

Be grateful on Memorial Day

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Memorial Day exists to honor over 1,235,000 men and women who have died in military service since the Civil War began in 1861. On this important day of remembrance, we all should be eternally grateful for the ultimate sacrifices made by these heroic Veterans so that we could have the privilege of living free.

It takes a tremendous and courageous person to be willing to wake up on a given day and conduct an operation that they know could end their life. And that’s what Veterans have done and continue to do every day: they risk their own safety for the benefit of the greater good. And this type of commitment and sacrifice deserves our honor and respect.

Without the actions of these brave and noble Veterans, where would we, as a nation, have ended up? What would life be like today in America without their sacrifices and accomplishments? I’m glad we never had to find out, and I hope we never will.

On Memorial Day, it is also important to be sensitive to family members whose hearts are hurting. To the parent who lost their child, to the husband or wife who lost their spouse, to the child who lost their parent, to the person who lost their friend, or to anyone else who lost a relative or friend, Memorial Day is more than a family recreational day or cookout, it’s a day that overwhelms

them with memories of the day someone knocked on their door to tell them the tragic news. And for some of these grieving family members, Memorial Day magnifies the feelings of sorrow they experience on a daily basis as a result of missing or remembering their loved one. Furthermore, for many surviving Veterans, Memorial Day brings back intense feelings and memories associated with wartime or other military operations where fellow Veterans were killed in action. So avoid greetings to them like “Happy Memorial Day.”

If you are a Veteran and someone does greet you with this type of comment, please don’t become upset or judgmental. Simply thank them but then kindly remind them that Memorial Day may be a very tough day for some people who are grieving the loss of a loved one who made the ultimate sacrifice. Some people get confused with the different days that recognize Veterans and don’t intend to be insensitive. (Armed Forces Day honors those currently serving in the military. Veterans Day honors all who have served. And Memorial Day honors those who died while serving.)

To help someone better relate to the importance of Memorial Day, it could benefit them to watch a movie like *Saving Private Ryan* or *When We Were Soldiers*. These two movies accurately capture the essence of military service and sacrifice in a very realistic way for those who

otherwise may not know. These movies also reveal the impact such service and sacrifice had on military families as well.

And contrary to what you may read on social media, it is okay to enjoy cookouts and backyard activities on Memorial Day. Families and friends have been doing this for years. In fact, part of the reason our heroic Veterans selflessly laid down their lives at the altar of freedom was for American families to enjoy the lifestyle associated with these kinds of weekends. And in today’s time-crunched world, Memorial Day provides Americans with that much-needed 3-day weekend to get in some quality family and friends time. Another reason to be thankful on Memorial Day!

If you’re attending or hosting a cookout on Memorial Day, I challenge you to be the one who gathers everyone together at some point for a brief moment of silence to honor those who gave their lives for our American way of life. And during this occasion, remind those in attendance that we should forever be humbled and grateful on Memorial Day, and to never forget the ultimate sacrifices made by our Veterans.

May God take great care of those whose military service brought them to His kingdom, and may He also provide comfort and healing to all those whose hearts are hurting on Memorial Day.

~ The End ~