

Children are our future, they are the future, and we have an obligation to leave this world as safe as it was when we came into it, or more safe, and as free as it was when we arrived, or more free.

Lets look for a moment at the end of life, at death and a lifetime comes to its end. The larger the following numbers associated with death in the list, the less likely that will be the cause of our death.

Accident: we meet our Maker in an accident	= 1 in 37
Non-transport accident: not in a car, plane, train	= 1 in 70
Suicide: we give up and decide to end it all	= 1 in 122
Assault: die as a victim of crime	= 1 in 214
Car: we are in a car when we pass away	= 1 in 242
Pedestrian: we are walking when we die	= 1 in 610
Fire: we are in a fire or die from the smoke	= 1 in 1,060
Pickup truck: we are in a pickup at the end	= 1 in 1,095
Medical mistake: complications or doctor's fault	= 1 in 1,170
Motorcycle: we are riding a motorcycle	= 1 in 1,295
Air transport: we die in a plane crash	= 1 in 4,608
Shot: we are shot with a firearm and die	= 1 in 15,565
Shot: by a semi-automatic military style rifle	= 1 in 19,456,250

When children die, their lives are stolen and our hearts are broken. But, lest we lose sight of the reality of how extremely rare and unlikely such a tragedy is, we must also take heart. Take heart, be strong, and protect the children so they too can live to pursue Life, Liberty and Happiness.

It is that second part, Liberty, we must not lose sight of, since to live under a despot, to live the life of a slave, is not much of a life at all. Threats of this kind are mostly born of governments gone awry. The super-confident leader, with an unlimited thirst for power, becomes impatient with the messy constraints of democracy, and decides to rule. The decision ia nearly always a tragedy for all but the ruler. Within the last century the price paid has not been hundreds or thousands, or even millions. It has been the tens of millions crushed to death by a bullet, or starvation, or worse.

Apart from Gandhi, the only effective resistance to the guns of the tyrant has been ten times ten that number of guns in the hands of those who would not give up, who would fight to their own death, for freedom. This is the price paid by others for the freedom we enjoy.

When there is the news of a child's wanton murder, or the killing of a score who are just beginning to flourish, take heart, be strong, and protect them with all your might. But beware and do not throw away their freedom and their ability to pass freedom on to their own young, and so on into the future,

We can wish life were otherwise, or we can relish the joy of being alive in spite of hard lessons that cannot be avoided: Hitler said he took away the guns of the Germans "to protect the

children." The world might rather he had guarded their schools from mad men and criminals instead.

Me too.

Thank you for all the good that you do,

T. N. Patch