

## While in Paris

By Kellie Sites, President, Waconia Chamber of Commerce

When you fly to and from Europe, you get lots of time to think... and watch movies and Linked In learning, and how to cook... and watch the Derry Girls. I love to travel so much! Before I left for Europe, I attended a women's retreat which featured a few videos from Brene Brown. One of the things she's been talking about, and we talked about at the retreat was being in the arena.

We are so quick to criticize how someone is doing their life, their business, their whatever.... Think about this, are you in the stands shouting down? Or are you right in the arena with your family member, your friend, the business owner... I just love this analogy and find it quite thought provoking. This analogy comes from a speech delivered by Theodore Roosevelt. Here's the section from his 35 page speech he delivered at the Sorbonne in Paris on April 23, 1910 and some commentary: taken from : <http://mentalfloss.com/article/63389/roosevelts-man-arena>

On April 23, 1910, Theodore Roosevelt gave what would become one of the most widely quoted speeches of his career. The former president—who left office in 1909—had spent a year hunting in Central Africa before embarking on a tour of Northern Africa and Europe in 1910, attending events and giving speeches in Cairo, Berlin, Naples, and Oxford, among others. He stopped in Paris on April 23, and, at 3 p.m. at the Sorbonne, before a crowd that included, according to the Edmund Morris biography, *Colonel Roosevelt*, “ministers in court dress, army and navy officers in full uniform, nine hundred students, and an audience of two thousand ticket holders,” Roosevelt delivered a speech called “Citizenship in a Republic,” which, among some, would come to be known as “The Man in the Arena.”

In addition to touching on his own family history, war, human and property rights, the responsibilities of citizenship, and France's falling birthrate, Roosevelt railed against cynics who looked down at men who were trying to make the world a better place. “The poorest way to face life is to face it with a sneer,” he said. “A cynical habit of thought

and speech, a readiness to criticize work which the critic himself never tries to perform, an intellectual aloofness which will not accept contact with life's realities—all these are marks, not ... of superiority but of weakness.” Then he delivered an inspirational and impassioned message that drew huge applause:

**"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."**

The speech was a wild success. According to Morris—who calls it “one of [Roosevelt’s] greatest rhetorical triumphs”—“Citizenship in a Republic” ran in the *Journal des Debats* as a Sunday supplement, got sent to the teachers of France by *Le Temps*, was printed by Librairie Hachette on Japanese vellum, was turned into into a pocket book that sold 5000 copies in five days, and was translated across Europe. Roosevelt, Morris writes, “was surprised at its success, admitting to Henry Cabot Lodge that the reaction of the French was ‘a little difficult for me to understand.’”

He might be even more surprised to learn that the most famous section of his speech still resonates and inspires, even today. It was quoted by Nixon in his resignation speech and has been paraphrased in TED Talks. It has a place in sports history, too: Before the 1995 World Cup, Nelson Mandela gave a copy of the passage to Francois

Pienaar, captain of the South African rugby team—and they won, defeating the favored All Blacks of New Zealand. Washington Nationals player Mark DeRosa would read it to himself before big games; before the Nationals faced the St. Louis Cardinals in Game 4 of the National League Division Series in 2012, DeRosa read it aloud to his teammates. “That’s a quote I’ve always gone back to,” he told the *Washington Post*. “I go to that a lot, I really do. I’ve done it since college. I like it because people think they know, but they have no idea what we’re thinking from pitch to pitch. With our backs against the wall I wanted to say something that brought us together, a little band of brothers. Go out and fight. See what happens. I felt it was fitting. It fires me up when I read it.” The team was victorious.

The speech has its cultural touchstones, too: One wonders what Teddy would have made of his words being tattooed on Miley Cyrus and Liam Hemsworth's arms and used in a Cadillac commercial.