IDEAS ARE OUR GREATEST WEAPONS

SPEECH FOR

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“The pen is mightier than the sword!” Some of us have heard that said, but who has heard the quote by Joseph Stalin that teaches us, “Ideas are more powerful than guns. We would not let our enemies have guns, why should we let them have ideas?” Wars have been won based on strategy, and the creation of winning strategies takes sharp and agile minds. Speech competitions have been won because of strong and thought provoking ideas and I certainly hope you are considering that as you listen to me right now! (**Wait for the laugh**)

Honestly, what greater strength do we have to protect and defend ourselves than ideas? And when you really think about it, is there anything else? Everything we do is based on an idea, and as we know, not all ideas are good ones, but the good ones really pay off!! As we get older, we learn to pay attention to our thoughts and guide our minds to create richer and more productive ideas. Our education helps to teach us and guide us to dream up great new concepts and as we learn, we have more fuel to burn in the creative thinking process. The photographer Duane Michals once said, “Trust that little voice in your head that says, “Wouldn’t it be interesting if…’; And then do it.”

What is it like when you dream? And by dream, I mean what kind of thoughts do you have, even when you’re awake, that have the power to really change your life? What inspires you to really think? And how do you feel when you’ve come up with a really solid handful of good, creative, useful ideas? How are ideas our greatest weapons? Imagine you’re in a car, in the middle of a two-lane road, right in the middle of the desert. Your car runs out of gas. Hmmm…this would be the perfect time to get a good idea!!! And once you have that idea, you keep thinking until you eventually come up with the solution that will save you from that uncomfortable situation you may currently be in. Of course coming up with the idea that you should have checked the fuel tank before you set out is also an idea, but probably one that is not as productive as thinking through the solution you need in order to get out of the desert. Hmmmmm….

We are surrounded by ideas every moment of every day. When you’re home, it’s a good idea to keep your room clean, follow instructions, and always respect your parents. At school, it’s always a good idea to pay attention, concentrate on your lessons, and use what you’ve learned to formulate new and exciting ideas. The brain is a muscle and the more it is used, the more skilled we become at devising better and better ideas, and as we improve our skills at coming up with good and even great ideas, the more complete our arsenal becomes-only our arsenal of ideas is peaceful, thought provoking, and has the potential to create gratification.

Think of the great ideas that people have used as weapons against ignorance, poverty, and hatred. President Lyndon Baines Johnson said, “Books and ideas are the most effective weapons against intolerance and ignorance.” I think that’s true. It is when people are ignorant that hatred can sprout. When someone is not completely aware of a situation, misunderstanding can occur, but when someone takes the time to have an open mind in order to form clear thoughts and ideas, the possibility of communication is endless.

Ideas can save the world in big and noble ways, and smaller, more subtle ideas can create solutions to every day problems and can also be considered weapons against situations that we didn’t even know we had! Consider some of these ideas that other people have had to make life easier:

* Did you realize that if you place your iphone or any cellular phone in a bowl, it will amplify the sound of the speakers just by the echo created by the bowl? Isn’t **THAT** a simple but clever idea!!
* Have you ever considered that you can recycle the little square plastic tags from bread bags and use them to mark your electric cords? try it…it works!
* For those of you that may like to bake, did you know that someone came up with the idea to pour cake batter into an ice cream cone, bake it, top it with one or two scoops of ice cream and you have ice cream cake!
* Here’s another great idea to mask scratches on wooden furniture…apparently, if you rub a peeled walnut onto wood, the scratches will disappear!!! I find it simply amazing that someone came up with that idea in the war against furniture scratches!!

Before I accepted this speech challenge, I had no clue that I would discover such interesting thoughts and ideas, but here we are, and I know that I, for one, look forward to exercising my brain as I do my mental gymnastics, come up with ideas, keep the good ones, toss the ones that make less sense, and learn to expand my horizons, build my foundation and take my thought process into the future!!! I am proud to dedicate my life to learning and acquiring the skills it takes to think and create new ideas that I will use as weapons against ignorance, prejudice and mediocrity. Thank you!