how do wise people live? Like if you’re –I’m not young, so I can’t actually see many of you-- but I suspect there are lot of people, like, under thirty here, right? Charlie made that claim. So if you’re young and you’re out of step politically, and clearly you are or you wouldn’t be here listening to America’s most despised talk show host ramble on – yeah, well-- If you’re young-- sorry—I’m sorry for the self-reference—I try to avoid it-- So like if you’re young and the world is changing really fast, in fact so fast that almost nobody can get a handle on where it’s going or what it means, it’s very hard to add it all up. It’s very easy to isolate, “Here are 19 shocking things that happened yesterday.” It’s very hard to see the pattern in them, and most of the people who see the patterns in them are also, by the way, crazy. ‘Cause sometimes crazy people can see the big picture, but I’m being dead serious, by the way. I always have a couple of crazy people on staff ‘cause they can see things. I’m not joking. But if you’re young and, like, this is all happening-- You know, I’ve got kids-- I’ve got one child in college [in Burgoyne] so I sort of know what it means to be twenty-one or eighteen or twenty-five or whatever-- It’s, like, very bewildering. So what should you do? How should you live? And, so-- ‘Cause I can’t control myself. ‘Cause I never can. Here’s my prescription. Okay? The very first thing I would do, and I try to do every single day, is remember that it ends. Like the big lie in American life—and there are many lies—but the biggest lie, the one that has the deepest roots and the worst effects is that no one ever dies. That no one ever dies. It’s like the one topic-- You could-- I could get up here and, like, tell you about my sex life, not that you’d be interested. But I could get up here and say anything and, like, no one would be shocked. But the one thing that is completely shocking to people is that people die. Like that’s the verboten topic. Like no talking about that. It’s awful. And even now I can see people’s [sour] faces, like, “Ooh. Boo hoo. The death talk.” But it is also, at the same time, the one thing that’s true of every living person and has always been and always will be. There’s an end to it. It’s the basic fact of life. It is not just a fact. It is the basic fact. This play has a finale. And it does tell you something about the people in charge, and it’s the one topic they never want to discuss. “Are you kidding? We got medicine for that. Why don’t you exercise more? Are you joking?” But none of that in the end will change that unchanging fact. That’s called Nature. The people running our culture, our government, and our economy are fundamentally at war with Nature. I mean that in the broadest sense. They may claim to be environmentalists. None of them have ever gone outside, by the way. None of them. They can be environmentalists if they want, but they are fundamentally at war with Nature. The basic fact of Nature is that life begins, it has an arc, and then it ends. So what does that mean for you? It doesn’t mean be depressed. It means face it head on and think through the implications. There are many. Here’s the most basic: You don’t have the time you think you do. Don’t waste time. That’s the bottom line. Don’t waste time. And I mean literally not a second. I’ve wasted-- looking back at my life which I try not to do--but I’ve wasted, like, a ton of money in my life. A ton. I’ve been out of money ‘cause I-- I’m not good at money. I’m not good at math, okay? And I’ve never really regretted that. I mean at certain times I’ve been concerned about it. But I’ve never been like, “Oh, I wish I hadn’t ordered,” you know, like, “an extra French toast from room service.” ‘Cause the truth is I liked—you know—I enjoyed it. I do not regret any of that. The only thing I regret in retrospect is wasting time. That is a bitter pill. That is tough to acknowledge. I wasted time. Because you can’t get that back. That’s a cliché that old people drop on you, and you’re like, “All right, grandpa, right. Life goes fast, I bet, when you’re eighty.” But the truth is they’re right. That’s the one thing that old people say that you should definitely believe. If you’re lucky you’ll be older before you think. And if you’re unlucky, hit by a bus walking out of the convention center. It’s just true. Sorry. So back up from that. Do not waste time. So what does that mean? It doesn’t just mean work harder at

your job. It means don't delay adulthood. **Don't delay full life. The most upsetting trend from my perspective [...]—in a country full of upsetting trends—is this idea that, “I'm gonna get married and have kids after I'm a success at work.” ‘Cause, like, the people at work are gonna, like, help you succeed so you can get married and have kids and leave the company? Yeah, I don't think so. No. They're gonna get what they can from you.** And maybe they're nice people and maybe they're not, but their interests are not the same as your interests. Your interest is to participate fully in human life. In your life. To be fully human, to experience it to the maximum extent you possible can for the time that you have. That's the truth. So my advice is exactly the opposite, and I mean this with heartfelt sincerity. You should get married as soon as you can. And you should do it-- You should do it while you're too young. And then after you get married too young, you should have more kids than you can afford. Okay? And then, after you do that you should try to get a job for which you are not qualified. Okay? You should jump face first into the pool of life. I mean it. I mean it. Put a blindfold on-- In fact, get up on the roof-- I'm serious. Get to the back of your double-wide-- You've got an above ground pool there-- and just run right off the end like that. That's you hitting life face first. Will it hurt? Yeah. Yeah. But you've gotta enter the pool. You do. And every day that you delay that you will regret. Trust me. Trust me. Seek meaning. Seek intensity. Meaning comes from other people. I've spent my whole life debating ideology and politics and I'm deeply interested in it, and I'm deeply ideological. I don't say that as a point of pride, I say that as a confession. I don't you can be too ideological. But I think in the end-- I mean literally at the end—you will not look back and say, you know, “I just wish they're lowered the marginal tax rate by six percent. My life would've been a victory.” You're just not gonna say that. I don't think anyone in human history—I don't think Hayek said that on his death bed. Maybe he did. I wasn't there. But the point is, everything that you do now should be serving in a positive way your long term interests, which may not be that long term. Like, do it now. And anything that anesthetizes you or keeps you from fully experiencing the only life that you have, stop it. I mean—I totally mean that. I'm like the only adult who's against weed. Everyone loves the weed, and everyone I know smokes the weed. I'm sure you guys all smoke the weed. I'm sure that your dab pen's right now in your pockets. But the reason-- Yeah, you've got a dab pen, baby. No dab pen? Okay. Got it. Got it. Every time I say this at, like, a dinner party everyone looks at me like, “Oh, I thought you were cool. Oh god—the anti-drug guy again.” Okay. I'm actually not—I don't have an ideological problem with it. I have a practical problem with it. And anything that causes you to experience life less deeply-- Anything that causes you to miss the amazing show going on right now in front of you is stealing from you. It's stealing your life. And it's not just weed—that's just the beginning. And I don't want to get, like creepy about it or too specific, but there're a lot of things that people are into now—a lot of them digitally that are detractors from the intensity of life. Right? They make it easier to pretend that everything's fine. And they also make it harder to acknowledge how amazingly wonderful everything is. They dull you. You don't want to be dull. You want at the end to say, “Holy smokes, that was ridiculous!” Like, “Some of it was amazing. Some of it was, like, shockingly bad. I can't believe that happened. But I was there for all of it.” You don't want to wake up in the third act and be like, “What the hell just happened?” You know what I mean? You don't want to be the guy snoring in the third row—which I have done. So live it, experience it to the maximum possible extent that you can. But always remember the measure—always--is how are the people around you, those eight people you love most and who love you back critically-- and don't lie to yourself. A lot of the people who are on TV—trust me, I know them all—who claim they really love you-- They don't know your last name. They don't know your first name. They don't love you. They may agree with you. They may want your help, your support, your ratings. This is true for politicians, they want your votes. Apple wants your money. But they definitely don't love you. Trust me. I know them. So take stock of the people who do love you and focus all your attention on them. Because that's all we can control. I look out every night-- Every night at like five I get a cup of coffee, I pad to the kitchen, I get a cup of coffee, then I go back to my bedroom where I have a desk. The dogs are there. My wife's coming in and out, and I start writing the

script. Every night. Five nights a week. And, usually around five-thirty when I'm like through the second paragraph, I'm like, "Man, things are bad." [laughs] I always have the same thought every night. I'm like, "Boy--" The people who seek the destruction of the things I love--my family, my country, my conscience--the ones who are trying to get me to repeat things that I don't believe—the ones who are forcing me or trying to, to lie in public—the ones who are getting me to dance like a monkey-- I'm serious. Some of the things they ask you to do are so preposterous the only explanation is they want to see if they can make you do it. No, it's the total truth. That's what they're saying. It's all about their power, like, "I wonder if we can get the public to do this." Yeah. "Can we get 'em-- not just wear masks in elevators—Fine--Can we get a guy who's on a kayak alone in the middle of the Pacific Ocean to wear a mask?" As if he's gonna get infected by the seals.

"Can we get him to-- Do you think we can-- "

"No we can't make him do that! Come on, are you joking?"

"Oh, yeah, we can. Here's what we'll do. We'll arrest him when he gets back on the beach and we'll invite a news crew to film it, so everyone else will know you better do exactly what they tell you to do or you're going to jail."

That's not-- By the way, I'm not minimizing Covid. I'm highlighting what's actually going on, which is a legitimate tragedy leveraged for the personal power of a small group of people. I mean—obviously. So I read-- just every night I'm sitting there at my desk writing this stuff, and I'm like, "Man, I don't know—Like, how many free minded people are there left, actually?" I mean—I do think this. It's kind of dark. But I'm alone. And the dogs never say anything. And I'm like, "Really? Can you win?" It's— It's not like two sides sort of facing off against each other. It's like actually—no, no joke, no exaggeration. It's the most powerful people in the world all aligned—I sound like a lunatic when I say this—but it's measurably true. The last election was a perfect example. I mean, the numbers tells the story. You don't need to be some late-night radio nut case. You just read the numbers. Where's the money come from? How much did one side have? How much did the other side have? Who gave it? It's the most powerful people in the world all on one side. And I think that's terrible for the country. I really believe in actual diversity where there's a robust debate, where two sides each have a position, we kind of talk it out, and-- like you know, one wins but it's a pretty fair fight. It's not where we are now. So I look at this and I'm like, "Aw, man. Is it hopeless?" Like, can you actually beat Google, the government of China, and Goldman-Sachs? I don't know. You gotta try. You know you gotta get out of bed in the morning and put your gloves on and go for it, right? You gotta tell the truth. But-- 'Cause by the way, in the end no amount of money and no amount of praise from the world's dumb people-- no amount of fake awards, the stupid little merit badges they give—the Pulitzer Prize—the Nobel Prize-- "I got a Rhodes Fellowship." Oh shut up. It doesn't mean anything. "I got into Princeton." Oh, be quiet. None of that means anything. And none of that is worth betraying what you know to be true. But that is-- That is real. None of that-- I don't care how much they pay you, I don't care how many of your friends on Facebook think it's cool for you to repeat the lyrics to their songs when you don't believe them—I don't care. It is not worth it. Never betray your conscience. And by the way you don't have to agree with me. Maybe you sincerely disagree with me, and I have friends who do sincerely. But every person I love and talk to and take seriously is a person of principle who doesn't lie about what he or she believes. Period. Period. That is essential. But let's say that even if you do that and you are true to yourself and what you believe, to your conscience and your God and to the ones you love, they win anyway. Like maybe they continue to get more powerful. And maybe the pizza place doesn't come back, and maybe in the end Jeff Bezos sells you your pizza. It doesn't taste quite as good but he runs the pizza business now with everything else. What if that happens? The truth is you're still in charge of what goes on in your head, and you're still in charge of the relationships with the people you love. That is what you're in charge of. So I always think to myself-- I always think to myself even if in the end they win— And in my case—just being honest—probably not gonna be treated that well if they win. Uh. [laughs] To put it mildly. But even if I'm living in a double-wide trailer in a state I've never been

to, in the middle of a cornfield, living on Social Security, I'm still gonna be living with my wife, and my kids are still gonna love me, and I-- I mean it. All that matters-- All that matters is your family. That's it. So, I know this is a little bit harder. It's a little bit easier if you're fifty-one and you have a job. And it's a little bit harder if you're not and you're twenty-two and you're like looking at this world and asking yourself like, "How do I fit in this? How do I end up building a life like the one that my parents had? How do I—in a world that clearly hates me and my values—how do I succeed?" And this is something that, you know, I think about a lot just because I have all these kids and because, you know, I was a young person. And like there's a lot of anxiety in the heart of every twenty-two-year-old because you've gotta kind of figure out how to live in a society that you don't control, and you have to prove yourself. And I guess my once piece of advice would be if you can just ignore the standards that they set-- You don't have to participate in the society that people who hate you and your values created. That's the truth. I never thought I'd be standing on the stage suggesting that people opt out of the popular society, but that is exactly what I'm suggesting. I mean it. I mean it. If you feel-- I read that-- There was a piece in the New York Post yesterday by a kid who some of my children know, actually, who had gone to Princeton for three years. He went to, you know, some expensive boarding school and then he went to Princeton. He was there for three years. He wrote a piece in the New York Post and he's like well, "The whole thing was shallow and basically I didn't learn anything. I just-- I went there to get the merit badge of going to Princeton. It turns out everyone else at Princeton was there for the same reason. They just want to work at some soulless finance company and get rich, get a house in Aspen, and call it a day. And I found that totally shallow and disgusting and it violated my values, and like the whole thing was a sham. Like, this supposedly impressive meritocracy that they created wasn't impressive at all, the closer I got. I realized that all these people were supposed to be really smart were actually completely banal and ordinary and were just hoping that nobody noticed. There were no original thinkers at all. Everyone was just a drone. And see so I moved to Australia." And I was like, "You go, dropout Princeton kid!" And then the last [...] was, "I'm going back to Princeton because, you know, gotta get a Princeton degree." And I'm like, "Really? No. You don't need to go back to Princeton." And by the way, you don't need to go to Princeton, either. If you believe the system is kind of a joke, then don't participate in it. I mean that. And what's gonna happen is-- This is another reason that no one my age ever wants to have dinner with me, 'cause I always say this at the table and they're all deeply offended. But the truth is that the entire American upper middle class of professional class is completely vested in the symbols of attainment, of achievement, which don't actually connote real attainment or achievement. In other words, going to Princeton doesn't make you smart, doesn't mean you learned anything. It just meant that you followed the rules—very narrow, specific rules designed to make you a perfect bank employee. And maybe that's what you want to be. And if you want to work at Goldman, go ahead and go to Princeton and that's awesome, and invite me to ski in Aspen next year. Great. But let's say you don't want that. Don't participate in it. Well, the problem is that when people start saying that it really offends their parents, because—and I'll tell you exactly why. Not because most parents believe their kids are learning anything in college, because they know they're not. But because-- I mean let's be honest-- Hayden's at Duke. You know what I mean? That's like the kind of thing that every parent wants to say at a cocktail party. Yeah, Hayden's at Duke. He's on the Lacrosse team. I mean, umm, got a kind of perfect score on the SAT. I mean, he's, he's pretty bright, I'll be honest. Like maybe you have to be fifty to know what that means, but trust me, that's the goal of everybody my age is to be like, "Hayden's at Duke." You know, you know, he got into Penn but we just felt like Duke was better. There's no reference at all to what Hayden is learning at Duke. [...] nothing, not one thing. And instead, it's like being taught to hate America, hate his parents, hate the system that made Duke possible. And no one wants to admit it. So clearly this whole system has run its course. So it's very easy to say that, to be like, "Oh, the system is stupid, and we need to fix it," and higher education should be impressive, and it was, and [we had] the GI bill and we trained generations of Americans to, you know, be more productive and happier and better compensated than their parents.

That's all true. But at a certain point, and we all know this and those of you who are in college already know it very well. You're living it. At a certain point it got completely subverted by bad people. And the rest of us who are the ones who send the money in to keep this whole ludicrous operation moving, like, refuse to acknowledge it and we're like, "We just want Hayden to get into Duke." Let's just be clear. You know what I mean? So we can tell our friends. And we allowed it to continue. And the truth is-- And you know this-- There's no fixing it. No, if you want to be a veterinarian or an engineer, whatever, there're all kinds of higher education paths that are necessary. I mean, if you're gonna, you know, drill my bicuspid I want you to go to dental school. I'm not, you know, I'm not against education. But the liberal arts conventional "I want a communications degree from Penn State--" No you don't. I'm sorry, you don't. You don't. And it'll be worth nothing. You're gonna be deeply indebted and there's a very good chance that it will hurt you is the truth. That it will hurt you. And this is the last thing I'll say, but-- So I've thought this for a long time. No one I know my age agrees with me. They think I'm crazy for saying this. So I had-- One of my kids had a friend who was very, very bright. I always thought he was bright in high school. Kid's really smart. And-- But a little weird. But smart. And—very smart. And so, this kid-- I said to him right before they graduated high school-- I was, like, "Do you, you know, plan to go to college?" "Well, yeah, of course." That's what you do in America. You go to college. Like, "What, you didn't go to college?" And I said, "All right," you know, "Have fun," or whatever. So-- But two months later my son calls me and is like, you know, he's not doing that well in college. Well, of course, he's not doing that well in college. He's like, an original, free thinker. They hate that. That's like the last thing you can be in college. Someone with unauthorized opinions who dares say them out loud. Like, not allowed. And so I called the kid and I was like, "How's college?" "Well, I don't really like it." And I was like, "You know, you've been there for three months or whatever. You should drop out and come work for me." He was like, "Well, I'm only eighteen." I was like, "I don't care." And so he did. And I'm not gonna-- He probably will see this and he will be deeply embarrassed. But the truth is that was five years ago. He still works for me. And-- No, I'm just saying like he turned out to be, you know, one of the best people that we had. Now the truth is, the job that I put him in was perfectly suited for his natural ability, which is really important. And no one ever says that either. One of the big lies of higher education is you can, like, go to school and learn to do something that you have no basic aptitude in. That's a total lie. You can send me to twenty year of MIT. I would never understand physics. I just wouldn't. Like I can't do math. I'm dyslexic. Done. Do the thing for which you're naturally suited. Pay attention to who you are. Do the thing that you are naturally good at, that you love without being prompted, that you would do for free. That's totally true. Don't lie to yourself. The biggest lie is that, "You can be whatever you want to be." What? No you can't. You can take the skills that God gave you, and you can use them to maximum effect. That's true. So anyway, this kid-- And I probably shouldn't even be saying this, because, unfortunately, it's one hundred percent true, but this kid had the skills required for the job that we put him in and he's turned out to be like an utter star. And he's twenty-four, married, and—and has like, you know, four years of work experience that no one his age has. He ran with it. So you can't tell me that there's a school in the world that for the price will give you the benefit of four years of being in the right job. Now you have to find someone who's gonna hire a high school graduate, you know, who drinks a lot. And you have to find a job that suits you. But if you can, you should. Just because they do it this way doesn't mean you need to keep doing it this way. And just because they require you to violate your most deepest-- your deepest held beliefs, the things that you really care about, your loyalty to your family, to your faith-- just because they require you to violate all of that doesn't mean you have to. You do not have to. And you should not. And I don't care how many guidance counselors tell you, "Well you gotta do this." No I don't. No I don't. The only way we're gonna live in a free country is if the people who live in the country act like it's a free country. That's the truth. It is the truth. And no one you vote for can make it a free country. What a lie that is. And I like some politicians—not very many—but I know them all, that's for sure. I mean I've lived in D.C. for thirty-five years. And some are better than others. A few

are pretty good, like you could have dinner with them. Very few. But all of them tell you, “If you vote for me you’ll be freer and happier.” And that’s a complete lie. That’s a complete lie. Only you can be free and make yourself free. And the only way you do that is by living as a free person, period. And if you have to take less money or move to some place you’ve never been before in order to do that, you should do that. Don’t play along. I’m sure I’m gonna wreck the life—I mean, probably like three people in this audience are like, “Yeah, I’m gonna do that.” It’s a huge risk to do that. I hope there are more than three because I really, really mean it. The old systems are going away. Don’t play along. Anyway-- Sorry-- So I’m rambling and I’m out of time. No, because my thoughts are so-- [audience noise] Okay, okay, hold on-- This guy, this guy-- Where’s the weird kid that’s been heckling me? Do you have a question? Didn’t you guys have a ques-- I’ll take one question.

[audience member asks question] In a country [...] where you speak louder than any member of the GOP-- How can we, the fifteen hundred people here, the hundred people out there, and the thousand people outside—how can we turn the silent majority to the [‘deafening face] that our country needs to hear, that you are, late night, how can we do that [....]?

Yes. So-- thank you for that. So let me-- umm, I’ll repeat the question, which is basically they’re telling you to be quiet, there’s an enormous amount of pressure on you to conform-- How do you-- How do you speak in a world like that? And I would say-- I think-- if that’s a fair summation-- and I would say-- I’m in a very fortunate place because I’m paid to talk, so it doesn’t take a great deal of bravery when you have a TV show to say what you think, ‘cause like that’s the job. And it’s amazing how many people are afraid to just do the basic job. Like if you have a contracted TV network and you’re lying, why are you doing that? You’re under contract. You can say whatever you want, and you should. You should say exactly what you think. Period. Like, again—back to the life is short thing-- Life is way too short to pretend you think something you don’t. Like what’s the advantage in that? Sucking up to the mob and being like, “Oh, really I’m on your side, spare me.” They’re gonna eat you in the end anyway. Be a man. Tell the truth. So-- but-- how-- But that’s-- But that’s-- that’s very easy-- I mean, I’ll just say-- Like that’s-- It’s a pretty low risk proposition for me. I’m just being totally honest about it, like it’s not-- It doesn’t take a lot of bravery for me to do that because that’s what I’m supposed to be doing, and I’m so grateful for it. It takes a lot of bravery if you’re a young person in a system controlled by people who hate you and demand obedience, to speak up against them. It really, really does. It takes too much and people can’t do it, and I understand why. And I hope I’d be brave enough to do it, but I don’t know because I’m not a kid in 2020, and I’m so grateful that I’m not. But I would say this. If you-- No-- If you want to change things-- If you really want to change things, that’s honestly what it takes. It does. It doesn’t take violence. It doesn’t even take voting most of the time. We don’t get to vote that much. Once every two years mostly. What it really takes is just small acts of personal courage and conviction. Like, “No I’m not-- I’m sorry, I’m not going along with that.” I don’t need to get in your face. I don’t need to give you some long-- I mean, I talk to people all the time who’re like, “Well I’d speak up but I’m not-- I don’t know the issues very well,” or, “I’m not super articulate.” Fine. I mean, that’s okay. But it doesn’t take some long soliloquy-- You don’t have to stand on a desk and be like, you know, “Four score and seven years ago--” You don’t have to do that. Often it’s enough to like, “No, I can’t do that. I’m sorry but I just don’t believe that and I’m not gonna pretend that I do.” You know, that-- that’s all it takes. And you don’t need to be confrontational about it. You don’t need to be a jerk or be loud. I mean some of the most powerful examples through history which I know you’re very familiar with have been quiet people who just refused to obey at a certain point ‘cause it’s too much. That was certainly true in the early church. It was true of the best parts of the civil rights movement. It’s always been true. Like, the people with deep moral courage don’t need to call too much attention to themselves. They just need to stop obeying. And so I would-- I would recommend that to everybody,

but I also recognize the costs are very real, and again it's easy for a guy with a job contract to give that advice. It's like, "Whoa, no, you know, you go first." And so that's kind of what I was getting at in a not very articulate way when I said, "Well, maybe you need to opt out and go do your own thing." I mean, honestly, I think it's worth it. If you look ahead in your life and you decide, "What I really want to have is a stable family," and that's the only thing that's worth having, in my opinion-- I know a lot of rich people—a lot-- and I've never met one who's like, "You know, I really got happy when I got rich." Like, "It really brought joy to my life." I've never met one person who said that. Better than being poor. Being poor will make you unhappy. There's no doubt about that. I'm not, sort of, romanticizing poverty. But I know for a fact that getting rich will not-- It won't ring your bell. I'm sorry, it just won't. And no person who's ever gotten rich will ever tell you otherwise. Not one person. So the only thing that makes you happy is a happy family. That's it. And that's just true. This is not, you know, Christian evangelism. It's just, like, fact-based social science. And so if you really believe that, then you need to work toward that goal without being distracted by it, any other thing that gets in your way. Like anything that prevents me from at the end of the day having a happy family, and like kids who love me, and a spouse who loves me, like—who doesn't want that? Everybody wants that. And we live in a world where it's like, "No, it's kind of embarrassing to raise your own kids." Like, "What-- You're not?-- What do you do? You're not working? And you're rai--?" If you actually talk to people, and there're surveys that'll say, "What do people really want?" They kind of want to raise their own kids, actually. They don't want to hire someone from a faraway country, do they? They want to raise their own kids. Like why is that a-- That's like the most natural thing there is. Like why wouldn't they want that? And guess who doesn't want you to raise your own kids. The people who are living off of your labor. The people who think you should be at work making widgets to help the stock price. Like they're not-- they don't care about your kids. By the way, their spouses are at home raising their kids 'cause they can afford it. They can do whatever they want. But they don't want you to. "Oh, I get it. You're working against the happiness of my family and the future of my children, so you're my enemy actually. You're my enemy--" How else do you describe that? "You're my enemy. You're working to hurt my family? You're making it impossible for me to raise my own children?" I mean, what does it take? That's like-- that's like a spiritual home invasion. That's such an act of hostility. Nothing else comes close to that. Calling me mean names? I don't care. Keeping me from raising my own kids? Like that's a basic violation. There's nothing more basic than that. So if you really believe that, then you should just take out all the stops and just try and live it. I mean it. And you'll win in the end. Thank you for having me.