

I am only one.

Approaching my 75th birthday, I ask how I can give back to my communities (there are many) in gratitude for all they have given me. What sacrifices are required? Millions of Americans of all ages are asking these questions.

Why now? There are two reasons. First, we are dismayed that we just haven't been doing nearly the best that is in us. Second, we have elected a real leader.

With an authenticity that cannot be legitimately denied, our next President challenges us through word and example to respond to our highest potentials and our best instincts. He aspires to lead us in actually fixing some of the things that we have long avoided.

It is time to coalesce and act. He—and we—will make some mistakes. But they won't be nearly as devastating as the mistake of not trying.

Barack Obama's mantra is, "Yes we can." This is not arrogance; it is confidence born of the fact that we have risen to great challenges before—challenges where, despite considerable fear and seemingly impossible odds, we prevailed. Consider just a partial list: our own revolution to become a nation, the civil war, the great depression, world war II, civil rights, the cold war, landing on the moon, and countless others.

A powerful example is the Berlin Airlift shortly after World War II. The story is splendidly told in Andrei Cherny's recent book, *The Candy Bombers*. Inspired leadership by an unknown young Army pilot, Hal Halvorsen, saved Berlin from Communist domination. His example eventually changed attitudes, minds, hearts and history, all initiated by a simple act of kindness. Leaders and common folk alike—Allied and German—rose to the challenge, did their part and saved two and a half million people from a terrible fate.

Our community is no longer just the locale in which we live. It spans from neighborhood to global in scale. Our degree of interdependence is without historic precedent. As the sole global superpower we can—if we choose—offer inspiring leadership, not by arrogant intimidation but by common sense and collaboration. And listening. Lots of listening.

My President invited me to join the team. I accept. We can truly make a difference.

Many already argue that he will not do enough or will do too much. These views will never be reconciled because they reject real dialogue. But the rest of us can take positive, sustainable steps to build upon rather than being discarded after the next election.

It has cost over 1.2 million American lives to get to this point in our history. I cannot face the families of those whose lives are currently being taken or look into the faces of the thousands of others whose unimaginable injuries have changed their lives forever and tell them I'm not willing to do my part as a citizen.

It's Team Time, America. We have a world-class team-builder on our hands now. My communities' potentials just expanded. So did mine.

Now, I am more than one.