



On My Honor, I Will Try To Make a Difference

Whether or not you like Hillary Clinton, it's hard to believe anyone voted for Donald Trump without at least some slight misgiving. And if you reap what you sow, I fear we are all in for a painful reaping now. With this election, then, the New Year doesn't hold as much promise as I'd hoped.

As I reflected on what we have collectively been through in this long presidential race — not just hateful political rhetoric and mudslinging but the evidence of who we are as a nation and how far we have to go in the areas of sexism, racism, religious tolerance, acceptance of sexual orientation, and other basic freedoms — I started to wonder when people go astray. When do people start to hate?

When I was a girl, I was a Girl Scout. I loved selling cookies and earning badges and going to camp. I actually remember the motto we recited at every meeting:

*On my honor, I will try
To serve God and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.*

What I didn't remember was the Girl Scout Law. So I looked it up. This is the version adopted in 1972, the law I read and tried to live by. (The current version, adopted in 1996, is only slightly revised.):

"I will do my best to be honest, to be fair, to help where I am needed, to be cheerful, to be friendly and considerate, to be a sister to every Girl Scout, to respect authority, to use resources wisely, to protect and improve the world around me, to show respect for myself and others through my words and actions."

It's a pretty simple oath, and a friend suggested maybe we should ask our president-elect to take it when he is sworn in.



The author (center) as a Brownie in the 70s. Courtesy photo

I find that, with a few revisions, I still live by the Girl Scout Law. For instance, I feel I should be a friend to every person rather than just a sister to every Girl Scout, and I tend to question authority when authority gives me reason to question it. And even when I was an actual Girl Scout I wondered why in the world I should walk around pretending to be cheerful if I wasn't. But overall, I agree with the sentiment.

Even though we have seen the ugly, hateful side of our country — the side that mocks the disabled, the side that wants to deport or ban immigrants, the side that wants to disenfranchise the LGBTQ+ community, the side that hates anyone who, it seems, isn't white and Christian — we have to remember that many people, in fact most people, don't feel that way.

As 2017 approaches, maybe we should all be a little more like the Girl Scouts and work to make our country and our world a better place. I, for one, plan to remember that pledge I said all those years ago. "On my honor, I will try." To serve. To help others. To make a difference. Even in the face of overwhelming odds.

With the right attitude, maybe we can all have a happier new year. ✨