

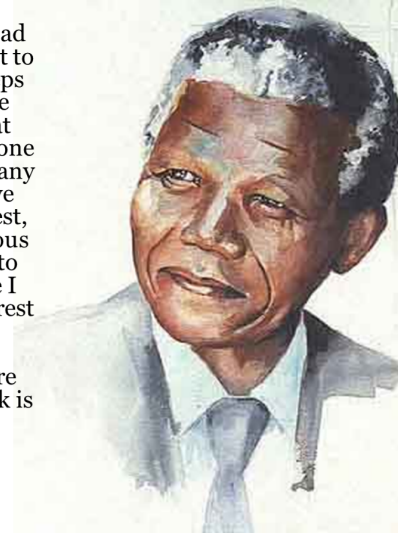
Day One, Post-Mandela

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Friday, December 06, 2013

<http://politicsrespun.org/2013/12/day-one-post-mandela/>

I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can only rest for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not ended.

Nelson Mandela



Today is the first day of our world after the Nelson Mandela era.

We don't need to canonize him or consider any messiah characteristics, but we should stop today and reflect on what kind of Mandela legacy we want to carry forward.

Here are a few ideas to consider.

Chances are you didn't wake up every day by meditating on a Mandela quote. Aside from [people like Rob Anders](#), though, most people found Mandela to be an inspiring person.

But one Mandela characteristic we need to hold close to our hearts is that he worked hard. Very hard. So hard, that he raised the racism-inspired ire of a white supremacist terrorist state. And he did it knowing pretty clearly what kind of consequences were possible and likely.

But he was also one of many. And many others died along the long road to this post-apartheid South Africa. He, I suppose, was "lucky" in some ways that he made it as long as he did. And that makes us fortunate for having so much of him in recent decades.

And today is the first day that we have to continue with the struggles against oppression, greed and misanthropy we see all over the world, which is fast becoming simultaneously a Monty Python sketch and a workshop in Orwellian improvisation.

This is the first day that we are on our own. Nelson Mandela achieved a great deal. So did Terry Fox. And Gandhi and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

How will you honour the legacy of Nelson Mandela in how you live your life?

Will you seek truth and reconciliation?

Will you ponder the legitimacy of violent response to oppressors who use violence?

Will you imagine creative ways to build bridges?

Will you examine your own inner apartheid states, hypocrisies, biases and counter-productive tendencies?

Will you explore how much time you spend [mentoring youth](#), celebrating life, sharing joy with others while dancing during our revolutions?

Will you find people to support you while you speak truth to power, even if it's uncomfortable to hear [and it usually is]?

I know I will. And I know that millions will spend some time today assessing their individual place in the world as we compare ourselves and our accomplishments to that of Nelson Mandela.

Millions have worked as hard as him and missed his fame. Many of us are those millions. And that's ok. We don't need the fame.

But we do need the integrity.

And starting today, we have one less living role model to inspire our integrity. And this is where we lift each other up.