The Day After

Aileen Riotto Sirey (November 09, 2016)

A heartfelt comment by the Founder and Chair Emerita of the National Organization of Italian American Women. "For me the most disturbing characteristic of this campaign was Trump's attitude toward women. He seems to see them as objects, not as individuals in their own right...less intelligent, inferior creatures subject to the convenience and entertainment of men like him. He ran against one of the smartest most knowledgeable women in this country, a woman arguably better trained and prepared for the job than any man ever to place his hand on that iconic bible. It's sad to see that sexism is still very much alive."

Like many Americans, I am still stunned by the election results, primarily because of the vitriol expressed by the President Elect during his long and contentious campaign. How could he attack or insult so many different groups and still remain the people's choice? It seemed like a betrayal of those cherished values that I learned in my elementary school years during World War II. At that time we were engaged in the greatest struggle in our history while trying heroically to preserve the 'land of freedom and opportunity' where people of all races and religions were expected to try to live

in peace and harmony.

I heard no expressions of these values during the Trump campaign.

Yet they were a key part of a belief system expressed by Presidents from Roosevelt to Obama [2] during the years this 'older American' listened. And while it was politics as usual during those years with the inevitable differences in foreign policy, over raising or lowering taxes, or dealing with the infrastructure etc., there was always an expressed respect for harmony in our diversity.

Our President Elect has espoused or actually demonstrated disrespect for women, people of color, the disabled, immigrants, Muslims and many more. Is this how we will flush away the American dream? Or can we believe that President Trump [3] will be different from candidate Trump? I sure hope so!

For me the most disturbing characteristic of this campaign was Trump's attitude toward women. He seems to see them as objects, not as individuals in their own right...less intelligent, inferior creatures subject to the convenience and entertainment of men like him. He ran against one of the smartest most knowledgeable women in this country, a woman arguably better trained and prepared for the job than any man ever to place his hand on that iconic bible. It's sad to see that sexism is still very much alive.

But Hillary was able to rise above the insults. She said we owed the president elect our open minds...and vowed to give him just that. In her formal concession speech she also cautioned us not to abandon our ideals as she tried to bring all Americans together. Hillary added a stirring and memorable message to women:

To all the women, and especially the young women, who put their faith in this campaign and in me, I want you to know that nothing has made me prouder than to be your champion.

I know that we still have not shattered that highest glass ceiling. But some day someone will -- hopefully sooner than we might think right now.

And to all the little girls watching right now, never doubt that you are valuable and powerful and deserving of every chance and opportunity in the world.

Thank you Hillary.

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