



# The Power of Now

*Dennis Kucinich*

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*This powerful and inspirational address encourages graduates to set their sights high and ignore nay-sayers who tell them that something can't be done.*

Your Highness, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum; Members of the Royal Families of the United Arab Emirates; Dr. Lance de Masi, President of American University in Dubai, Mr. Elias Bou Saab, Executive Vice President, Members of the Board, Members of the Faculty of American University of Dubai, Esteemed Officials, Parents and Sponsors, Students, Alumni and Friends and especially you, our dear Honoured Graduates:...

Thank you for the great honour of addressing this esteemed gathering upon an occasion of singular importance in the lives of each and every one of you. This day announces you are prepared. The journey which brought you here has conferred upon you a commencement to the future of your dreams:... For when you ascend this stage you are confidently passing through a portal in the time and space of your life, presenting yourself to the world as a person of accomplishment, as an individual prepared to tap the transformative power of this moment which brings to bear every talent and ability you have developed, pouring it into the moment when you present yourself at the door of opportunity, the moment which is called NOW. The NOW which contemplates that the past, the present, and the future exist simultaneously, the power of NOW as it connects with eternity, your timeless self which finds its power in expression of self recreation, self actualisation.

## A Now Moment

"Come my friends," wrote the poet Tennyson, " 'tis not too late to seek a newer world."... Behold the new world being born in the moment. The NOW which comes again and again and again in each and every day forward as you watch for it, recognise it, be mindful of the possibility it presents, be grateful for its immanent unfolding potential. The NOW which bids you to think, to speak, to act, to challenge, to create, to change. The NOW which declares that years of preparation have come to meet the seedling of a single moment. The NOW which whispers: "Do not spill a single seed." The NOW which makes joyous the challenge of venturing forth in faith. The NOW which bids you, "Come, you are ready!" And reminds you there is no time to waste. The NOW which unveils your deepest potential when you summon the courage to knock upon an unfamiliar door. The NOW which has been secretly awaiting your arrival:...

"What you seek, is seeking you," wrote the poet Rumi. The NOW which waits for you to embrace its endless possibilities, its extraordinary beauty of presence. Yours, the restless quest of the human soul for true purpose, for a place in the world, for life, for love, for a spiritual home all awaits your attention, your touch, your gaze. Your place in the scheme of things is unfolding and even resistance can be your friend as you align with the time signature with which the hand of destiny inscribes your name.

Be relentless in pursuit of excellence. Though your reach exceeds your grasp every moment, "What's a heaven for?" asked the poet Browning:... What do I know? From my earliest, I heard my life's drummer banging out a rapid tempo, a quick march to college, to work, to public life, all at the same time, twenty years old working two jobs, going to school, running for city council. When I put my ear to the ground I could hear the heart of the world beating and I rushed excitedly to embrace it fully, no apprenticeships, only the experience of trying and failing, trying and succeeding, climbing the mountains outside or the mountains within, looking up, walking up, running up one path, then another, then still another, sometimes pausing as the crowd passed me by.

Then, a new moment, sensing a new possibility, stepping out into the crowd, coursing with it, stepping briskly to meet it, to embark upon a new destination, a new life, the unfolding of each and every day: I chose a career in public service while I was still in college in Cleveland, Ohio, and was elected America's youngest Mayor at age 31:... I ran for Congress five times in a period of twenty-five years before I was elected. I know what it is to try and to fail. Do not fear failure. Let failure be your friend. It prepares you for what you desire to achieve and you arrive at your new destination with growing beauty and wisdom, thanking your friend for the visit:...

My dear graduates, the world needs you. I know how important you are. The raw, kinetic, intellectual and spiritual power here from one hundred countries can save our planet from destruction:... We are constantly being told that there is nothing we can do about war, nothing we can do about global climate change, nothing we can do about poverty. Those who accept the self-fulfilling prophecies of doom may have a stake in the status quo or, fearing a new order, delay change.

Life, however, is not inert. The human heart is not inert. Its rhythms excite to the call of the future. The soul is not inert. Its eyes see the future:... George Bernard Shaw wrote in *Back to Methuselah* "You see things and say 'Why'? I dream things that never were; and I say, 'Why not'?" He spoke to the capacity of vision, of possibility thinking, of the certainty that life is a profoundly creative experience, an expression of the workings of the mind, the heart and the soul – the nonphysical, spiritual world, which sanctifies the physical world. Ideas come through our senses, bathing in a world of dreams, imagination, the magical, mysterious province of poets and prophets, inventors and painters, the realm of Michelangelo's Creation of Adam where man receives from the divine the spark of life:...

A photograph by the Hubble Telescope has captured a picture of the Eagle Nebula: "Pillars of Creation," that place in deep space where stars are born. Quantum physicists have identified gluon particles which exist in interstitial space, the space between the spaces, the unseen element of our physical

universe which holds together the world with the primal energy of the Big Bang:... We travel back and forth upon the bridge between spirit and matter, at large in a physical universe, we breathe in the eternal spiritual sustenance. Inspired, we fling our dreams back into the physical world and create islands in the sea, buildings that reach to the heavens, new structures in society, and new ways of living.

### Possibility Thinking

Possibility thinking is a science grounded in old truths. It is the capacity to call forth new outcomes:... Let me share with you a few examples from my own experience. Again and again in my public career I have confronted circumstances where I was told there was nothing I could do about a given condition: a city electric system sold to a giant private utility under indecent conditions. "Nothing you can do," said my top advisors. I saw something else, organised a civic movement and a three-year struggle resulted in regaining for the people of my community a light system that recently observed its 100th anniversary.

Two hospitals were to be closed. "Forget it," I was told. There is nothing you can do. I saw another possibility. Creative legal action ensued, the community rallied, hospitals were saved and one still stands. A steel mill that provided thousands of jobs was about to be closed. Again I was told, "there is nothing you can do." Long story short, we organised the community, intervened in court, stopped the shutdown of the mill long enough for a buyer to emerge and that mill today is the largest integrated steel mill in the world:...

There is a practical physics to civic involvement and action. Look deeply into the appearances of things. Deeper within is another possibility. Envision it, call it forward, act upon it, drawing upon that same elemental energy which comes from where the eternal first touched us and where we touched the eternal, where stars are born:...

What I have learned from experience is this — when you see a condition you desire to see change, when you seek to make something happen and you are told it is not possible — that may be exactly the place to put your energy, to change the outcome. When you do, people will say a miracle occurred. We live in a world where miracles are waiting to be welcomed:...

### A New World

This brings me to a thought I would like to share with you, my fellow citizens of the world. We have inherited a world where war is dropped on our doorstep and we are asked to adopt it as our own. We are told deadly force must be used to change people's conduct. Violence to stop the violence, war to prevent war, war to end war. When we believe war is inevitable, we come to accept the self-fulfilling prophecy of war. War happens. We wonder why:... We must call forth from this world which is so fraught with fear and foreboding that which is beautiful and glorious, a new possibility, a new thinking, a new physics, if you will, of peace. We must do it with courage. We must do it in fulfillment of salaam, the peace that comes from the unseen, the peace that comes from the heart, the peace that comes from our collective yearning, the peace that comes from an awareness that the world is one.

That all people are interconnected, interdependent, one with the human family, one with the world, one with the spirit, one with the divine:... War is never inevitable. Peace is inevitable if we desire to call it forward, if we approach it as a science. I speak of peace not simply as the absence of war, but as a practice of the science of human relations, as a capacity of human evolution and human development. But if we call peace forward from the unseen we must name it, we must give it structure, we must prepare for it a place to exist - a space to breathe, to be nurtured - to flower, so that it can be appreciated as an expression of that divine spark of creation:...

In writing of the unfolding potential of nature, the poet Lowell celebrated the month of June: "Every clod, [or piece of earth], feels a stir of might, an instinct within it that reaches and towers, and groping blindly above it for light, climbs to a soul in grass

and flowers." His poem was about the search for the Holy Grail, a sacred vessel said to contain drops of the blood of Christ. Peace is a Holy Grail and the quest for peace is empowered by thoughts of peace, words of peace and actions for peace and attainment of peace.

It is a temporal question. It is also a spiritual journey: "Wherewith Allah guideth all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety, and leadeth them out of darkness, by His will, unto the light, guideth them to a path that is straight." — Qur'an 5:16:... Think of the possibilities if we could create within every nation a place where the best minds and hearts are brought together within the context of a cabinet level position or ministry wherein resides the power to develop social structures for peace and strategies to avert conflict between groups and between states:...

Such a proposal exists; I brought it to the United States Congress two months before 9/11. In its simplest expression, it seeks to develop an organised approach to make the daily work of our nation engage our top social and economic scientists to deal with the root causes of domestic violence, spousal abuse, child abuse, gang violence, gun violence, violence against gays, and racial violence. It would develop skills for non-violent conflict resolution on a domestic level, as well as internationally, where such a ministry would be prepared to assist to ameliorate the causes of violence inherent in poverty, lack of access to food, water, shelter and the instability caused by environmental disasters:... As violence is learned, so is peace. Education has a powerful social purpose. A ministry of peace would create the resources for peace education within every culture and within each government to construct a world where we learn to settle differences by tapping the spiritual principles of salaam, shalom, of peace.

We are then within reach of creating cultures of vision, cultures of creativity, cultures of unlimited wealth and cultures of sustainability:... I have been in Congress for 16 years and involved in government for the better part of 45 years. I am told, "Dennis, such an idea is so impractical." After all, my nation spends more money for weapons and war than all the other nations of the world put together. We spend so much time, so many resources human and financial preparing for war.

Why not begin to spend time and resources preparing for peace?... Will this vision be realised for creating new structures for peace? I was reading a speech given in Dubai in 2007 by His Highness, Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, observing the challenges facing his new organisation, the Foundation His Highness created. He quoted a friend: "... in this Foundation you are like one ploughing the sea. The challenge is huge; the gap of knowledge in most of the Arab and Islamic countries is bottomless. There is a lot of talk about building communities of knowledge, but little action. The pit is too wide to be seamed, so why should you weary yourself over this matter?"...

At a time when the technology of destruction and the capacity of human destructiveness is so great, this is exactly the time to create a common global effort to build communities of peace, to provide structures in every country to help peace issue forth and flourish. I, too, believe that if we will make of human development a new art, we will set our eyes to the distant horizon and plough the seas with wondrous effect. We can then lift up our eyes to the heavens and, with our imagination, with joyous abandon, plough the stars, and a thundering universe will burst forth with new possibilities and we will make heaven on earth. "Come my friends, 'tis not too late to seek a newer world."

**Rep. Dennis Kucinich** is a leading spokesman in Congress for Peace and a new and integrated world-view. He has twice run as a Democratic Presidential Candidate. See [www.kucinich.us](http://www.kucinich.us)