

American History: Our Hope for the Future

September 11th, 2001 was the worst day in American history. It was a day of total devastation and grief, not only for the people of the United States, but for people around the world. Children in school were paralyzed in fear, teachers were in tears, people on the streets held each other and wept. It was a complete moment of unity and support in our nation.

This was always explained to me in school. I was too young to truly experience the grief and feeling of loss as many did on this day. I was presented with facts and statistics, but never could truly understand the effect that this caused our nation-- until I watched the 9/11 documentary. The documentary hit me in a way that no other fact, statistic, or opinion ever has. It was real, raw footage of what truly took place on that day in New York City. The countless first responders, paramedics and fire crews was astonishing. They had to put their lives suddenly on the line for other people, in what they thought would be 'just like any other day.' Their only goal was to get as many people as they could to safety, and then hoped to make it home to see their families and loved ones at the end of the day. Many people got trapped as the buildings collapsed, as they refused to evacuate in order to save as many lives as possible.

For many of the rescuers that made it back, there was a long lasting impact on their mental health and well being. PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) was common in many September 11th first responders and survivors. They witnessed utter chaos in the streets. They saw burning bodies around them, people jumping out of buildings, and had to later deal with the guilt of not being able to save everyone, including some of their former coworkers and friends. This would be hard on anyone, and I believed it helped form the EMS and rescue environment of

today. It gave many crews a stronger bond, and in general, everyday people's outlook was changed. Many people were kinder to others and appreciated their well being and safety far more than they had before.

It's hard for me to fathom how an individual, or a group of people can set out to cause this level of destruction and utter chaos intentionally on innocent people. It is disturbing to realize that people are willing to hijack planes, crash into buildings, and murder thousands of people simply because their personal views and opinions do not align. The people that hijacked the planes blindly followed their leader and put countless lives in harms way, including their own. Many of the passengers on the plane did not know what was going on, until it was too late, except for flight 93, which was originally headed toward Washington D.C., but crashed in Pennsylvania. The passengers on flight 93 realized that the plane had been hijacked, and worked together to take down the plane, even though they knew they weren't going to make it. These people were heroes, and their personal sacrifice had the potential to save thousands of lives.

So today, we must continue to ask ourselves what we can do to make our country a safer place. We must strive to prevent an event like this from ever happening again. Our best defense is intelligence and investigation, which has kept us safe from terrorism in the past, and will do so in the future. Safety measures are extremely important to prevent terrorist attacks, especially in extremely populated and high-risk areas. We must continue to adapt and work together as a nation, and never forget September 11th, 2001.

These ideals can be applied to the general future of our nation, not just in reference to terrorist attacks. Also, we must come to a conclusion as to why this happened, which is simple:

Angie Gutekunst
Voice of Democracy

hate. I hope that one day, not only as a nation, but the whole world, can band together. Or at the very least, have compassion for people's lives. My hope for the future is to stop the hate, violence, and discrimination between nations.