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The True Meaning of Patriotism

Mark Twain once said, "Loyalty to country always. Loyalty to government, when it deserves it." What does this mean? It seems simple, when talking about being a patriot; you are supposed to put your country first. Some people are not clearly educated on the difference between government and country, in other words, not everyone knows the true meaning of patriotism. The dictionary simply states that it is love or devotion for ones country. It is much more, and the other components can be explored through research on what the founding fathers, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution say about this subject.

The founding fathers of our country all had at least one thing in common, they had no love for government, not even their own. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin and John Adams believed that power corrupts and that government is a powerful force. George Washington said that government "is force. And, like fire, it is a dangerous and a fearful master." He did not trust the government and many patriots agreed with him. True patriots would only support a system that protected individual rights. Patriotism wasn't toward the government but to the union of people. Our founding fathers created the concrete foundation on which we view patriotism as. Our loyalty and

devotion as a nationalist, or patriot, should be to those willing to sacrifice property and their lives for freedom and the right for self-determination. John Adams is an American founding father and was our second president. He said that “our obligations to our country never cease but with our lives.” This is a very influential statement, expressing the importance of loyalty to ones country and patriotism. The founding fathers had a firm idea of what patriotism was and devoted a large portion of their lives to making sure the American people could be true patriots to their country.

To understand the Declaration of Independence is to understand the true meaning of patriotism. A patriot is someone who supports their country’s ideals. The heart of the Declaration is distinguishing between country and government. The Declaration of Independence ensured the equal rights of all to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” It focuses to serve the people. It also is the fundamental document of democracy. The Declaration of Independence was created by the founding fathers to guarantee equal and individual rights. The founding fathers are some of the best examples of patriots. Patriots fight for those rights, because they put their country and the people in it before the government, the state and anything else that could come between that.

George Washington said, “The Constitution is the guide which I never will abandon.” American patriots are unwaveringly loyal to our constitution. Our constitution protects and preserves the liberty that patriots support and are loyal too. Patriotism doesn’t necessarily mean you have a devotional loyalty to the state and federal system. It means you are loyal to the Constitution and those who abide in it. The Constitution spells out the undeniable rights to the American citizens and it balances the powers within our government. It does not allow our government to have too much power; patriots don’t

inevitably fear or hate the government. Patriotism just means that you can't automatically believe that your government and country are exactly alike. As a patriot, the country in which you were born and raised is one of the only things you are obligated to be loyal to. The Constitution, the subordinate guidance of the Declaration of Independence, spells out the rights in which patriotism lives to protect.

Mark Twain's statement on loyalty and patriotism is a subject that not everyone understands. Many people argue over supporting or not supporting patriotism. It is unfair to be bias about patriotism if you are not fully educated on what it really is. People have their own opinions but the founding fathers clearly said that patriotism is supporting, defending, and loving your country over your government or anything else that does not support of follow the guidelines given by the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution support the founding fathers and their standards and principles of patriotism and the true meaning and responsibility of being a patriot.