Building Community: For Democracy, Well-Being, and Happiness

Former presidential candidate and consumer advocate Ralph Nader, along with his sister and social scientist Claire Nader, examine the importance of community and civic motivation and share examples of how they contributed to a better community in their hometown.

http://video.esri.com/watch/796/building-community-for-democracy_comma_-well_dash_being_comma_-and-happiness

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Video Transcription

00:02 My name is Jim Appleton, I'm president of the University of Redlands, and I welcome you to your university.

00:07 Isn't it great to live in a college town?

00:15 And I welcome you as well to the Redlands Forum Series sponsored by Esri…

00:20 …and the University of Redlands Town and Gown organization.

00:23 This is the second of our fall events and there'll be many, many more throughout the year…

00:28 …and I hope you will be a part of those events as well.

00:32 You know, we have enviable Town Gown relationships in Redlands…

00:36 …in part because we collectively here this evening are very committed to working diligently to translate our town…

00:44 …into a community of people who care deeply about improving community with qualities that I think…

00:49 …if we do it right, can extend beyond our own borders.

00:53 And I want to illustrate that sense of community tonight by maintaining a tradition that Jack Dangermond began as these…

01:01 …this series was begun now two years ago, and that is that we'll illustrate community…

01:09 …by you needing to turn either to your right or to your left or behind you or in front of you…

01:16 …to find the person you don't know and say hello to them. And this is the time. Let's do it right now.

01:26 That's terrific. I actually believe that while we might not accomplish as much as we will tonight by having our guests…

01:43 …and enjoying that time together, even if we spent the whole evening just talking with each

other…

01:50 …we would begin to have a greater sense of community.

01:53 But I welcome you and thanks for getting acquainted with one more person tonight.

01:58 And I want to, at this time, introduce our cohost for the evening, the cofounder and president of Esri, Jack Dangermond…

02:05 …and our biggest celebrant for community in Redlands, and with that in mind, our greatest cheerleader, Jack Dangermond.

02:19 Thank you. Good. Great. Thank you.

02:27 This is a great evening, isn't it? I mean, it is a good evening.

02:32 I have the great pleasure tonight to introduce you to two of my good friends.

02:37 And one of them saved my life, I'm very pleased to say, and has motivated me to do what I do.

02:46 He has shown me a way, and his sister reinforced it, to be involved, to make a difference…

02:54 …to focus on being somebody or something in my life.

02:59 Not a day goes by that I don't think about him and his commitment.

03:04 Not so directly, but indirectly, he's always kind of this little shadow in the back of my brain. Why is that?

03:12 Because early in my career when I was still in university…

03:16 …I listened to him and I saw in him a commitment of unending dedication to…to making the world a better place…

03:25 …to saving people's lives, and he did it through consumer…consumer activism, first with cars, then on product safety…

03:33 …then just getting involved in the well-being of all of us in our communities.

03:38 In recent years, I've seen him try lots of new things. Some of them are…he's been criticized for…

03:44 …actually he's probably been criticized from the very beginning, but he doesn't stop.

03:49 And if you know him the way I know him, you'll, you'll begin to understand what an incredible person he is.

03:58 His sister, Claire, is exactly off the same…off the same…off the same…what? Stick candy, is the way to say it? Of the same grain.

04:07 She also has dedicated her life to making a difference and worked in everything from social work…

04:14 …to anthropology to science and has likewise distinguished herself.

04:19 About…when was it? About six months ago or nine months ago? Seven months ago, they invited me to a special forum…

04:29 …where they acknowledge whistle-blowers in Washington, D.C.

04:33 People who've actually, you know, exposed themselves to criticism, and they hold a forum at the…

04:41 …at where they are, to acknowledge those people.

04:44 It was most remarkable, and we got to thinking. I told him a little bit about Redlands.

04:48 They know about Redlands because one of…one of the homeboys here, Jim Fallows, was one of Ralph's early protégés.

04:56 But they wanted to come. They wanted to share what they're now doing in their own community about building community.

05:02 And so, I'm going to stop talking because it's a…you really came to listen to them.

05:08 They are remarkable, remarkable people, and I hope by sharing them with you…

05:14 …you'll get some of the sense that I got as an early person about working and…

05:19 …participating in life and building community at a hundred percent.

05:23 So join me in welcoming these two great people to the stage, Ralph and Claire.

05:41 Thank you.

05:54 Thank you very much Jack. I suppose the best superficial comment I can make about Jack is…

06:00 …that in all the conversations I've had with him, I never felt he was a CEO.

06:09 And I've rarely met anybody who's open to more ideas and suggestions that he digests…

06:15 …and shapes them in so many directions, and that's what we all have to do.

06:23 As they said, everybody's smarter than any one person.

06:30 This evening, it's going to be a little rigorous, 'cause Clair and I don't believe that a lecture should be…

06:38 …to the mind what massage is to exercise.

06:41 So, bear with us and there will be tables out front so that if you like one of the projects that's described…

06:52 …that we worked on in Connecticut or elsewhere, and you want to start it here…

06:58 …you can sign up for community lawyer, if you like community technologist…

07:04 …you like the Time Dollar program, all of which will be explained.

07:08 There's also the main magazine that chronicles local economies, community-based economies,

and the energy…

07:16 …health, transportation, agricultural area, and many other areas, right down to formation of local currencies…

07:26 …it's called Yes magazine. There's a bunch of them up there for you to take.

07:32 Over at the Kettering Foundation in Ohio, they do work on civic activity.

07:38 What does it mean to be an engaged citizen? How do you develop the techniques, the skills?

07:44 There's a nice little booklet called For Communities to Work, which would be very useful…

07:51 …and Matt Zawisky, who's my colleague, will be out there, hailing from Buffalo…

07:57 …and he will answer whatever ancillary questions you want or take your suggestions.

08:06 We have a lot of work to do in this country. We have not been given an opportunity to do it.

08:15 More and more, as power gets concentrated in the hands of the few, the decisions are made by the few for the many.

08:23 We have seen in the last few decades, an enormous concentration in two directions, coming to one objective…

08:31 …which is the growing concentration in fewer and fewer giant corporations and their influence over government…

08:39 …turning government sometimes into a gridlock of paralysis or into a bazaar of accounts receivables for these corporations.

08:50 Corporate welfare, for example, subsidies, handouts, giveaways, bailouts…

08:57 …inflated contracts, grants of natural resources, et cetera.

09:02 The result is predictable and it was predicted thousands of years ago.

09:05 Every major religion has warned its adherents not to give too much power to the mercantile classes.

09:14 It isn't [that] the mercantile classes aren't important.

09:16 It's that they're so singularly focused on commercial advantage and profit and sales…

09:24 …that they will run roughshod over broader civic and spiritual values…

09:29 …that really are the most important fiber of any society that calls itself a civilization.

09:35 And so they did want to curb it. And it's amazing that this comes from religions from Middle East, religions from Asia…

09:45 …East Asia, and they all came to the same conclusion in their materials, in their scripture.

09:52 And so I don't say it came from revelation. I think it came from hard experience.

09:58 Something that we need to recognize now, that a society that subordinates commercial values to civic values…

10:06 …that's access to justice, clean elections, democratic processes, freedom of speech, freedom to organize.

10:15 A society that subjects commercial values to civic values is going to do much better than a society…

10:24 …where civic values are subjected to the domination of commercial values.

10:30 Early in the auto industry's first 50, 60 years, the commercial short-range attitude of the car companies…

10:40 …emphasizing style and horsepower over safety and fuel efficiency…

10:45 …produced enormous casualties, enormous economic costs, enormous dislocations, enormous delays…

10:54 …because their commercial values dominated over the civic values…

10:59 …of safe, efficient, consistently reliable surface transportation.

11:06 When the motor vehicle laws went into effect, guess what happened?

11:12 The values of safety; of health; breathing less polluted air, which you're very familiar with here in Southern California…

11:20 …and fuel efficiency; ease of maintenance and repair; et cetera…

11:26 …all of these values began to be more predominate, because a new factor entered in to the design of motor vehicles…

11:34 …and that was the Department of Transportation, reflecting congressional authority to establish relatively modest standards…

11:42 …which irregularly enforced, have produced spectacular benefits.

11:47 The death toll when Unsafe at Any Speed came out in 1965 was 5.6 deaths, statistically…

11:56 …for every hundred million vehicle miles traveled. It's now 1.4. From 5.6 to 1.4.

12:10 And what these mandatory standards did, and they never were what I thought they should be…

12:16 …political pressure by the auto industry weakened them.

12:20 But what they did was basically liberate the scientific and engineering capabilities of the auto companies.

12:29 The scientists and engineers were not high up in the hierarchy compared to the stylist and the horsepower people…

12:37 …and so this gave them backing, so the doors began to open, the investments began to be

made, and long overdue…

12:45 …safety features we all take for granted when we buy vehicles now, padded dash panels, collapsible steering columns…

12:52 …side protection, head restraints, less shatterable glass, seat belts, airbags.

12:59 All of these were developed many years ago, including the air bag…

13:05 …and so they just really took them off the shelf and refined them into our safety.

13:12 Now the example of concentrated power hits hard here in Southern California…

13:17 …because in 1939, Southern California had the largest trolley system in the world.

13:25 It was quite a spectacular network. Some of you may remember that who are older here among us.

13:32 And General Motors and Standard Oil and a tire company got together.

13:37 They saw the trolley industry as their principle competitor, however reduced it was, and they wanted it off.

13:44 They wanted people only to get on the ground from point A to point B in motor vehicles…

13:52 …and so they literally bought up the trolley systems of 29 metropolitan areas…

13:57 …including Southern California, and tore up the tracks and pushed Sacramento and Washington…

14:03 …into more and more highways, which of course, has resulted in a lot of congestion…

14:09 …a lot of air pollution, a lot of crashes, and a lot of delays.

14:14 We're still suffering from that economic crime of the century.

14:18 It is a crime because the Justice Department caught the conspiracy and indicted these companies…

14:24 …in federal district court in 1948 and convicted them of criminal violation of the antitrust laws.

14:32 Unfortunately, the penalty was pretty trivial. GM was fined $5,000.

14:39 But today, when you're caught in traffic, part of it you can attribute to the absence of what would have been…

14:46 …a super modernized network of public transit, very convenient…

14:52 …and in some cases almost reaching a point of personal mass transit. That you do not have.

14:59 So, what we have to do is liberate our minds from those who have gotten too much power over us…

15:06 ...in such ways that we often don't realize.

15:10 If we were asked what we own, we'll give our personal belongings...

15:14 ...our savings account, our home, our car, our clothing, et cetera.

15:19 But most of us would not say that we are part owner in the great commonwealth in our country...

15:25 ...which is the source of the greatest wealth in our country, the public lands, one-third of America, onshore, offshore too...

15:34 ...the public airwaves over which radio and TV transmit their programs 24 hours a day, and trillions of dollars...

15:43 ...of government research and development that have helped build the semiconductor industry, the biotech industry...

15:49 ...a good deal of the pharmaceutical industry, the aerospace industry, the containerization industry.

15:54 You name it, a lot of the basic research and some of the applied research came from the National Institutes of Health...

16:01 ...from the Pentagon, from NASA, from the Department of Agriculture, et cetera.

16:07 Once we realize that, the next question is, you know, we have assets. Why don't we inventory the people's assets?

16:15 Why do we own all this commonwealth and control virtually nothing of it?

16:21 The timber companies, oil, gas, uranium, coal companies, the offshore drilling. That's our property.

16:30 And we have an 1872 Mining Act in this country that allows something which no other nation in the world permits.

16:37 It allows foreign and domestic mining companies to discover hard-rock minerals like gold, molybdenum...

16:45 ...silver on our land, and get it essentially for free, and mine it, sell it, make the money, and not return any royalties to Uncle Sam.

16:57 The Canadian company, Barrick, discovered $9 billion worth of our gold on federal land in Nevada and got it for $30,000.

17:06 That's all it is. It's 5 bucks an acre, 1872 price. So, people don't know about these things.

17:13 We don't teach them in the schools. We don't teach them at the universities. I never saw that discussed at...in law schools.

17:22 Why is it we own so many assets in this country as a commonwealth...

17:26 ...but we don't partake in how it's used and the extent we participate?

17:33 Why do we have to simply define freedom when we're watching TV as the remote?

17:38 You don't like a program, zing; another program, zing. That's not freedom. That's exit.

17:45 Why don't we have our own programs? We own the public airwaves.

17:49 We are the landlords. The TV and radio stations are the tenants.

17:53 They pay us no rent whatsoever since the 1934 Communications Act passed through congress…

17:59 …and they decide who says what, 24 hours a day, and who doesn't say what.

18:04 And yet, we could say, We want a couple hours a day for our own audience network. We want time in.

18:11 We want to develop local talent; state, regional, national talent; artistic resource; serious subjects; political subjects; cultural subjects.

18:22 If we don't raise our expectation level, we will be inviting the most perfect controlling system of all, which is, we control ourselves.

18:33 And Western Europe after World War II illustrates what happens when you raise expectation levels.

18:39 They're no smarter than we are. They're no richer than we are. After World War II, they were devastated.

18:44 The cities were destroyed, London, Paris, Rome. The countryside was destitute.

18:50 And yet within 10 years, working through their multiparty system, not a two-party dictatorship, multiparty system…

18:59 …working through their trade unions, working through their large consumer cooperatives…

19:05 …they demanded and received for all the people, not just some people, all the people, universal health care…

19:13 …decent public transit, tuition-free higher education, paid maternity leave, paid day care, paid family sick leave…

19:24 …five weeks paid vacation (in Sweden, it's about seven weeks now, paid vacation)…

19:30 …and a much better pension and retirement structure…

19:34 …until they began adopting the multinational model that began sinking us through Wall Street…

19:40 …they had a much better livelihood than we had. In our country today, we have none of these.

19:47 Sixty-five years after we won World War II, we have none of these.

19:52 Eight hundred people a week in our country die because they don't have health insurance to pay for diagnosis and treatment.

20:00 Who says that? The Harvard Medical School research peer-reviewed article in December 2009 Journal of Public Health.

20:09 That's 800 a week. That's over a hundred a day.

20:13 Nobody dies in Canada or Luxembourg or France or Germany or England or Denmark because they can't afford health insurance.

20:22 And the same is true for all these other social networks and social safety nets.

20:30 What was it about our country that we couldn't get it done?

20:34 Indeed, our problems have worsened in the last 30 years.

20:38 We no longer have an arc of progress economically for 80 percent of the people, who are making less in real dollars…

20:45 …inflation adjusted, than their predecessors made in the peak year of real wages in our country, 1973.

20:54 It's been going down like this. Consumer debt is skyrocketing.

21:00 Consumer abuse is wide prevalent with inadequate law enforcement.

21:07 We have lousy public transit and the transit we have is incomplete.

21:12 An incomplete public transit system is an oxymoron. You can't, and you've seen that yourself.

21:20 And not only that, 50 million people do not have health insurance.

21:26 One out of every three full-time workers in this country makes Walmart wages.

21:32 That's ten dollars, nine dollars, eight dollars, before deductions, very poor benefits.

21:39 And the difference between the top, rich, one percent is so staggering…

21:45 …it belies even the comparative imagery of banana republic.

21:50 The top one percent have financial wealth of the combined 95 lowest.

21:58 The 95 percent at the bottom of the people in this country have financial wealth equal to the one percent at the top.

22:06 It's illustrated by Walmart workers who make 8, 9, 10, 11 dollars an hour…

22:12 …and the boss at Walmart makes $11,000 an hour. An hour. And he's not the most highly paid CEO.

22:21 So before he goes to lunch on January 2, he's made more than any one of his workers make in an entire year.

22:27 This is not inequity only.

22:30 It has very coarse ramifications in terms of higher levels of poverty, economic insecurity, and

anxiety.

22:38 And in so doing, that spells a lot of psychosomatic illness, a lot of misery…

22:45 …a lot of internal domestic strife, from debt, et cetera, et cetera, and you can spell out your own consequences as well.

22:54 So, is this multinational model that we are being subjected to…

23:00 …where we have to compete with 80-cents-an-hour Chinese labor…

23:03 …hard working, modern equipment, shipped back to this country?

23:08 Since when do we allow countries that are authoritarian, fascist, communist, to lure our industry with our own tax advantages…

23:19 …for going abroad, and use labor that we would never allow to be used, in terms of their labor wages…

23:28 …and in terms of their exploitation, in terms of their refusing to allow them to form independent trade unions…

23:35 …or go to court or do anything that we think our people can do…

23:39 …and then hurl that against our own workers with the standards that companies have to adhere to?

23:47 That's severely masochistic. That's severely undemocratic. And what it's doing now, it's creating huge trade deficits…

23:57 …which is another way of saying we're exporting jobs, and it's not only blue-collar jobs, it's white-collar jobs.

24:04 The future of white-collar jobs by university students when they graduate is not going to be very pleasant unless we turn it around.

24:13 Now there are two ways to do this.

24:15 Develop a major political movement, where people begin saying, Hey! If Congress spends 22 percent of our income…

24:23 …I think it deserves 2 percent of our time, watching.

24:28 If Congress can get us into wars abroad because it abdicates its constitutional authority to the White House…

24:36 …if they can discern the level of toxics in the environment, if they can determine our taxes…

24:44 …why don't we spend more time watching in every congressional district?

24:48 Someone once asked me, Well, how much time? I said, Let's take a simple yardstick.

24:54 I'll settle for one-tenth of the time that those good people who call themselves bird watchers spend watching birds.

25:02 If we ever had groups in every congressional district watching Congress, you would see a dramatic turnaround…

25:08 …'cause we're dealing with only 535 men and women who put their shoes on everyday like you and I…

25:15 …and a number of corporations, who don't have a vote, get their way too often…

25:21 …tilting the balance of power and the balance of equity in their favor, which often is very short term…

25:29 …and not very farsighted, some corporations to the exception, and things keep getting worse.

25:36 So, I think the theme this evening is not particularly that one.

25:43 The theme is, there's another way to approach our political economy, and that is through local community economies.

25:52 If you take an inventory of Redlands, and I was privileged to read some of the history of your, your town, your city…

26:02 …which is geographically just a little larger than our hometown in Winsted, Connecticut, but seven times the population…

26:10 …you will see that there are local resources that are not organized, are not focused…

26:17 …and that the economy of Redlands is far too dependent on outside economic institutions than it need be.

26:26 Another way of putting it, concretely, is the more community health clinics there are…

26:33 …the less power the giant insurance and drug companies have over you.

26:37 The more community energy resources there are, the less power Exxon Mobil, and Peabody Coal…

26:43 …and the nuclear power companies have over you.

26:46 The more community, the more community food to market to consumers there are…

26:54 …the less power that the giant agribusiness companies have over you. And so it goes.

27:02 And we have seen all over the country a striking bit of [Unintelligible].

27:10 You take…you make a list of the 50 major problems in our country…

27:14 …down at the local level, whether deals with juvenile justice, not good schools, et cetera.

27:22 Somewhere in the country, a community, or more than one, has successfully responded to it.

27:30 And the question is, if they have successfully responded to it, why doesn't it spread faster?

27:37 And some answers are, one, the particular leadership of a few citizens did not erupt in these other communities.

27:49 Another answer is, community is so disorganized and depressed…

27:55 …that it can't get its act together to even ask the question, What are our community assets to mobilize?

28:04 A third is that the national media does a lousy job in publicizing success stories. They're almost hooked on depravity.

28:16 They're hooked on things that go wrong without pointing out the remedial causes, of course, but they're not doing a good job.

28:25 We should be able to turn on the evening news and learn how someone in Seattle or Macon, Georgia…

28:31 …or Pittsfield, Massachusetts, has solved a problem that we need to have solved in our own community.

28:40 And that's not happening. So how can it happen from a local basis? Claire is going to give some very concrete examples.

28:49 If those commend themselves to you here, you can sign the sign-up sheet with each headline…

28:57 …and you'll form yourself into a small community to meet and try to get it done.

29:04 Small communities are about the only thing that ever gets anything done.

29:10 The only revolution that ever works is one that works. And it starts with individual conversations.

29:20 It starts with groups in the neighborhood and then builds up to the city, county, state, region, and national level.

29:30 Some problems can be dealt with nationally.

29:32 We certainly don't want 50 states with different motor vehicle safety standards.

29:38 But mostly, power for the people grows vertically.

29:44 It grows up from the bottom and then begins changing Congress and the executive branch.

29:50 That's certainly going to be true with the Pentagon budget, which is half of the federal budget's discretionary money. Half.

29:58 And we have no more major enemy, do we? I mean, there's no more Soviet Union.

30:02 Communist China is not going to send missiles here. They can't even handle the pace of our giving them our jobs in industry.

30:12 So we exaggerate a few criminal gangs in order to justify an $8-hundred-billion…

30:20 …annual budget for the Pentagon, including the wars…

30:24 …not including all the successive problems for the poor veterans who are damaged for a

lifetime…

30:34 …and not including the blowback from the rest of the world for what we've done…

30:39 …without constitutional ratification and without a good strategic purpose.

30:44 We're attacking countries now that never attacked us, never intended to attack us. So it does go up.

30:51 That's not going to be changed in Washington. It's going to be changed at the local level, percolating up.

30:59 And that's pretty advantageous, because that's the one place that you can get your grips on your local assets…

31:05 …your local government, and your local citizenry. Now, Redlands and Winsted have one interesting parallel.

31:14 They both benefited from some pretty spectacular philanthropists.

31:20 I was reading Dr. Burgess's writings on the history of Redlands…

31:26 …and you're very lucky you have a historian as well as a teacher…

31:29 …and a librarian of that depth, and you had the Smiley brothers.

31:34 You had the first two, you had, I think, Mr. Hudson and Mr. Moore, is it? I don't know. Was it Moore? Huh?

31:45 Oh, Mr. Brown, excuse me. And they're the ones who laid the basis here. You were incorporated in 1888.

31:53 We're 150 years older than you, and it shows. We are very water rich.

32:03 The vast portion of this town of Winchester, it's about the size of Manhattan Island…

32:08 …geographically is woods and streams and rivers and lakes. But we never…we never valued these assets.

32:19 When I grew up, we would hear the cows mooing on the hillsides.

32:24 A few hours later we'd get the milk in bottles delivered to our door with cream at the top.

32:31 In my father's restaurant, he'd make ice cream.

32:35 And I always knew exactly when my father was making ice cream, trust me.

32:40 Now, the milk is brought in from who knows where. We don't know what's really in it.

32:47 Could be bovine growth hormone, which 20 other Western countries ban, and the ice cream is made from outside milk.

32:58 We don't hear the mooing anymore. And that part of the community has been displaced.

33:03 But years ago, Miss Beardsley started our library, Beardsley Memorial Library, $10,000 in 1900.

33:13 A family started the first county hospital in our county on the hill in Winsted.

33:20 Parks were started by philanthropists, civil war monuments by philanthropists.

33:25 The local high school was built by a clockmaker, the Gilbert Clock business. It was worldwide famous at the time.

33:35 And my father once put me in a car and took me all around. I was 10 years old.

33:40 He said, Look at this, look at this, look at this. And I said, Well, Dad why are you showing me this? It's not exactly new.

33:49 He said I'm showing it to you because in the last 70 years, there have been many rich people in this town…

33:57 …who, if they did what these few philanthropists did around 1900, 1910…

34:04 …you wouldn't recognize how wonderful this town would be.

34:08 And he wasn't talking about soup kitchens. He was talking about institutional philanthropy.

34:15 So, in considering how you develop community motivation and civic motivation…

34:22 …you first have to understand how the community disintegrated. That's where the study of history comes from.

34:28 The students here…how much would you know about yourself if all you knew was about yourself for the last six months?

34:35 What would you know about yourself? And that's what we are doing to our communities and our education system.

34:43 Every school system should teach the students local history and have them get around the town…

34:49 …see how their water is collected and decontaminated, see if there's a historical society…

34:57 …see how they get the services, public services, public works, for roads.

35:03 See how the schools are maintained. Go and sit in on the schools.

35:09 My mother once wrote a column called How to Tour Your Own Hometown.

35:14 And our town had 100 factories and fabrication shops at one time.

35:18 They're almost all gone now. But they could have gone and learned how pins are made…

35:24 …how clocks are made, how electrical wire is made, how clocks are made.

35:29 There's a whole local community for all of us to discover…

35:34 ...because we're spending entirely too much time watching screens...

35:38 ...constantly watching screens, and now text messaging and endless music piped into our ears.

35:45 It's changing the very nature of how we think and how we communicate...

35:50 ...and we've got to go and spend more time in reality and less time in virtual reality.

35:56 And of course for young people, it's getting to be 40, 50, 60 hours a week in virtual reality.

36:04 Once we start conversing with one another, personally, voice, person to person, that's when things start happening.

36:12 You don't believe it? Study the critical 10 years before 1776 and see how a rag-band bunch of farmers took on...

36:24 ...by far the most powerful military force in the world.

36:28 It started out in the taverns, in the general stores, farm to farm, communication, talking...

36:37 ...meeting, rallying, and then you know the rest. So that's the way you build it.

36:43 The key is how do you make people civically motivated?

36:47 One is to tell them that they are not free just because they're personally free.

36:53 They're not free just because they can pick their own music, eat what they want, meet who they want, date who they want...

36:58 ...divorce who they want, marry who they want, participate in sports when they want, travel where they want...

37:05 ...get into a 5,000-pound vehicle and go down three blocks to buy Chicklets if they want. That's not civic freedom.

37:14 Civic freedom is being able to hold the reins on the powers that be...

37:21 ...and say, You're not going to get us in these wars without full deliberation and the consent of the governed.

37:27 You're not going to get a tax system that is so distorted, so counterproductive...

37:33 ...and so privileged for those who can afford the tax lawyers or go offshore to tax savings.

37:40 You're not going to misspend the public budget. You're going to take it back to the people whose taxes fueled that public budget.

37:50 You're not going to have corporate welfare where corporations can misbehave and take too many risks...

37:56 ...pocket their profits, pay very little taxes, and socialize their losses on the backs of the taxpayer.

38:04 That's civic freedom, right down to the local level. Once we realize that, we might get a little

upset with the status quo.

38:15 Once we get upset, we start losing our excuses.

38:18 You say to an upstanding person in the community, Gene, Jack, why aren't you more active?

38:27 You've got knowledge, you've got experience, you've got a good occupation or profession.

38:33 Here are the four excuses. One, I don't have time. You don't have time? You don't have time for democracy?

38:40 You're going to be very busy in other ways trying to make up the difference.

38:47 The second is, Well, we don't know quite how to do it.

38:50 These lawyers and the jargon, you go to the city council and they give you the Robert Rules and tell you to shut up and…

38:59 …you know, if you talk too much, they'll show you the door.

39:04 Oh, so you don't know how to negotiate. You don't know how…

39:08 …do you realize that in your business, you are commanding far more difficult details and intricacies? Don't give us that excuse.

39:18 The third is, Oh, well, well, I may have the time and I can negotiate all this jargon okay, but I'm afraid.

39:29 You're afraid? What do you think, you live in El Salvador? You think you live in the mountains of Afghanistan?

39:38 You're living in America. What are you afraid of? You don't want to show up? Half of democracy's showing up.

39:47 What are you afraid of? Maybe you are afraid, but what are you afraid of? Spill it out. Let's examine it.

39:54 Alright, are you very sensitive to criticism? Are you blistered by moonbeams? Or is there something else we don't know?

40:05 And then when you get them to say, We got the time, we can negotiate the complexities, and we're not afraid…

40:13 …here's the last excuse. It doesn't make any difference anyway.

40:18 They're all going to make the decisions for us and I don't want to waste my time.

40:24 Those are the four pillars of civic excuse building, and politely as possible…

40:32 …we have to disabuse our neighbors and friends of that exit strategy.

40:39 And we've got to do it with conversation, with going back into our history at the greatest heroic moments…

40:45 ...when people took on far greater risks, and gave us what we have, blessings that we inherited, and we've got to do it by...

40:54 ...vectoring them on their descendents and what kind of country and world are they going to bequeath to our descendents.

41:02 All this comes of just asking ourselves...

41:07 ...What is the estimate of our own significance as human beings over the next 50 or 60 years, or 20 years, or 10 years?

41:16 Once we raise our expectation level, once we decide to spend some time and some skill...

41:23 ...the consequences become spectacularly interesting and beneficial.

41:29 Every local community has extraordinary resources. You've used some of yours.

41:34 You can see them in the buildings, in the institutions, in the library.

41:40 But you also have a lot of problems, like every other community, a lot of unmet needs.

41:47 I understand you have a mall that's shuttered. You have other problems that you know more about than I do.

41:56 But these problems are able to be confronted with a very, very controlled focus, stripped of their ideology...

42:08 ...hopefully stripped of personality differences, which can be very corrosive, as many of you know...

42:13 ...and focusing on what kind of vision do you have for Redlands and beyond that, California, and our country.

42:23 It does make a great deal of difference for us to start the ball rolling in as small a way as possible.

42:32 Everyone can make a difference in one degree or another.

42:37 And in that manner, you can learn from other communities...

42:41 ...and we can learn from your community, so we don't have to reinvent the wheel.

42:46 But I want to conclude this part, before Claire makes her presentation, with two very important recommendations.

42:55 One, history of the local community and California must be taught in the schools as a distinct subject. A distinct subject.

43:12 Otherwise, connections will not be made with adults outside the school. Experience using the city as a laboratory...

43:22 ...the way physics and chemistry majors use their in-house laboratories will not be attended to.

43:31 The students will not learn how to practice democracy.

43:34 They will not learn how to use the Freedom of Information Act. They will not learn how to build coalitions.

43:40 And that requires another course, which is civic skills.

43:45 If students are taught computer skills, business skills, marketing skills, advertising skills…

43:52 …they should be taught the most important skills of all…

43:55 …to synthesize all knowledge and add civic skills to make this an ever deeper democracy.

44:03 I'm going to turn this over now to Claire, who will talk about some very concrete things that we've done in our…

44:10 …in our hometown, and let me tell you something. I've said this in my hometown.

44:15 If we can do it in Winsted, Connecticut, it can be done anywhere.

44:20 Claire.

44:31 Thank you.

44:43 Good evening to all of you. I'm happy to be here with you to talk about the important subject of community.

44:49 I was telling Jack Dangermond last December when I saw him in Washington…

44:55 …that I came across a book in my brother Shaf's library called The Small Community by Arthur Morgan.

45:04 Arthur Morgan wrote that book in 1940, and you…if those of you who are of a certain age…

45:11 …will know that we were about to enter World War II. Europe was already embroiled.

45:17 And he said at the beginning of that book, "We are ignoring the most important problem in the country…

45:24 …and that is the deterioration of the small community." This was 1940.

45:29 I wonder what he would say today. So let's pay attention. Your presence here tonight shows that you are.

45:38 We moved in our town and other towns too in a long process that came to us like Carl Sandburg's fog on little cat feet…

45:49 …from a farming community to industrial activities, and now to more or less a bedroom town…

45:57 …where people go out of town to work and come home to have their families and to sleep…

46:04 …to help their children with homework, and then go back to work the next day.

46:08 Very little time for the public sphere. And we're faced with that in Winsted, Connecticut.

46:17 We thought that if we owned as individuals, the assets of the town of Winchester and the city of Winsted…

46:26 …we would certainly have help in trying to manage these assets.

46:30 We would have lawyers and economists and accountants and name it, and we would run our business.

46:38 So, similarly, we own these assets collectively as citizens of the town…

46:44 …and we thought maybe we would try something called community lawyering.

46:49 You have all kinds of private lawyers, attorneys, I use the word judiciously.

46:55 These are lawyers seeking the common good for people…

46:59 …helping them do the work of citizenship and their client is the public and it's not fee for service.

47:10 The community lawyer's mission is to deepen the quality of the citizenry…

47:14 …and that means what we do between elections, every day of our lives.

47:20 And to bring the citizen back into the center focus of public decision making.

47:27 So in 1989 came our first community lawyer. I have to say that the two we've had so far have been women…

47:36 …and that might be instructive to some of us, it might not.

47:40 I think it is, that these women are able to work at the community level and want to.

47:47 I have some examples of what the work has been about. I'm told I don't have to talk into that.

47:57 And so we looked at this community lawyering as a shoehorn, not a crutch for people…

48:04 …a helping hand to help them access their government, to show them procedural ways to do it.

48:12 It didn't matter whether you liked their politics or not. If they wanted to petition their government, you showed them how to do it.

48:19 The other part of the practice is advocacy, looking at significant public issues and taking action on it…

48:27 …building the coalitions that are necessary to solve the problem.

48:32 There are numerous roles that the community lawyer serves and I left some brochures with Jack Dangermond on this.

48:43 They would teach about the tools of democracy, the procedural issues, how to negotiate…

48:53 …how to bring together people of like mind, how to talk to the other side, how to write, how to research, and so on.

49:05 The other role is to help citizens act on public issues by guiding them through the maze of laws and regulation…

49:14 …initiate ideas and action that stimulate awareness and involvement.

49:18 And one example of that was the US Patriot Act, where she had a road show all the way through Connecticut…

49:25 …explaining to people…save your bill of rights…

49:29 …how this affects your rights and what we should be cautious about…

49:33 …and aware about and maybe wanting to try to reverse.

49:39 Monitoring government to ensure accountability, and last but not least, litigating when necessary.

49:46 These are some of the roles that the community lawyer serves.

49:53 With her presence and through practice, through instruction and action actually…

50:00 …she has helped stir the civic imagination of people who want to be participants.

50:06 And it's more than participants who see themselves as an asset in their community…

50:12 …not as somebody coming in need wanting a helping hand, but as an asset.

50:16 And so her job is to bring all these human assets together…

50:21 …in order to execute proper actions in the community, but for the benefit of the whole.

50:29 The charter, we have home rule, the charter revision.

50:32 It used to be that the charter were stacked up like this in town hall, but nobody interested in it.

50:39 Now, you can hardly find a copy, because whenever somebody thinks about a problem in town…

50:44 …they go to the charter to see what their rights are. She has helped maintain those rights.

50:49 She has helped make the annual town meeting for the budget go from the town meeting to the referendum…

50:56 …instead of just the decision being made at the town meeting with a small number of people who might come.

51:05 So it went to referendum. And it changed the equation.

51:10 For over 20 years, she has been going to the local high school to lecture about the state and federal laws…

51:20 …the Freedom of Information laws, and we have an essay contest to…with a prize for the top three essays…

51:28 ...and if they're good enough, they get published in the local paper.

51:32 She has helped community access TV become really community access TV...

51:38 ...where they have to have the public access station...

51:41 ...helped incorporate and get tax exemption for the citizen group, we call it the Mad River TV, the name of one of our rivers...

51:50 ...to negotiate with the charter franchisees, and to make sure that under Connecticut law, they're in compliance...

51:57 ...which means providing proper studios, proper equipment...

52:02 ...proper help for people to make their own videos. That wasn't happening.

52:08 And the other thing, I might add, she also made sure that if you're running for office...

52:14 ...a candidate, you can get your message on cable TV and you wouldn't be blocked. Anybody can.

52:21 She was able to build a student canvas, which helped build their citizenship skills.

52:28 I'll just mention one project, which was Fill a Pothole.

52:32 After a very severe winter, we had a lot of potholes and they weren't being filled...

52:37 ...and so one student, Eagle, wanted to have his Eagle Scout program focus on that and they had a hilarious time...

52:44 ...videoing and then going around with public works and filling those potholes.

52:49 They've never forgotten that. And there were other canvases, like Get Out the Vote, explaining the issues to people...

52:57 ...going door to door. So they had that experience of talking to...to their elders actually, and getting them to come out and vote.

53:01 Now SLAPP suits stand for Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation. Just think of that name.

53:08 She defended citizens against SLAPP suits.

53:20 Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation, where developers and sometimes even government...

53:26 ...go after citizens for petitioning their government against a mall, for example.

53:32 And the reason she was asked to defend this group against the mall was because...

53:40 ...the private lawyer who was defending them got sued also and therefore became a defendant...

53:46 ...and so she moved in, took the case to the Supreme Court of Connecticut...

53:52 ...where in August 2009, the decision came down, a resounding decision on the side of people for their First Amendment rights...

54:01 ...and protecting them from any liability for the activities of citizenship...

54:09 ...arguing that the law is more powerful than commercial...

54:15 ...and the rights of people under our First Amendment is more powerful than commercial interests.

54:23 The most noteworthy effort that was made by the community lawyer resource was to fight to save our hundred-year-old hospital.

54:33 We...we're a small hospital, the Winsted Memorial Hospital, and one day in August 19...April 1996...

54:43 ...the president of the hospital asked me to come to his office...

54:48 ...and announced to me that they were closing the hospital and he wanted our support. Well, that was a real shock.

54:59 He went through a whole speech about the new look, ambulatory care on Route 44...

55:09 ...not high on a hill where the air is cleaner. He got his CFO, his financial officer to tell me A, B, C, D.

55:20 He said...I said, Wait a minute now. Let me see if I understood you.

55:25 You're telling me that no medical care is going to be in this hundred-year-old hospital?

55:33 That's right, he says. So I promised him a robust public discussion.

55:39 I did take the community lawyer with me that time so she could hear what was going on...

55:45 ...and we went back to the office and looked at each other...

55:49 ...because the reports from the hospital had been coming through...

55:53 ...that they are in quite good financial...at least they were in the black.

55:57 We looked at each other, and what do we do? We go to the people. She called a meeting.

56:10 Over a hundred people came to the town hall, which is where we held it, and we were off. The people were very angry.

56:21 The vision that the state had for us was a major hospital in the Hartford area and one at Yale New Haven in between clinics...

56:31 ...and the families be damned. So that didn't please us. We had three resources that helped us prevail in the following way.

56:45 We had the community lawyer resource off and running.

56:50 We had in the mix a physician whose medical practice consisted of unhealthy hospitals and...I

mean…

57:01 …financially unhealthy hospitals, structurally unhealthy hospitals, and who…that were failing, and medical practices.

57:15 That was his business. He was a medical doctor, he had a business degree, and he had a law degree.

57:24 And, to our delight, he was in the first medical group of Nader's Raiders, and he said to me, "It's payback time."

57:34 So he came in and worked with us pro bono for over a year as we fought the closing of the hospital.

57:41 There were lots of outside reasons why the hospital was pressured, a small rural hospital like that.

57:48 But also there was the inside incompetence of the board making bad decisions along the way, like closing obstetrics.

57:58 That was always a bad decision. In his practice, he had never seen a hospital that was in trouble…

58:04 …that hadn't closed obstetrics, and you can understand why, I think.

58:10 And then we had the people, the energy of the people…

58:13 …the unorganized energy and passion of the people to keep this hospital.

58:18 Well, without those first two resources, that energy would have dissipated…

58:24 …and people would have just gone away quite sad and they would have lost their hospital.

58:28 I think we can say we're the only hospital, small hospital in the country…

58:33 …that was threatened like that, that lost the battle to bankruptcy, and it's a long story.

58:40 We're putting together a history. But bought the facility out of bankruptcy…

58:48 …provided a health center up there that offered everything but 24-hour beds.

58:54 And after months of back and forth with the board, and it was a real fight…

59:01 …people began to understand that you do have to fight sometimes and you do have to…almost…

59:08 …it did break up bridge parties, it broke up families, because the board was a local board and they were being criticized.

59:17 We didn't start out with criticism, we started out, Well, let's see what we can do about this.

59:22 But they didn't like it, and there were lots of forces allied.

59:27 But what the community showed is that it had the will. That's very important.

59:33 And what we got out of it was talent that surfaced that never occurred to anybody…

59:41 …even the person that was standing up fighting for it who was a member of our citizen group that their lawyer brought together…

59:49 …and some humorous member of that group said, "We'll call it the Code Blue Committee." They put out pamphlets.

59:56 We collected a petition to the state to help us with an unfair tax that they had slapped on all hospitals…

1:00:02 …which hurt small hospitals, and they collected, I think, in 12 days, 12,000 signatures. That is phenomenal.

1:00:14 We bundled up these signatures and we took them to the governor's office…

1:00:18 …only to be told by his chief of staff that the governor did not receive petitions from citizens.

1:00:24 And that's the governor who some years later landed in jail. So there are lots of parts to this story…

1:00:32 …but we did succeed in doing that, and the community lawyer served as a pro bono legal counsel…

1:00:43 …going after charitable funds of the hospital to be given to this approximate group for 10 years.

1:00:51 Well over a million dollars in fees if you were to consider commercial legal fees.

1:00:56 And the hospital would not…the health center would not have had…

1:01:01 …we've called it the Winsted Health Center Foundation, focusing by the way…

1:01:05 …to go back to something Ralph said on local control.

1:01:08 That was a serious concept with us, that we the people who live there know best what kind of health care we need.

1:01:16 We don't have to have outsiders come in and tell us the makeup of our demographics.

1:01:21 We don't need outsiders to tell us what we need.

1:01:25 We know what our illnesses are, where we'd like to go, and preventive medicine, and so on.

1:01:32 It built self-confidence, it built self-reliance, it reminded people that when the hospital got established to begin with…

1:01:38 …it was about citizens taking action. It was not anything else. We did go to the state, though.

1:01:44 It was chartered by the state in those times. Citizens donated the land, citizens built the hospital.

1:01:53 Citizens did everything before the evolution of medical care in this country evolved to what you're familiar with today.

1:02:05 It was also a social center through its auxiliary, by the way.

1:02:09 So, we demonstrated, I think, Margaret Mead's wonderful quote that I'd like to read to you.

1:02:18 "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever does."

1:02:28 And so we are now 15 years into this experiment. The people love having a facility up on the hill, and outside…

1:02:40 …outside forces are being held at bay for the moment. But it requires extreme vigilance.

1:02:53 I just got hooked on this. Somebody left something sticky up here.

1:02:59 The other…the other example I want to give is after a while we realized that maybe we need some help…

1:03:09 …in assessing and evaluating and getting the relevant information and assessing it and putting it in front of people…

1:03:17 …to make better decisions on problems that have high technical issues to them.

1:03:24 And one of the main things that…so we got a community technologist. We invented it.

1:03:29 It's kind of a bulky name, but we didn't want to say engineer.

1:03:34 The person we got had engineering, architectural, fine arts background, she seemed to have everything.

1:03:41 And what she had to learn, of course, is doing this practice with people in a small town, and that requires additional skills.

1:03:52 She had the persuasion…she had very good persuasive skills.

1:03:57 Her biggest…there were many things she worked on.

1:04:03 One…well, I'm going to go to the biggest one, which you'll understand, I think.

1:04:08 Is that we were putting in…the state was mandating, under the safe drinking water…

1:04:13 …the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, that we have a filtration and treatment system.

1:04:20 Doesn't matter whether you could have found another way to do it, you had to have a plant like that.

1:04:26 And before she came, a year before she came, the public had voted a 6.5-million-dollar plant…

1:04:35 …way over what we needed, we thought. And she delved into those plans and she found several things.

1:04:44 First, that we weren't metered yet. We were going to be metered, but they said, Well, we'll do that afterwards.

1:04:50 Well, usually you meter to find out what 2,500 customers will require. She got them to rethink the scope.

1:05:02 She reduced the cost of the plant by showing that you didn't need this and you didn't need that, to the engineers.

1:05:11 She went to the engineering meeting. She backed them up on their…

1:05:17 …she told the engineering consultants that they don't have to charge…

1:05:21 …from when they leave their office in Vermont to come to us.

1:05:24 They don't have to schedule anther meeting when they hadn't done what they said they would do in the first meeting.

1:05:29 And so there were lots of things. The town was very happy to have her…

1:05:34 …but these are not questions that town officials couldn't have asked themselves if they were looking at the project…

1:05:40 …really from the point of view of the taxpayer, and doing the right thing for the scope.

1:05:46 She also looked at the plans and found that the way they had laid out the different parts of it up at the…up at the…

1:05:57 …where it was going to be located. It made no sense at all.

1:06:01 It required more piping, more electricity. She rearranged that whole thing so that it made sense.

1:06:08 It was like furnishing a house, for heaven's sake. She told him it didn't have to be a brick building, the main building.

1:06:16 It could be another, cheaper variety. It didn't have to have, what do you call those big windows…

1:06:23 …that you see everything through, which are expensive to replace?

1:06:28 And so this is a facilities, a plant facilities building.

1:06:34 She cut it down, but it was too…she should have been there on the ground floor.

1:06:39 Too many decisions had been made. People find it difficult to retract, to revise. So that was an obstacle.

1:06:50 She wrote many things in the paper to talk about…we did have a wonderful invention.

1:06:59 We've had something called the Winsted Voice, reader…reader written. I mean, everybody could write for it.

1:07:09 You paid for it through ads, but businesses in the area. With the Winsted Voice, I want to

say one other thing.

1:07:16 With the Winsted Voice, with three newspapers covering local issues at the time, and a cable access…

1:07:23 …it's the public access station where, when we got the information out, we would just go on and put on a show.

1:07:30 The word got out. It was very, very good.

1:07:32 We couldn't do the same thing today, because this has disappeared due to the cost of newsprint.

1:07:41 The papers are disappearing. The only thing that's left is cable access, so we value it.

1:07:49 Other things she worked on, I'll just mention briefly, is the renovation and use of a historic house on Main Street…

1:07:58 …which was owned by the YMCA. She dug up all kinds of help.

1:08:03 The domestic front of Americore…Americare, as you know, that disaster relief organization that speedily responds to disasters.

1:08:12 They would come in and give us all the equipment for 300, was it…$350,000 renovation…

1:08:19 …if we would provide two things, we the community, that is, a $1,500 good-faith payment…

1:08:28 …which our foundation was certainly willing to do, and local labor, and we had that in spades.

1:08:37 Everybody stepped up to volunteer. The people would put in the heating and air conditioning…

1:08:42 …to people who would do the carpentry. It was a wonderful thing.

1:08:47 But the Y was trying to tear down the house in order to put up three more parking spaces.

1:08:57 And it didn't seem to matter, so we lost that one. You win some, you lose some.

1:09:02 It's an interesting…we've had enough experience now to go back and analyze what works, what doesn't work, and why.

1:09:11 The Y is very important. And this is a small town though, so families marry each other, are friends with each other…

1:09:21 …play bridge with each other, and you don't know who you're talking to…

1:09:25 …so you have to tread very lightly when you object to something.

1:09:30 And it's interesting the way it develops. So relationships are extremely important in a small town.

1:09:38 She worked on traffic lights. Route 44 is our main street.

1:09:43 It's a state highway from Hartford to Albany, and they wanted to put in the galvanized lights that you see…

1:09:51 …the gray prison-like lights, and she said, Why don't we put a nice green that would meld with the forestry out there.

1:09:59 We have a lot of trees around, and oh, no. Well, you can as a town, but you have to maintain it. No town likes to maintain.

1:10:07 She found a company that would paint it the right…the color we wanted and warranty it for about 25 years.

1:10:17 So we got those nice lamps.

1:10:18 And she worked with the Department of Transportation, which leads me to another point.

1:10:23 If the town resource, whether it is a citizen resource like this one or a government resource…

1:10:32 …shows competence and can show alternatives to what the state wants to do…

1:10:38 …and can argue it from a technical and economic point of view, they will listen.

1:10:44 Which leads me to the understanding that if you have that kind of self-confidence and self-reliance…

1:10:52 …you can build that in a community, to be…command…to command respect of anybody who comes in to work in your town…

1:11:01 …including the state, you can get very far, and if you show enough competence…

1:11:07 …the state will want to work with you, because they know then that the money they put in will be well regarded.

1:11:14 One thing, when we lost this fight, she started a series of articles on the historic treasures in our town…

1:11:23 …and we're going to collect those that have been written now about wonderful residential structures, and so people can remember.

1:11:32 Again, going to the point of local history, your buildings are part of your local history.

1:11:37 Your local families who did things, the architectural styles…

1:11:41 …and they're familiar, so they're markers when you take a walk around town. And when they're gone, you miss them.

1:11:49 She was instrumental in taking advantage of a state program to help small businesses fix their facades.

1:11:59 Without her presence there, Winsted would have missed it, wouldn't have been able to handle it properly, I'm sorry to say…

1:12:06 …and wouldn't probably have even known about it.

1:12:09 So it's very important to know what the resources are out there and to have a vision of where you want to go with them.

1:12:17 We were the first to start the program, the first to complete the program.

1:12:21 They were so delighted with us, they gave us more money to enlarge the program.

1:12:26 So that was another…now, one thing she did right, which tells me something else is…

1:12:31 …an article in the Voice, Which Candidates Will Best Serve Winsted? We were up for elections.

1:12:40 She talked about the water project and what kind of decisions they had to make, this board of selectmen we're about to elect.

1:12:49 She…and in by doing that, she raised the standards of the citizenry…

1:12:53 …what they should be asking the candidates and expecting of them.

1:12:57 She talked about the River Walk project and bridge, which had to be replaced, got them to make it the same kind of…

1:13:07 …got the…found the money at the state level, which would increase the grant to the town…

1:13:13 …to make it the same color as the traffic, rather than that rust, ugly stuff that they do put up.

1:13:23 And she maintained the visual and aesthetic aspect of that River Walk and the bridge that connected one street to the main street.

1:13:35 And then she talked about municipal spending and government accountability. Very important.

1:13:40 Which elected seven officials, she said, will work hardest to reduce town debt…

1:13:46 …avoid new debt, and seek overall municipal cost reduction efficiency.

1:13:51 Question vague, broad-brushed, expenditures. There's a lot of that. Seek to achieve the most value for each dollar.

1:14:00 And she went on and on and then she said, and most importantly, review and approve each expenditure…

1:14:06 …through the eyes of the citizens paying the bills. So that's the community technologist.

1:14:11 We did…I'll mention one other thing. We kept evolving our ideas of what was needed.

1:14:19 The schools needed something more than what they had, so we had come into the play…

1:14:26 …an educational anthropologist whose pedagogy was so unique.

1:14:31 She did…she covered the curriculum…we didn't do this adjunct extras.

1:14:37 We asked permission to…the school let us in, the teacher said this is what we're teaching.

1:14:43 She took that material and, through storytelling and performance, she had those children…

1:14:51 …I don't care what category you put them in, special ed, or any of that…

1:14:56 …so excited, they couldn't wait to come to school the next day.

1:15:00 She stayed eight years, and the school system was unable…

1:15:04 …because it was so dysfunctional with one superintendent to the other, was unable to pick it up…

1:15:11 …although there was some teachers wanting to do that.

1:15:15 So, she came out with a manuscript about the work called, A World of Their Own…

1:15:24 …about the children, because that was the good news.

1:15:29 They aren't that difficult to teach, but the problem was…

1:15:33 …the bad news was the bureaucracy of the school system and no teaching to the test. Teaching to the test.

1:15:42 She couldn't get in the period of time she needed with those children because the day was so truncated.

1:15:50 They were making schizophrenics out of the children.

1:15:54 But her book is very elevating in the Jonathan Kozol tradition, if you know his work in education…

1:16:02 …that children can be taught, can be critical thinkers, can be imaginative…

1:16:10 …are as a matter of fact, if you provide the right context for them. So she demonstrated that.

1:16:18 What are we left with? We're left with a lot of…and I haven't covered everything, but experiments of this kind.

1:16:25 But these two, the community lawyering and the community technologist can help the community…

1:16:32 …and it's not just hardware, it's the built environment, it's the natural resources, the air pollution, the waste disposal…

1:16:40 …all of the questions that come up, even more probably for a town the size of Redlands.

1:16:46 I don't know if you've experienced that and whether you need it. But people need to be…need that kind of help.

1:16:53 And all I can say is it doesn't take many people to start a little yeast and then it steamrolls…

1:17:00 …and it becomes like a snowball, and the enthusiasm is incredible.

1:17:05 One citizen who got involved in a statewide controversy we had, which the community

lawyer was involved in…

1:17:14 …to stop a stadium of the New England Patriots, said, he never stuck his neck out for any issue, for any public issue.

1:17:25 But this has been so much fun, he said, I'm going to search for other issues. And I leave you with that thought.

1:17:32 It can be very energizing to become self-confident in your public sphere, in your public lives, to become self-reliant…

1:17:41 …to demand things of others who are supposed to be serving you…

1:17:48 …to raise your own expectations of how a government works and should work…

1:17:53 …and you will maybe teach government officials that the wisdom of the people can be used to their advantage…

1:18:03 …and that it is their business to deepen the quality of the citizens.

1:18:08 Thank you very much.

1:18:14 Very good. Very good.

1:18:24 Thank you very much, Claire. Before we go on to the questions, I just want to make two points.

1:18:31 A lot of times people say, oh, this is a good idea in a local town, but there's no money.

1:18:37 How many times have you heard that? Well, there's a…one of the cofounders of legal services to the poor…

1:18:44 …who now is a law professor of long standing, Edgar Cahn, developed a currency of time. It's called the time dollar.

1:18:54 And here's the way it works, very simple. Elderly couple tutors a teenager for 20 hours.

1:19:03 The 20 hours are logged in a time bank run by a church or a community college or some nonprofit group.

1:19:12 When the elderly couple wants work to shovel the sidewalk or mow the lawn or whatever, that couple draws on 20 hours.

1:19:23 And it's not just A gives hours to B and B gives hours back to A. It works with a lot of matrices.

1:19:30 A gives to B, B gives to C, C gives to D, D gives back to A. You can do wonders with a software program on this.

1:19:39 This basically is creating a new currency. It's not a monetary currency, it's trading hours. And everyone is equal.

1:19:49 A lawyer's hour is equal to the hour of a teenager or a homeless person as they exchange time. It's bartering in hours.

1:20:00 He's got this going now in several communities, started out in Miami. He has a software program. He has a book on it.

1:20:10 Every conceivable question you can think of, he has worked through.

1:20:15 And so if you have the semblance of a community, you can set up a time dollar program here…

1:20:21 …and build it into literally millions of hours of exchange, which binds the community together.

1:20:29 It's not taxable by the way. It binds the community together, people become acquaintances, acquaintances become friends.

1:20:38 It's a marvelous concept, and I urge you if you're interested in trying to form one here in Redlands…

1:20:46 …there's a sign-up sheet out there with the title Time Dollar.

1:20:50 For those of you who want to find out about it quickly…

1:20:53 …the website is timebanks.org, T-I-M-E-B-A-N-K-S.org, and it can work in all kinds of areas.

1:21:03 It can work in emergency areas, it can work in health care, education, et cetera.

1:21:09 All this comes down to the following. I've got to tell you three little episodes in history.

1:21:16 It comes down to three traits, which we're all capable of producing and elaborating within ourselves.

1:21:25 When Isaac Newton, the great physicist, was once asked…

1:21:30 …Mr. Newton, why are you so much more brilliant than your fellow scientists?

1:21:39 He answered, "I'm not so much brilliant than my fellow scientists.

1:21:45 "I suppose the difference is that I can concentrate on a problem in my mind longer than most of them." Concentration.

1:21:58 That's one trait…in a generation of attention-deficit disorder and shortened attention spans.

1:22:08 The second story's Einstein. Okay, it's an understatement, but he's quoted the following sentence.

1:22:17 He said, "I don't think of myself as a genius. I just have a passionate curiosity." Curiosity.

1:22:32 Concentration. Curiosity.

1:22:34 The third story comes from Robert Blake, the British poet of a couple hundred years ago a lot of you have read [in] school.

1:22:44 At a party, he was asked by an acquaintance this question, "Mr. Blake, with whom are you living these days?"

1:22:57 And Mr. Blake responded, "With my imagination."

1:23:03 Concentration, curiosity, imagination. Those are the building blocks with a sense of justice…

1:23:12 …which Senator Daniel Webster called the greatest work on human beings on earth, by human beings on earth.

1:23:18 Justice, without which liberty and freedom are not very deep or possible.

1:23:23 Those traits have been repressed by our standardized, corporate, governmental monocultures.

1:23:33 They have been repressed by bureaucracies which share common traits worldwide.

1:23:39 There's a brotherhood of bureaucracies. They exhibit the same symptoms.

1:23:44 Standardization, lack of individual initiative, passing the buck, getting along by going along.

1:23:54 It's been repressed by a media that is lunching off our public property…

1:24:01 …but serving its private investments instead of its private trust under the 1934 Communications Act.

1:24:12 It's most prominently repressed by formal education. Self-censorship is alive and well in America.

1:24:21 Self-censorship is so deep, you don't need censorship. We do it to ourselves. It's time to speak our minds.

1:24:34 It's time to say what is on our minds. It's time to exhibit our better instincts [Inaudible] from Lincoln.

1:24:48 And it's time to think anew, as he said in the 1860s. It's more time than ever to think anew.

1:24:57 No nation in history has had more solutions on the shelf and more problems on the ground without connecting the two.

1:25:10 And that gap is a democracy gap, and a democracy gap is us.

1:25:17 Thank you very much.

1:25:27 Thank you.

1:25:29 Have question.

1:25:38 [Unintelligible].

1:26:06 Take questions.

1:26:07 I think we have a PA system, is that right, Jack?

1:26:10 Oh, it's eight-thirty. It's eight-thirty.

1:26:12 Thank you…President Appleton, is there…

1:26:14 It's in the audience there are.

1:26:16 Oh, it's in the audience. Right. Right.

1:26:18 [Inaudible comment]

1:26:19 Right.

1:26:25 Anybody want to start, please?

1:26:27 [Audience comment] I do.

1:26:28 Either ask Claire or me or both of us.

1:26:31 I do. I have a question. When you were talking about the community attorney…

1:26:37 …and the community engineer, who provided the money for those to…to…

1:26:47 I'll explain. I did not explain that. I meant to do it, but Ralph talked so long, I got started on the wrong foot.

1:26:57 [Inaudible].

1:26:59 [Inaudible].

1:27:01 Our brother Shaf was community based.

1:27:05 He was the founder of the Northwest Connecticut Community College almost single-handedly…

1:27:10 …and when he passed, before his time, we set up a small foundation called the Shafeek Nader Trust for the Community Interest.

1:27:23 And it's that organization, of which I'm the president at the current time; my mother was the first president…

1:27:32 …supports this effort. And I remember when he was working to set up the college…

1:27:40 …which the opportunity opened up because it was our secondary school and they wanted to build a new school…

1:27:47 …which left this building where we went to high school, available.

1:27:52 And we had to have…we had to have a fight in Winsted to get to that step, because our town hall…

1:28:01 …which is located where it should be, sensibly, in the middle of town, needed renovation, and they thought…

1:28:09 …oh, we don't need to renovate this building. We'll just go down to that building. It's in pretty good shape.

1:28:15 And so, we said no. We renovated the building, and we set up the community college…

1:28:24 …almost single-handedly with a small committee.

1:28:27 And I remember what he said, and that resonated when we established this organization in his memory.

1:28:35 When he was asked by one of his committees, you know, I don't know…I don't…I'm just a businessman.

1:28:40 I can't go talk to the chancellor of higher education.

1:28:44 So my brother Shaf said to him, "I don't know about you, but I've got the majesty of my mind."

1:28:49 And I've never forgotten that. And that's what we try to work on.

1:28:54 Everybody has the majesty of their mind and can make that contribution to a citizen and community.

1:29:05 And I might add, you have much greater philanthropic resources in your town, historically, and contemporarily…

1:29:14 …to fund such full-time citizens like community technologists, community lawyer, community anthropologist, and so forth.

1:29:23 It's amazing the leverage they bring, 'cause they really put together a lot of incipient desires by people who are otherwise busy.

1:29:36 So…yes?

1:29:37 [Audience question] Hi. Oh, wow. I'd like to ask your opinion on an idea I've had for awhile…

1:29:44 …and I've been working on it for a long time and it has to do with a lot of points you addressed…

1:29:50 …two of them being corporate corruption and not enough participation of the governed.

1:29:58 It's about a three-minute explanation of the idea. Can I ask…can I tell you the idea?

1:30:05 Go ahead.

1:30:06 [Audience comment] Alright. It's called the Legislators League.

1:30:09 It's a nonprofit designed to ensure that the legislative branch represents the best interests of all the governed.

1:30:16 And…so it's going to use a web-based form as its crux and it'll do so in five phases.

1:30:28 First, anyone in the world can sign up and take a short test that'll make sure that they have…

1:30:34 …good law-making principles at hand, like awareness of unintended consequences.

1:30:40 And then the next phase is anyone in the world can open it up to submitting issues.

1:30:47 So anyone in the world can submit issues online that they want solved.

1:30:52 And anyone sympathetic that's already signed up can say, I agree with that issue.

1:30:58 I want to see what I can do to solve it. And then it's opened up for a brainstorm. This is the third phase.

1:31:05 And anyone in the world can participate there…submit their ideas.

1:31:09 And then the fourth phase is the actual creation of the bill.

1:31:14 So, it's a very collaborative experience and the admin, the person who started the bill…

1:31:25 …or who started to take on an issue, starts writing a bill, and then anyone in the world can add on, like, parts of the bill…

1:31:36 …and people can vote on whether they like those parts or not…

1:31:39 …and then there'll be a side panel with four different feeds of comments.

1:31:46 One will be for related professionals.

1:31:52 And the next one will be for poli-sci majors and government officials, so that these different perspectives can be added.

1:32:02 The next one will be people affected by the issue.

1:32:07 And then the fourth one will be anyone in the world who wants to contribute their ideas.

1:32:12 And the next phase after that is, after the bill is made and people agree that it's a done bill…

1:32:22 …it'll…all they have to do is push a button and then it'll be submitted…

1:32:27 …to sympathetic politicians and…and then the politicians can say…

1:32:35 …Yes, I agree with that bill, and they can take it further.

1:32:39 And then as that's happening, the next screen, which is the fifth phase…

1:32:43 …it'll show a little icon of the bill going through the different committees and you can click on each of the committees…

1:32:49 …and it'll show the faces of the people on the committees and where they stand and whether they're supporting the bill.

1:32:55 And it'll be a nice little neat package of a bill that'll have the…the amount of people that support the bill…

1:33:02 …why, and the amount of people that are against it and why. And then…

1:33:07 What's your website?

1:33:09 [Audience question] It's…it's going to be called the Legislators League.

1:33:12 Is it up yet?

1:33:13 [Audience question] No.

1:33:14 It's a very creative idea. So like a version of an open sore citizen legislature, right?

1:33:20 [Audience question] Pretty much.

1:33:21 Okay. There's a magazine out there called Connections - Focus on Communities.

1:33:26 You might want to try to write it up for this magazine.

1:33:29 [Audience question] Okay.

1:33:30 And number two, I have a submission. Would you take a submission from me?

1:33:34 [Audience question] Of a…an issued to be solved?

1:33:35 Of a bill.

1:33:37 [Audience question] Oh, sure. It's open to anyone.

1:33:38 Are you ready? Okay. Here's the bill. It's very short.

1:33:41 Anytime Congress and the White House plunge our nation into war, anytime, immediately, all age-capable…

1:33:52 …able-bodied children and grandchildren of all the senators and representatives are drafted.

1:34:09 That will make them deliberate very well, as our founding fathers wanted them to do…

1:34:17 …because they will be part of the risk. How about that?

1:34:21 [Audience question] I like that.

1:34:22 Okay. So, give us your…give us your website when it's ready.

1:34:28 [Audience question] Okay.

1:34:30 [Audience question] Alright.

1:34:31 And good luck to you.

1:34:32 Alright. Thank you.

1:34:39 [Audience question] Thank you so much for being here.

1:34:40 I wonder if you could take a minute of two and explain the importance of voting or not voting in the upcoming election.

1:34:49 You want me to explain the importance of voting or not voting?

1:34:53 Is that what it was?

1:34:54 [Audience comment] Yes.

1:34:55 Oh, okay. Well, first of all, I believe in maximum choice in voting…

1:35:06 …and once that has occurred, that is, you can vote for the candidates…

1:35:10 …you can write in your own candidate, you can vote for yourself, or you can vote for none of the above.

1:35:16 That sort of covers the whole waterfront. And if that's true, then voting should be a legal duty the way jury duties are…

1:35:25 …because we simply cannot be told again and again that we have to obey…

1:35:30 …a thousand-and-one laws passed by thousands of legislators without having a legal duty to select them or reject them…

1:35:39 …or have a vote of no confidence, which None of the Above would register, and that would require new elections.

1:35:48 If the mayor…the election for mayor, and None of the Above got more than all the others, candidates…

1:35:55 …it would cancel the election, and in 30 days have a new election with new candidates.

1:36:00 Having said that, that's the answer to the question. I think nonvoting often is a deliberate explanation that the vote…nonvoter…

1:36:10 …doesn't think it matters, doesn't think it's going to make any difference…

1:36:14 …refuses to play the game of dweedle-dum dweedle-dee, or single-party districts.

1:36:21 The majority of all state and congressional districts are dominated through gerrymandering by either Republican or Democrat.

1:36:30 So it isn't even an election, because an election means contest, and a contest means at least two viable candidates.

1:36:41 So a lot of people, in their own rational way, say, "I don't want to participate. It's a sham."

1:36:48 But if you give them all those choices, it can no longer be a sham, because not only can you vote Yes…

1:36:55 …but you can do what you cannot do in the United States of America.

1:36:59 Go to the polls and vote No to all of you on the ballot. That's the essential accountability.

1:37:06 The ability to say, I don't have any confidence in who's on the ballot, I'm voting on None of the Above.

1:37:14 Having said that, trying to get people out to vote's one of the most difficult civic efforts imaginable.

1:37:20 Claire has this Get Out to Vote campaign, a small town, you can canvas the whole thing with 15 teenagers in six hours…

1:37:31 …and it's like pulling teeth to get people to go out to vote, even for local elections. It gets maybe 50 percent of the vote.

1:37:41 That is a real level of discouragement or powerlessness or detachment or whatever you want to call it.

1:37:51 And the only way I think to do it is, we've got a lot of rights in our constitution. It's a bill of rights.

1:37:56 We don't have a bill of duties. So with a light touch, we do what Australia and Austria…

1:38:03 …and some other countries have done for years, which is to make voting a legal duty.

1:38:07 But I would not urge that without having None of the Above, a write-in vote, plus all the candidates.

1:38:15 Good idea.

1:38:17 Yes. Yes.

1:38:18 Do you have anything?

1:38:23 Yes?

1:38:24 [Audience question] Yeah, thank you for coming. I've always been an admirer of you for years.

1:38:28 I'm in my sixties and I don't live in Redlands. I live in a small community. It's unincorporated.

1:38:34 It's called Muscoy, so we're under the county's jurisdiction…

1:38:39 …but we're also under the sphere of influence of the City of San Bernardino.

1:38:44 And my question is, I became…I think you left out one thing about…

1:38:49 …when you were talking about a person's civil…civic duty, you left out about passion.

1:38:56 You have to be passionate about something in order to get started, and mine is the environment.

1:39:03 I live near Lytle and Cajon Wash, which is an endangered habitat right now.

1:39:07 In fact, we're in the middle of…fighting a developer, and that's how I got involved.

1:39:13 I've lived in my community for years, about 40 years…

1:39:16 …but I didn't actually become involved in it until I bought my house in 1990…

1:39:22 …and then there was a mining company that was going to…

1:39:24 ...right above our community, was going to develop it as a mine.

1:39:30 And that's when I started attending our MAC meetings, which is Municipal Advisory Councils...

1:39:36 ...which is, California mandates that you have...if you're unincorporated...

1:39:41 ...you have this liaison between the county and your community.

1:39:45 And so I started getting really active in that, which led me to being an environmentalist, trying...

1:39:54 ...'cause I didn't know if the land around me was endangered of being developed.

1:40:00 And that's where I am today, at this point, and my question is, I think also local government has a responsibility.

1:40:09 Like we had a county general plan update. Every 10 years, you have to have that...

1:40:15 ...and we have our own community plans involved in this, and it was passed six years ago but it doesn't do any good.

1:40:24 It doesn't have any real teeth because a developer came to our community three years ago...

1:40:30 ...after we just had our community plan approved by the county board of supervisors...

1:40:36 ...and he said he was there to develop these condos, and we said, Well, no, that doesn't fit in with our community plan...

1:40:44 ...which is semirural, and it's one house per acre. And the guy said, Well, we're not going to do it that way.

1:40:51 And so my question to the board of supervisors was...

1:40:54 ...What is the point in having a community plan if it has no legal teeth to it...

1:40:59 ...and you guys just go ahead and do whatever you want to our community?

1:41:04 And so it does begin at a local level. You have to fight the county...our county is so corrupt, right now...

1:41:12 [Inaudible comment]

1:41:13 ...and they just spent thousands...hundreds of thousands of dollars on a vision statement, and...

1:41:21 [Inaudible question]

1:41:22 Oh, and the question is, I think you should also add to that, you have to be passionate about, you know...

1:41:30 ...your civic responsibilities, and include the environment in that also as your community. Thank you.

1:41:38 Before Claire answers the question, I just want to make a comment.

1:41:42 A lot of people get active, they get passionate, they hit a stone wall, they burn out, and they never come back.

1:41:48 We've seen that. And one of the things that full-time community advocates and technologists do is…

1:41:55 …they lighten that stress and that pressure and they also will find you allies.

1:42:01 I've often said, If we ever have a perfectly formed democracy, like at the local level, public referendum and all…

1:42:08 …the biggest problem will be personality conflicts, not policy conflicts, and burnout.

1:42:15 And you've got to be very careful of that.

1:42:17 That's why most people go to shopping malls and McDonalds because they're sensual pleasures…

1:42:24 …and they don't go to city council meetings, or county meetings, or local courts to look it over…

1:42:31 …because they require a higher level of intellectual stamina. And that's true for young people.

1:42:36 You ask students today, How many of you have never been in a McDonalds, Starbucks, or a shopping mall? No hands go up.

1:42:44 You say, How many of you have never been in a court of law as a spectator or a city council meeting? The hands go up.

1:42:51 That's the problem. We have to be ready for heavy-duty thinking and stamina.

1:42:57 And this problem similar to…not similar to yours, but with some of the main elements, was, Claire wants to just comment on.

1:43:06 We have a wonderful lake in our community, five…five…seven miles around, and for over 50 years…

1:43:14 …between, maybe 54 years now, a local organization was formed called the Highland Lake Watershed Association.

1:43:24 It has a passionate citizen activist who has turned herself into a citizen scientist to keep the quality of that lake up.

1:43:36 In a variety of different ways, she has pushed for the town to do the right thing…

1:43:43 …the water levels of the lake, at a right time, for taking care of algae, all kinds of problems.

1:43:50 She's connected with a limnologist who helps her understand what is going on. She knows how to put the resources together.

1:44:00 She has put together a fabulous application for open space to the state to make some of the

land permanently open space…

1:44:12 …collaborated with the land trust; we have good land trusts in New England…

1:44:18 …to hold the property and the Highland Lake Watershed Association would maintain the property, seven acres.

1:44:26 Pardon? Hmm?

1:44:27 The housing development.

1:44:28 Oh, and the housing development was coming in to…I don't know, 450 houses, upscale, no children allowed…

1:44:39 …it's not our community, and with the community lawyer and the watershed association, we were able to push it back…

1:44:50 …and with the help of a recession, by the way, and the community lawyer really essentially training the chair…

1:44:58 …of the Inland Wetlands Commission how to handle the application, because without zoning…

1:45:05 …that's the next thing we have to do in our town, proper zoning, they were able to come in.

1:45:11 She gave…they gave them a lot of permits but with many, many conditions. I mean, not permits, but many conditions.

1:45:17 You can do this if you do this, this, and this. They became very onerous. There were about a hundred. They are passionate.

1:45:26 That is an element and I think that's what Ralph was referring to, the Einstein quote, I only have passionate curiosity.

1:45:33 She has that, and she understands too, I will make one more point, that she and her husband…

1:45:40 …who do the water quality testing every season, all the seasons, are not going to go on forever…

1:45:47 …so she's trying to get the community college in town to take it on in the environmental program as a continuing practical…

1:45:57 …testing the water, working with the state, learning how to do things.

1:46:01 This is a living laboratory. Any college worth its salt should just grab it.

1:46:07 I want to be helpful for our speakers. Those of you who want to inquire, please make the question, not your own speech…

1:46:15 …if you would, because Shelli Stockton's hopeful after we…after you have some opportunity to hear our terrific speakers…

1:46:23 …that there will be book signing as well with tables set up on the platform, so we will get to

that, so help the speakers.

1:46:30 No speeches from you. We'll get those tomorrow. You ask the question please. Thank you.

1:46:37 [Audience question] Mr. Nader, I'm a freshman here at University of Redlands…

1:46:40 …and for awhile now I've had a very strong passion for public education.

1:46:43 I graduated from a high school in Los Angeles, which in…which the public education system…

1:46:48 …LAUSD is one of the most corrupt in the state, if not the country.

1:46:52 And I would like to ask what sort of…what sort of history you've had and what plans you have to not only reform…

1:47:00 …but also just to affect and be involved with the public education system in our country?

1:47:05 First, we did one…probably the first critical study of ETS back in 1980, Education Testing Service.

1:47:13 The standardized test promoter and…by the way, when those standardized tests were first developed…

1:47:21 …in the 19…late 1920s and 1930s, that the major honcho on the test was asked…

1:47:28 …What is the purpose of these tests, you know, A, B, C, D, none of the above?

1:47:33 And his answer I've never forgotten. Just think of it.

1:47:38 He said, "The purpose of these tests is to keep hope within reasonable bounds."

1:47:46 And we found that these tests were very income related.

1:47:50 By and large, the higher level income your family comes from where you have books, libraries, you don't have sirens…

1:47:57 …rats, robberies, and so on, they tend to do better, especially if they can afford tutoring. So we have to get rid of them.

1:48:06 They're not assessment tests. You're going to have tests.

1:48:09 You have assessment tests and you shouldn't have tests every week. You shouldn't have high-frequency tests.

1:48:16 But then the teacher's teaching to the test, the teacher's record is measured by the test scores…

1:48:21 …the school's measured by the test scores, the school district's measured by the test scores.

1:48:26 It's worse than the ancient Chinese nine-legged essay, if any of you are familiar with that form of mind control.

1:48:33 The second is civic skills connecting classroom with community.

1:48:38 That's what opens up all the disciplines taught in the curriculum.

1:48:42 Geography, politics, economics, home economics, history, sociology, you name it.

1:48:50 The civic involvement in town problems, town challenges, town solutions…

1:48:56 …is a very maturing and motivating way of educating.

1:49:01 As far as all the books written and all the theories and this and that, it all comes down to several simple precepts.

1:49:10 Learn by doing is more memorable than memorization, which leads to vegetation.

1:49:18 That's one, learn by doing. Connect abstract learning with practical.

1:49:25 The second is, connect the school with the community. That means more than the parents, but including the parents.

1:49:33 And the third, recognizing multiple intelligence. No one shoe fits all, like the standardized tests. Multiple intelligence.

1:49:42 And giving rein to the students, giving an opening to the students to exercise their imagination…

1:49:49 …curiosity, which leads to be able to engage in concentration.

1:49:56 Civic skills include civic experience. You can't do one without the other.

1:50:02 It's amazing how simple it is to take idealistic young students with very imaginative minds…

1:50:09 …able to ask questions that would shame the White House press corps, when it comes to politicians…

1:50:15 …and we mold them and standardize them and repress the very things that they bring to the table.

1:50:26 And that's one reason we have the lawyers we have, the architects we have, the engineers we have.

1:50:31 They can be very skilled. They don't have a larger frame of reference.

1:50:37 They're more of a trade than a profession. And we're paying the price for that. That's my brief take.

1:50:45 Yeah.

1:50:47 [Audience question] Yeah, thank you, Claire and Ralph.

1:50:50 My questions is, can you talk a little bit about the project you have with the regard to doing the primaries for President Obama…

1:51:00 …and how that might be made a local project for people who…maybe they vote for president…

1:51:05 ...but maybe you're not doing that primary project here.

1:51:07 Could you talk a little bit about what that is and how we can get involved in that?

1:51:10 Okay, here's where our expectation levels are so low, the politicians oblige us.

1:51:17 You know, that's the only time they really give us everything we want...

1:51:21 ...when we give them nothing by way of expectation level.

1:51:25 Next year, what we're going to see is the most tedious democratic primary.

1:51:30 You will only have one candidate, flying around in Air Force One, responding to the crazed Republican slate...

1:51:38 ...whatever it may be, being dragged into those areas...

1:51:42 ...but not into the majoritarian areas where people really want change.

1:51:47 They want crackdowns on corporate crime. They want a fairness in the tax system.

1:51:52 They want to stop taking our tax dollars and shoving it up to the higher one or two percent of the wealthy or the corporate.

1:52:00 They want us to get out of quagmire wars. They want us to do a lot of things that will never be discussed.

1:52:09 They want us to talk about living wage. The minimum wage now is far lower than it was in 1968, adjusted for inflation.

1:52:19 They want us to talk about all these things that'll never be talked about...

1:52:24 ...if there isn't a slate of candidates challenging Obama, not to beat him...

1:52:31 ...you're not going to beat him in terms of the nomination.

1:52:34 The essence of a slate is not to beat him, because they divide six people on the slate...

1:52:40 ...but they all have distinguished backgrounds in education, military, foreign policy, tax, poverty...

1:52:47 ...labor, environment, those areas, and they basically get on the primaries. You see them on CSPAN.

1:52:56 You see them being debated, like you see the Republicans who debate.

1:53:00 And there's an old principle - What is not discussed will never be advanced.

1:53:08 If all these major redirections are not going to be discussed, whoever wins the next four years...

1:53:14 ...you can be sure they're never going to pay attention to it.

1:53:18 And so we, together with 45 other people in our country, we signed a letter to a couple

hundred…

1:53:25 …saying, Take four months off, you can be provided with the legal advice and reasonable expenses, get into Iowa…

1:53:34 …New Hampshire, the various primaries, and make this a robust, exciting campaign over the issues.

1:53:42 He's capable of responding. He's very smart. But if he's given an easy ride, the people are going to be bored…

1:53:50 …and if they're bored they're not going to be enthusiastic, and they're not likely to vote. So that's the first one.

1:53:57 The second one is, Why are we rationing presidential debates? We don't ration candy, ice cream, trampolines, comedies.

1:54:13 Why are there only two or three presidential debates run by a corporation called the Commission on Presidential Debates…

1:54:19 …controlled by the two parties, who only allowed Ross Perot in once, never allowed anyone in since…

1:54:26 …even though polls showed that people want more people on the stage.

1:54:31 So we're proposing that in 21 areas around the country, in late September and October…

1:54:39 …enough people sign letters, business, laborer, religious, citizen, neighborhood…

1:54:45 …environmental groups, educational group, let's say from the LA area.

1:54:51 They sign a letter and they say to the candidates, presidential candidates, they'll all be nominated by then…

1:54:57 …We want, we are inviting you to our community to have a presidential debate.

1:55:04 And there should be 21 of them so that the entire country is covered and there's no more blue state, red state avoidance…

1:55:11 …where the Democrats never even respect people in the red states because they're never going to win, like Texas or Alabama…

1:55:19 …and the Republicans don't campaign for president in California, Massachusetts and New York.

1:55:24 That's a disgraceful disrespect.

1:55:27 And so I hope some of you in this area will contact us. We can give you some of the materials and get it under way.

1:55:37 This'll break the grip of the debate commission, open up all kinds of local and regional questions…

1:55:43 …involve all kinds of people in planning the debates and participating all over the country…

1:55:49 ...and excite students, 'cause who doesn't want a president's debate to come to their community, right?

1:55:55 The mayor down...all down. They all want a presidential debate.

1:55:58 But we've got to get it under way, otherwise it's going to be tedious beyond description.

1:56:05 It gets worse every four years and we don't deserve that, and in order not to deserve that...

1:56:12 ...we've got to basically say, You're coming to us. For three, four weeks, we're going to set the agenda...

1:56:19 ...all over the country, not your political consultants.

1:56:22 We're going to set the agenda, so get ready for a trek right across the country...

1:56:28 ...from Maine to California and from Alaska to Florida.

1:56:32 So it's, a city like Redlands can be the core inviter for all the communities around...

1:56:41 ...if, say, the larger communities don't want to do it. So you do it as a collaborative effort.

1:56:45 You see what I mean by local going up? That's an example of local going up.

1:56:52 Thank you.

1:56:58 We're going to take one more question, Mr. Nader.

1:57:07 [Audience question] Oh. Hi. My question is on behalf of not only myself but my fellow university students.

1:57:12 If you could give our generation one piece of advice, what would it be?

1:57:18 I think we'll both answer that.

1:57:20 My advice to students of your generation is to grow up and become serious and not allow the entertainment industry...

1:57:34 ...the gossip, the electronic industry, to absorb your waking hours and trivialize your potential.

1:57:45 You may not think this is happening to you, but it is.

1:57:48 [Audience comment]It is.

1:57:49 You...for better, for worse, you're going to be the leaders of the next generation.

1:57:56 It's better to get started early with the right orientation, the right depth, the right sense of doing what it takes.

1:58:08 You will be witness to some of the most horrendous disasters in the history of the world if we don't change...

1:58:15 ...including climate and viruses and bacteria and wars, or, and...

1:58:23 ...you'll be the champions of the fastest dedication to prevent, forestall, and foresee these tragedies...

1:58:32 ...to the extent that it can be done, in terms of natural tragedies. So that's what I mean.

1:58:38 You don't have time to waste your twenties trying to get over personal habits and personal hang-ups...

1:58:45 ...that you should have gotten rid of in your adolescent years. You are mature human beings.

1:58:52 Clair?

1:58:53 Thank you very much. Thank you.

1:58:54 [Inaudible]

1:58:56 I can't top that.

1:58:57 One thing you want to talk...one thing.

1:59:01 I can't think of one. I mean, that's what I would say.

1:59:05 I was going to say that could be my advice too when I see the young in our town that...and they're capable of it.

1:59:12 You have to give them, though, I think, the opportunity...

1:59:15 ...and I think sessions like this are giving you exposure to all kinds of people.

1:59:21 Some...some people will talk more directly to you than others and more honestly with you than others...

1:59:29 ...because the expectations that we have of you are really quite high. Give yourselves a chance.

1:59:37 And...

1:59:40 Lastly, this one last thing on that very important question. Do not disregard the wisdom of the ancients.

1:59:51 Do not disregard the wisdom of your elderly, one of the greatest unused resources in America are retired people...

1:59:58 ...who are told by your generation, in one way or another, indirectly, unconsciously, out of sight, out of mind...

2:00:06 ...you're not relevant. And they've been through things that have seasoned them that you can benefit from.

2:00:16 Cicero, over 2,000 years ago, without the benefit of e-mail, television, or telephone...

2:00:23 ...gave us the greatest definition of freedom I've ever heard.

2:00:27 He said, "Freedom is participation in power." Just think of that.

2:00:37 In the fourteenth century, Ming Dynasty in China, a philosopher let loose another aphorism.

2:00:46 He said, "To know and not to do is not to know." Just think of that. Think of its application today.

2:00:57 To know and not to do is not to know. Has there ever been a country in the history of the world…

2:01:02 …who's known more about how to make things right and hasn't applied it?

2:01:09 And I want to end with a poem that I recited to the students earlier, if I can find it here. It's by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

2:01:29 Well, let's see. Well, she wrote it in the 1930s and it really applies today.

2:01:39 I can't locate it right now, but basically the thrust of it is, we're inundated by facts…

2:01:47 …whether they're real or fancy, but they represent the core of wisdom.

2:01:54 But we don't move those facts into a wider fabric of understanding.

2:02:03 And the Internet is great for flooding you by the minute with facts and factoids…

2:02:10 …but you need to weave it into a fabric of understanding.

2:02:16 I think I remember some of it.

2:02:18 She said, "Wisdom enough to leach us of our ill is daily spun, but where is the loom to weave it into a fabric?"

2:02:28 Thank you.

2:02:32 Thank you.

2:02:33 Thank you.

2:02:34 So…

2:02:37 Good.

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