

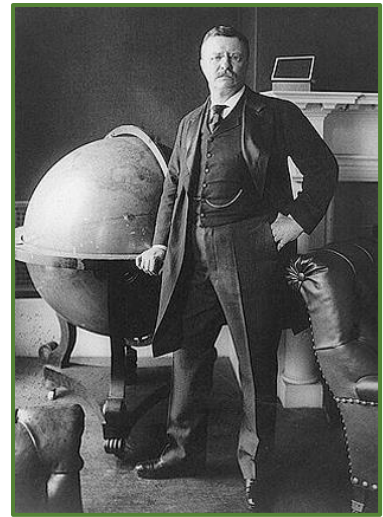
THE MAN IN THE ARENA

To say that Theodore Roosevelt was a man of many talents might be an understatement. In addition to being the 26th president of the United States – serving in 1901 to 1909 – he was a statesman, author, explorer, soldier, naturalist and reformer.

Roosevelt was the 25th vice president of the United States, the 33rd governor of New York and a leader of the Republican Party in his time. His face is depicted on Mount Rushmore, alongside those of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln.

He was a fiery president, and his remarks on a person's approach to life should inspire us all. In a speech *Citizenship in a Republic*, delivered at the Sorbonne in Paris, France, in 1910, Roosevelt said:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.



That section of the speech has come to be known as *The Man in the Arena*.

The former president – who had left office in 1909 – had spent a year hunting in Central Africa before embarking on a tour of Northern Africa and Europe, attending events and giving speeches in Cairo, Berlin, Naples and Oxford, among others. His speech in Paris was attended by governmental ministers in court dress, army and navy officers in full uniform, 900 students and 2,000 ticketholders.

Roosevelt's words, spoken more than 100 years ago, challenge those of us in Life Care and Century Park today. One of the occupational hazards of being a leader is receiving criticism – and not all of it constructive.

In the face of that kind of heat, there is a strong temptation to go under, throw in the towel, bail out. Many fade out of leadership because of intense criticism.

Make no mistake: The leader who does anything that is different or worthwhile or visionary can count on criticism.

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up (Galatians 6:9 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter