



Patriotic Grace: What It Is and Why We Need It Now

Peggy Noonan

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In this long season of searing political attacks and angry partisan passions, Peggy Noonan's *Wall Street Journal* column has been must reading for thoughtful liberals and conservatives alike.

Now she issues an urgent, heartfelt call for all Americans to see each other anew, realize what time it is, and come together to support the next President—whatever he is. Because it is not the threats and challenges we face, but how we face them that defines us as a nation.

The terrible events of 9/11 brought us together in a way not seen since World War II. But the stresses and divisions of the Bush years have driven us apart to a point that is unhealthy and destructive.

Today, Noonan argues, the national mood is for a change in our politics and it is well past time for politicians to catch up. Americans are tired of the old partisan divisions and the campaign tricks that seek to widen and exploit them. We long for leaders who can summon us to greatness and unity, as they did in the long struggles against fascism and communism.

In this timely little book, written in the pamphleteering tradition of Tom Paine's *Common Sense*, Noonan reminds us that we must face our common challenges together—not by rising above partisanship, but by reaffirming what it means to be American.

Patriotic Grace: What It Is and Why We Need It Now Details

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Angela says

For someone who rarely reads non-fiction and almost never reads political books, this was quite an eye-opener. The writing style was conversational and a little rambling at times, but the casual tone softened the serious and sometimes critical message in a positive way. I think Noonan found a good balance between warning and encouragement.

I didn't agree with her opinions 100% of the time, but our ideals and concerns were in sync often enough that I understood her perspective. It makes for a very thought-provoking read, especially in our day and age.

Sarah C says

I learned Peggy Noonan has the most eloquent way of phrasing some of the most politically charged topics. She is queen of the euphemism. Although I was too young to remember Ronald Reagan's presidency, Peggy has certainly raised my curiosity to understand his politics and impact on our country.

Never hesitate to read one of her books or articles - it is a guarantee that you will read something well written, thoughtful, and intelligent even if you do not agree with what she has to say.

Tammy Downing says

A really good book about how we all need to put aside the partisan BS and work together to make America better for everyone. Although I don't necessarily agree with everything Peggy Noonan believes, she makes a very strong case in this book that we don't need to agree but we need to be calm, rational adults and work on our issues rather than just point fingers and blame the other guy. This is my personal philosophy and I wish more people felt this way. We're all human beings, none better or worse than any other.

Nandi Crawford says

I want to say that I haven't read but have heard of Ms Noonan, and thought that the book would be pro Republican, ra ra ra, but I was mistaken. Now, it takes someone with a clear head and mind to say well, even though I'm a Democrat/Republican, there are some things I find wrong with the current administration and find it she does. For one, I find it sad that unless an approval ratings attached to stuff, most Presidents will NOT do things that will be for the betterment of the country. See, it seems Ms Noonan noticed that a 9/11 or something of that nature was on its way years before, but was rebuffed when a person from the Clinton administration stated that it will not get done because it will not show in the approval ratings. Are you serious? she speaks pretty harshly on the Bush administration calling it akin to a gang especially if their views and yours sharply differed. She also spoke on certain individuals who predicted the future. Those who tried to do the right thing and paid later. The list goes on. She also feels that before 9/11 there was a huge

divide in this country after the 2000 elections that got partially healed with 9/11 and got ripped open again by Iraq and the following elections. No, I didn't agree on all things, but I must say, some was enough to make me think.

Beth says

I loved her short-and-sweet-and-to-the-point writing style when I could catch up with her writer's ADHD. Kudos for making her point with the fewest possible words but I will have to read this again to fully appreciate it.

Her premise is both refreshing and scary-as-hell. Getting my passport has just moved up my priority list and after reading this I am getting them for the kids too. No more ignorant bliss for this household. Note to self: buy batteries and bottled water too.

I am a liberal who has always gotten along with conservatives so I am, unfortunately, the choir here but her target audience may have only been those in D.C. anyway.

Overall, fascinating read that I highly recommend. I suck at Macro perspectives and she offers up a lot of them.

Jon Box says

The book is a bit dated coming at the end of the George W. Bush presidency, but the guiding principles she asks us to adhere to are still necessary if not more relevant today. Her overall call for "patriotic grace" is thoughtful, well intentioned and spot on--she presents a great case. I agree. However, grace seems to suffer a corresponding blind spot in her unending criticism for every Bush effort during the country's initial seven-year response to Global Islamic Terrorism--he could do nothing right! Apparently, she is blinded by her never-ending love for President Reagan coming at a different time in the Cold War era. I can't understand her loathing hate for Bush--like President Obama says, it was all his Bush's fault . . . Please!

José says

Noonan posits that a great calamity will sooner-than-later befall the United States and that we must prepare ourselves by embracing a "patriotic grace", whereby Americans discard the small things that divide us, embrace those that unite us, and prepare for the long haul by strengthening the fabric of America. This book, published before the 2008 presidential election, is a product of its decade. Noonan argues that Americans were hurt and divided after the 2000 presidential election and that the tragedy of 9/11 united them briefly, only to have Iraq fracture us again and lead us into a decade of hyper-partisanship. She wants us to return to the state of grace exhibited during and after 9/11

While her argument has merit, the book itself is often a series of rambling commentaries that are not logically tied to each other. Thus, the text is not cohesive and has a certain stream-of-consciousness quality to it. Noonan would have better served her argument by turning this disappointing book into a great article.

Maria says

I gave this to Brian for Christmas. After a contentious political season, this book seemed fresh and important.

I like the way Noonan writes, that newspaper columnist-style. Her thoughts on the media and the war in Iraq are spot on, but her reasoning on immigration was thin.

Best of all: her thoughts on generational cooperation. Baby boomers aren't as bad as everyone has made them out to be.

Michael says

I love Peggy Noonan. I am going to read all of her books. *Patriotic Grace* is the third I've read, and I enjoyed it tremendously. Written in the summer of 2008—before the election, and before the worst of the Great Recession descended on the United States and the world—Noonan asks for all of us to focus a bit more on what we have in common, and less on what separates us politically. She speaks quite convincingly about partisan cable news, the many errors of the Bush administration, and the problems that beset our capital in this 'got'cha!' environment. Noonan—and I couldn't agree with her more—suspects that we are heading into a period of 'bad history,' and that we as Americans are going to have to stick together regardless of who we voted for in the last election. I agree with her that teaching children the good things about their country is an important way of fostering a sense of responsibility, belonging, and pride (Plato would be in 100% agreement), and that a large dose of civility in our public discourse would go a long way toward focusing us on substantive issues instead of the day to day ephemera that consumes so much of our national attention.

So bravo, Peggy! I get the sense from her writing that she like President (then candidate) Obama very much; I can't help but wonder about what she made (and makes) of Sarah Palin. Noonan is one of my favorite conservative writers: she is smart, thoughtful, moderate, and a pleasure to read.

AnnaMay says

What a great little book. It was small enough that I didn't feel like I was 'wading through' a deep-thinker book, yet the information within is up to par with a 'deep thinker' kind.

Noonan helped me think about what it means to me to be an American. She helped me feel good about the good things I'm doing and made me think a bit realistically about what may happen in the future.

The book was written before the outcome of the election was known, and I appreciate this. It's nice to not have it slanting to one side or the other, but instead getting us to think as Americans and ponder what we can do to hold things together.

I'd like to look into some of the books mentioned within hers. I want my mind to be so active and comprehensive as hers is when I'm 'grown up'. Maybe if I read some of the great books she mentioned, I'll be one step closer.

It only took me a day or so to read. Very uplifting material.

Caroline says

Put your gas mask on before helping others. America must first attend to America, if it would like to help others. "We are best, in the world as it is now, as the beacon, not necessarily the bringer, of freedom. We are its friend, its exemplar, its encourager...to be a beacon is to speak softly to the world, with dignity, with elegance if you can manage it, or simple good-natured courtesy if you can't. A superpower should never shout, never bray, 'We're number one!' If you're number one, you don't have to."

Julie says

This book couldn't be more timely. Peggy Noonan addresses the many issues we as a nation face and why we need to be united to survive through future tough times. She talks about our political culture on the eve of this 2008 election and how "political professionals...divide us cynically, needlessly, for small and temporary partisan gain." We cannot afford that, and Noonan offers ways to get our country back on track, and our leaders focused on solving the important problems. She leans toward the conservative side, but if you can't overlook that, for the reasons she has stated, you've missed the whole point of her book!

Alicia says

This was an interesting, thoughtful, quick read. I'm not so sure about her predictions of a large-scale catastrophe in the U.S. (in terms of an attack on the electric grid, or something like that), nor all of her solutions, but I really liked her points about the need to change the tenor of our political discourse, including: we have to be careful that politics doesn't become our religion! Amen to that!

Kierstin says

I couldn't get through this book. It was too abstract and well graceful, when I was looking for a real call to action in regards to our country's current situation. I couldn't tolerate blame not being assessed where blame was due. Maybe it is the value of my home, maybe it is that every apartment complex in Elk Grove is government subsidized, maybe it is because CA is holding my income tax refund with a sort of IOU. Patriotic grace...ha!! We need patriotic indignation.

John says

While I didn't agree with everything, I found that she was fairly even-handed (given her partisan background) on how we came to be in the unfortunate place we were at time of last year's elections; the obstructionist stance of Congressional Republicans being exactly the situation she warns should not be allowed to occur.

Kudos for her in blasting the TSA and DHS as symptomatic of the failure of the Bush Administration, as well as repeating her opposition to the term "Homeland Security" as creepily "un-American".
