

Quotes to Inspire Conservative Activists

YOUNG AMERICA'S FOUNDATION



FOUNDING FATHERS

“The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the Republican model of Government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.”

— GEORGE WASHINGTON

“Those who would give up essential liberty to gain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

— BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

“You will never know how much it has cost my generation to preserve your freedom. I hope you will make good use of it.”

— JOHN ADAMS

“Our obligations to our country never cease but with our lives.”

— JOHN ADAMS

“All tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent.”

— THOMAS JEFFERSON

“The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.”

— THOMAS JEFFERSON

“The liberties of our country, the freedom of our civil constitution, are worth defending against all hazards. And it is our duty to defend them against all attacks.”

— SAMUEL ADAMS

“Our contest is not only whether we ourselves shall be free, but whether there shall be left to mankind an asylum on earth for civil and religious liberty.”

— SAMUEL ADAMS



CONSERVATIVE PHILOSOPHERS

“Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.”

— EDMUND BURKE

“The greatness of America lies not in being more enlightened than any other nation, but rather in her ability to repair her faults.”

— ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE



“Our faith in freedom does not rest on the foreseeable results in particular circumstances but on the belief that it will, on balance, release more forces for the good than for the bad.”

— FRIEDRICH A. HAYEK

“Liberty not only means that the individual has both the opportunity and the burden of choice; it also means that he must bear the consequences of his actions and will receive praise or blame for them. Liberty and responsibility are inseparable.”

— FRIEDRICH A. HAYEK

“Men cannot improve a society by setting fire to it; they must seek out its old virtues, and bring them back into the light.”

— RUSSELL KIRK

“Every right is married to a duty; every freedom owes a corresponding responsibility; and there cannot be genuine freedom unless there exists also genuine order, in the moral realm and in the social realm.”

— RUSSELL KIRK

“Freedom has cost too much blood and agony to be relinquished at the cheap price of rhetoric.”

— THOMAS SOWELL

“If you are not prepared to use force to defend civilization, then be prepared to accept barbarism.”

— THOMAS SOWELL

“In a free society, government has the responsibility of protecting us from others, but not from ourselves.”

— WALTER E. WILLIAMS

“More important than anything else is for Americans to wise up to class warfare demagoguery and reject the politics of envy.”

— WALTER E. WILLIAMS

“The freedom we must defend is freedom for the practice of these virtues. It is freedom for excellence, the freedom that enables us to master ourselves. It is a freedom that, far from being negated by rigorous standards of scholarship, demands them. It is not the freedom of “if it feels good, do it”; it is, rather, the freedom of self-transcendence, the freedom from slavery to self.”

— ROBERT P. GEORGE



PRESIDENTS (1800-TODAY)

“America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves.”

— ABRAHAM LINCOLN

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

— THEODORE ROOSEVELT

“To live under the American Constitution is the greatest political privilege that was ever accorded to the human race.”

— CALVIN COOLIDGE

“They criticize me for harping on the obvious; if all the folks in the United States would do the few simple things they know they ought to do, most of our big problems would take care of themselves.”

— CALVIN COOLIDGE



“When it’s written, history of our time won’t dwell long on the hardships of the recent past. But history will ask—and our answer determine the fate of freedom for a thousand years—Did a nation born of hope lose hope? Did a people forged by courage find courage wanting? Did a generation steeled by hard war and a harsh peace forsake honor at the moment of great climactic struggle for the human spirit?”

— RONALD REAGAN

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same.”

— RONALD REAGAN



“America is better off with leadership that reflects the philosophy, the principles, and the aspirations of Young Americans for Freedom.”

— RONALD REAGAN

“There is no better way to establish hope for the future than to enlighten young minds.”

— RONALD REAGAN

“Every generation stands on the shoulders of the generation that came before. Jealously guard the values and principles of our heritage; they didn’t come easy.”

— RONALD REAGAN

“Each generation goes further than the generation preceding it because it stands on the shoulders of that generation. You will have opportunities beyond anything we’ve ever known.”

— RONALD REAGAN

“Let us be sure that those who come after will say of us in our time, that in our time we did everything that could be done. We finished the race; we kept them free; we kept the faith.”

— RONALD REAGAN



MODERN-DAY CONSERVATIVE LEADERS

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts.”

— PRIME MINISTER WINSTON CHURCHILL

“Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in, except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.”

— PRIME MINISTER WINSTON CHURCHILL

“The Conservative Movement is founded on the simple tenet that people have the right to live life as they please as long as they don't hurt anyone else in the process.”

— SENATOR BARRY GOLDWATER

“Let us henceforth make war on all monopolies—whether corporate or union. The enemy of freedom is unrestrained power, and the champions of freedom will fight against the concentration of power wherever they find it.”

— SENATOR BARRY GOLDWATER



“There’s no greater service to this country than the defense of its freedom.”

— SENATOR BARRY GOLDWATER

“The best defense against usurpatory government is an assertive citizenry.”

— WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

“A Conservative is a fellow who is standing athwart history yelling, ‘Stop!’”

— WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

“When people are free to choose, they choose freedom.”

— PRIME MINISTER MARGARET THATCHER

“You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it.”

— PRIME MINISTER MARGARET THATCHER

“Disciplining yourself to do what you know is right and important, although difficult, is the highroad to pride, self-esteem, and personal satisfaction.”

— PRIME MINISTER MARGARET THATCHER

“The greatest advances of civilization, whether in architecture or painting, in science and literature, in industry or agriculture, have never come from centralized government.”

— MILTON FRIEDMAN



“A man who has made no enemies is probably not a very good man.”

— JUSTICE ANTONIN SCALIA

“In my humble opinion, those who come to engage in debates of consequence, and who challenge accepted wisdom, should expect to be treated badly. Nonetheless, they must stand undaunted. That is required. And that should be expected. For it is bravery that is required to secure freedom.”

— JUSTICE CLARENCE THOMAS

“If you're not brave, you're not going to be free.”

— SPEAKER NEWT GINGRICH

“Fighting for free enterprise means standing up for free markets. The freedom to succeed includes the freedom to fail. We must defend entrepreneurial capitalism against the onslaught of the American Left.”

— VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE

“I hope we, the American people, can come to the understanding that we are not each other's enemies. The enemies are those who are stoking the flames of division, trying to divide us into every category.”

— SECRETARY BEN CARSON

“Success is determined not by whether or not you face obstacles, but by your reaction to them. And if you look at these obstacles as a containing fence, they become your excuse for failure. If you look at them as a hurdle, each one strengthens you for the next.”

— SECRETARY BEN CARSON



“Looking at America’s history, ordinary people did something extraordinary. Leaders risked their lives for freedoms that we take for granted today. That’s what instills confidence. That’s us. We will move forward and prosper because that’s who we are as Americans.”

— GOVERNOR SCOTT WALKER



“You know, the nice thing is — the nice thing is, the Left will always, always, always tell you who they fear. And they fear you. They fear the American people.”

— SENATOR TED CRUZ

“We have done it before and we can do it again. Together again, all of us can restore that shining city upon the hill that is the United States of America.”

— SENATOR TED CRUZ

“There comes a time in the history of nations when fear and forgetfulness cause a nation to hesitate, to waver, and perhaps even to succumb. When that time comes, those who love liberty must rise to the occasion. Will you lovers of liberty rise to the occasion?”

— SENATOR RAND PAUL

“I want to be one that is willing to do things that are not easy but that need to be done.”

— SENATOR MIKE LEE

“Conservatives understand that the power that binds our republic together is fierce independence held high on the shoulders of compassion.”

— CONGRESSMAN ALLEN WEST



“Every person has a right and duty to participate in public life . . . Charges of careerism, idolatry of power, egoism and corruption . . . as well as the common opinion that participating in politics is an absolute moral danger, does not in the least justify either skepticism or an absence on the part of Christians in public life.”

— POPE JOHN PAUL II

“We will stand up every time that human life is threatened. When the sacredness of life before birth is attacked, we will stand up and proclaim that no one ever has the authority to destroy unborn life. When a child is described as a burden or is looked upon only as a means to satisfy an emotional need, we will stand up and insist that every child is a unique and unrepeatable gift of God, with the right to a loving and united family. When the institution of marriage is abandoned to human selfishness or reduced to a temporary, conditional arrangement that can easily be terminated, we will stand up and affirm the indissolubility of the marriage bond. When the value of the family is threatened because of social and economic pressures, we will stand up and reaffirm that the family is ‘necessary not only for the private good of every person, but also for the common good of every society, nation and state.’”

— POPE JOHN PAUL II

“Freedom has continually to be won, it cannot merely be possessed. It comes as a gift but can only be kept with a struggle.”

— POPE JOHN PAUL II

“America is the greatest, freest, and most decent society in existence. It is an oasis of goodness in a desert of cynicism and barbarism. This country, once an experiment unique in the world, is now the last best hope for the world.”

— DINESH D'SOUZA

“Our only hope for America is that every conservative takes upon him or herself the project of learning what American and conservative values are, coming to understand what leftism stands for, and learning how to make the case for those values to women, young people, blacks, and Hispanics.”

— DENNIS PRAGER

Freedom of speech and thought matters, especially when it is speech and thought with which we disagree. The moment the majority decides to destroy people for engaging in thought it dislikes, thought crime becomes a reality.

— BEN SHAPIRO

ABOUT YOUNG AMERICA'S FOUNDATION

Young America's Foundation is committed to ensuring that increasing numbers of young Americans understand and are inspired by the ideas of individual freedom, a strong national defense, free enterprise, and traditional values.

As the principal outreach organization of the Conservative Movement, the Foundation introduces thousands of American youth to these principles. We accomplish our mission by providing essential conferences, seminars, educational materials, internships, and speakers to young people across the country.

Young America's Foundation stepped forward to save President Reagan's Western White House, Rancho del Cielo, in the spring of 1998 to preserve it as a living monument to Ronald Reagan to pass on his ideas to future generations. President Reagan committed himself to reaching young people with his ideas—a goal that is also central to the Foundation's mission.

For more than 30 years, the National Journalism Center has trained aspiring journalists in the values of balanced, responsible and accurate reporting. Weekly seminars and on-the-job experience provide participants with the tools to become a leader in combating bias in the mainstream media.

In 2011, Young America's Foundation unified with Young Americans for Freedom, which serves as the Foundation's chapter affiliate on college and high school campuses across the country. Founded by William F. Buckley, Jr. and a group of young conservatives in 1960 at his home in Sharon, Connecticut, Young Americans for Freedom today promotes to youth the principles as outlined in the Sharon Statement.

Young America's Foundation's Center for Entrepreneurship & Free Enterprise educates and inspires young people to defend and articulate free enterprise principles. The Center's program aim to popularize the ideas of free markets, limited government, and lower taxes necessary to generate economic growth and prosperity for more Americans.



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