

## How to Win Back the American Dream

Written by Ginny Grimsley  
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Scholar Shares 4 Ways to Get Back on Track  
Individually and as a Society

The central branding message of the United States encapsulating freedom, democracy and capitalism is the American Dream, says historian and researcher Merrilyn Richardson.

“Clearly, our country and the world in which it resides have seen better days, but we have a roadmap for getting back on track, and it starts with the individual,” says Richardson, author of “You ARE God: The Challenge to Achieve Christ Consciousness in the Modern Era.”

“Violence is more than perpetrating physical harm – it can also be mental, emotional and spiritual coercion. The root of the word ‘terrorism,’ for example, is terror, a mental state. I believe we have been violently coerced, as individuals and as a society, into straying from what is essential to our well-being.”

On the individual level, if we are more truthful to ourselves as spiritual beings, we will bring more generosity and kindness into the world every day, she says. On a larger scale, societal obstructions include misguided government policies and agencies at home, dictators abroad, terrorism and deceitful preachers, she says.

Winning back the American Dream starts on the individual level, says Richardson, who provides four ways in which we may be truer to our spiritual nature, and better off as a society:

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- Choose to act out of love, not fear. When our true spiritual nature is not dictating our actions, it's readily apparent to any reasonably attuned individual. Various fear-based bad ideas, however, blind individuals and prevent them from connecting cause (fear) and effect (violence, selfishness, etc.) When we make choices that are truly based in love, we are connecting to the good of our souls, which, in turn, connects to the benefit of greater society.
- Use your inner "GPS guidance system" – intuition. Flesh, blood, material possessions and money – these are things you cannot take with you when you die. This should remind us that though money may be necessary in life on Earth, it does not buy happiness, as several studies indicate. Peace and goodwill are the coordinates of our beings that are, sadly, often blocked in today's world. Individuals tend to resist the things they most desire in life – peace and goodwill.
- Embrace suffering as a guide to higher purpose. Often, we are told that suffering is something to be avoided. Pain and suffering on a personal level, however, is an indication that something is wrong. At the same time, there is provided a spiritual healing grace to one's vulnerability. Let this sensation reassure you that there is a pull of purpose within you, and the pain felt can be overcome en route to a life filled with meaning.
- Blend spiritual being-ness with human doing-ness. Euripides, one of Athens' great tragedians from antiquity, wrote, "The best and safest thing is to keep a balance in your life, acknowledge the great powers around us and in us. If you can do that, and live that way, you are really a wise man." Just as our U.S. Constitution includes a system of checks and balances so, too, must each of us establish checks and balances between the spirituality within us and the actions of human beings around us. Living without balance, we risk extremism on the spiritual or worldly level.

### About Marilyn Richardson

Marilyn Richardson received a degree in journalism from Texas Tech University and was editor of Air Force Bases newspapers. At 89, she has spent decades searching for truth and found that studying spiritual subjects provides a basis for understanding our human condition. Her latest book, "You ARE God: The Challenge to Achieve Christ Consciousness in the

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Modern Era,” is a concise glimpse of American history and other events that have affected individuals worldwide. She is a founding member of the Center for Spiritual Living in Midland, Texas. Her two previous books were “Initiation of the Master” and “The Master’s Quest, an End to Terrorism.”