



MIKE ROWE

**SOMETHING
TO STAND FOR**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

★ MIKE ROWE ★

PRESENTS

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Note: This resource contains spoilers and is intended to be used after your group has seen the movie.

INTRODUCTION TO MIKE ROWE AND HIS WORK

Mike Rowe is fascinated by people and what motivates their actions. In his new feature film, “Something to Stand For,” we follow America’s favorite storyteller on an epic journey to the heart of Washington, D.C. Here we’ll watch as he unfolds nine mysteries adapted from his “The Way I Heard It” podcast series and learn more about the American Revolution, World War II, the Civil Rights Movement, and other inspiring events.

Part mystery, part history—each tale is one you’ve probably never heard before. From the legendary rebels we call “Founding Fathers” to the unknown Marines of Iwo Jima – these Americans risked everything to build the country we call home and gave us something to stand for! Written in the style of Paul Harvey’s “The Rest of the Story” radio broadcast, the short stories invite viewers to guess the identity of the famous subjects.

Perhaps best known as the creator and host of Discovery Channel’s Dirty Jobs, Mike is not a historian but a fan of the past who believes a better understanding of what came before can give us a better future. For the last 20 years he’s “soaked in local color through visits to greasy spoons in all 50 states and by working alongside hundreds of Americans involved in more than 350 different vocations.”

In the process, the Emmy award-winning TV host, producer, narrator, podcaster, spokesman, bestselling author, and recording artist has become America’s leading advocate for the skilled trades. Through his mikeroweWORKS Foundation, the CEO has awarded nearly seven million dollars in work-ethic scholarships, with a chief goal to see shop classes reintroduced into high schools.

His “The Way I Heard It” blockbuster podcast, which features original short stories and extended interviews with “dirty jobbers, mad scientists, serial entrepreneurs, bloody-do-gooders Mike thinks you should know” has been downloaded nearly 300 million times. He’s also narrated dozens of National Geographic series and documentaries and has represented Ford, Hewlett Packard, Caterpillar, Motorola, and other Fortune 500 companies as a spokesperson. Other notable projects include: Somebody’s Gotta Do It for CNN, Six Degrees for Discovery, The Story Behind the Story for TBN, and Returning the Favor for Facebook. Today, more than 6 million people follow him on social media.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

One thing viewers will quickly realize is that Rowe’s writing is always jam-packed with rich details. And Something to Stand For is no exception. By using one or two stories in this guide per shorter group sessions, everyone will have a chance to talk and share. It’s our hope that everyone comes away feeling stronger about the convictions earlier citizens stood for. Each discussion could also include responses to the statement: For this principle, I will stand: _____ (name one or more). Attendees might even consider naming their group and creating a group manifesto. Just a thought! The important thing is to engage with each other in meaningful conversations. Always remember, words are powerful, and they can change the world.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FROM THE NINE STORIES

STORY #1



1. In America's first engagement on foreign soil, which President launched one of the most famous covert recovery missions?
2. With a U.S. merchant ship missing and 21 crewmen held captive, how might you have responded to the Islamic terrorists who attacked the Libyan consulate?
3. Which President did this one look to for inspiration?
4. Can you name the Attorney General and Secretary of State involved in the President's decision to stop negotiating with terrorists?
5. Why did the Attorney General object to the President's decision?
6. Name the Lieutenant who led 8 handpicked warriors, the best of the best, trained for engagements on land and sea?
7. Where did the assault force take them in pursuit of the terrorists?
8. By what name were the terrorists eventually identified?
9. Name the military branch these nine men represented.
10. What lesson from this story would you share with children and why?
11. Can you identify a Biblical principal or scripture passage relating to the theme of this story?

STORY #2



1. Mike Rowe never served in the military, but as a youngster was a _____.
2. He called the U.S. Marines “the tip of the _____” when it comes to protecting America.
3. While visiting the monument dedicated to the men who fought at Iwo Jima, he shared the story of PFC _____, a ____ year-old enlistee described as a liar, a _____, and one who deserted his post.
4. How old was Lewis when he first wanted to enlist after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor?
5. What post did the Marine desert and why did he desert it?
6. At Iwo Jima, Lewis and 3 other riflemen were met by how many Japanese soldiers?
7. What sacrificial and heroic act did Lewis perform?
8. Lewis was the _____ Marine to ever wear the uniform and the youngest since the Civil War to receive the _____.
9. Lewis was recognized on his ____ birthday as the only member of the Armed Forces who answered the call of duty while fighting as a _____.
10. Could you imagine your own bravery in this situation? Could you lay down your life for your friends?
11. Can you share a Bible story or verse that relates to Jack’s sacrifice?

STORY #3



1. A Democrat and Illinois State Auditor whose first name was James became enraged over a letter to the editor written by someone identified only as _____. The writer criticized James' idea of eliminating paper money in favor of _____ and _____.
2. After James demanded a retraction and apology, _____ asked James to reframe his request in a more gentlemanly fashion. Instead, James challenged _____ to a _____ with _____.
3. The challenge was accepted but what weapons were preferred by James' opponent?
4. What other stipulation did the letter writer specify and what would the person crossing the stipulation receive?
5. On September 22, 1842, a large crowd sailed to _____ _____ to watch two men "hack each other to death."
6. James was afraid but willing to die rather than live the rest of his life in _____.
7. What did his opponent offer him before the fight?
8. _____ _____ was the only man ever elected as a Senator in _____ different states.
9. Although considered to be vain, he was an honorable man who later distinguished himself during the Civil War as a Brigadier General in the _____ _____.
10. His prior opponent (the letter writer) later became his boss and promoted _____ _____ how many years after their aborted duel? That individual, a country lawyer, was named _____ _____.
11. Which words are inscribed in the memorial built to honor this President? With a sense of honor, duty and humor, President _____ did all he could to keep the _____, including "disarming the enemy with _____."
12. When this memorial is defaced, how quickly does the U.S Park Service attempt to remove the damage?

STORY #4



1. A female soloist opens this story with her rendition of “We Shall Overcome.” For what occasion was she singing?
2. The doctor who told her that her dream of singing on Broadway was a _____ one, because if she hung up her lieutenant’s uniform, who would wear it next? He also described himself as her _____ and told her she was a _____ to his children.
3. Dr. _____, _____ loved what show, because it showed a future where nobody cared about skin color, birthplace, ethnicity or nationality?
4. He asked _____ to reconsider her dream, but he never heard her _____.
5. What fictitious role did the female lieutenant play, for which she later became famous?
6. Mike Rowe used a quote from the doctor in this story, which said: “The _____ is right; you shall reap what you _____.”
7. The doctor knew that “those people who use the most powerful _____ wind up paying the steepest _____.”
8. In what famous speech inspired a nation to look beyond the present and contemplate a truly color-blind society?
9. The “lieutenant” was selected by _____ to become a _____, assisting actual _____ and thus paving the way for women and minorities to be involved in future endeavors.
10. Can you relate any Biblical dreams to the leadership of this renowned doctor?

STORY #5



1. This story features three men: John, a prosperous farmer; Frank, a Welsh merchant/ employer who became a U.S. citizen; and Richard, one of the wealthiest lawyers in America whose ancestors helped to build Princeton University. They sat down with other one-percenters (the very wealthiest) to consider the tax code, money being squandered by leaders, and unjust policies that were dividing the country. They were involved in writing a manifesto we now know as the _____ .
2. Unscrupulous leaders decided to teach these three men (and others) a lesson. Armed troops attacked Frank at his New York mansion, confiscated his values, and incarcerated his _____ for _____ months. Not long after her release, she _____.
3. Soldiers also occupied John's home in Hopewell and had orders to _____ him. After the widower with _____ children was on the lam for almost a year, _____ killed him.
4. Richard's wealth and status on the New Jersey Supreme Court made him an even bigger target. Armed men attacked his home one night, locked him up, _____ and _____ him. He survived his incarceration, but struggles following his stolen fortune meant he spent his final days utterly dependent on the _____ of others.
5. We remember names like Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson for their signatures on this manifesto, but can you supply the last names for these three men?
6. The American Revolution was started after _____ very wealthy men enraged the Red Coats (British) and put everything on the line for a country that didn't even _____ yet.
7. Those men comprised the Second _____ . The year was _____.
8. They chose _____ over safety. They pledged their lives, _____, and their _____ to preserve freedoms for future Americans.
9. They knew phrases like "We, the People," "inalienable rights," and "all men are created equal" would be dangerous. But those words in the _____ _____ have inspired millions of Americans to take up _____ and _____ our country.
10. Their promise and their courage remain worth celebrating each year on _____ .

STORY #6



1. A tall Irish kid with a radio voice and a passion for sports worked as an announcer for baseball games at the WHO Radio station in Des Moines, Iowa, during the 1930s. He would call the Chicago Cubs games, not while attending, but rather by recreating the action from slips of paper sent by a telegraph operator who transcribed plays from _____. With the Cubs and Cardinals tied 0-0 in the ninth inning on June 7, 1934, the line went dead while Billy Jurges was at-bat and Dizzy Dean was on the mound. Rather than lose his audience, this announcer improvised a streak of foul balls that lasted nearly _____ minutes until the wire came back.
2. This announcer was known more for playing the sport of _____.
3. As an announcer, he was opposed to _____ in the game of baseball. He continually editorialized against the rule that baseball was for _____ gentlemen only. He credited Branch _____ and Jackie _____ for helping baseball become a truly _____ sport.
4. This announcer's name was _____, who became the _____ President of the United States. In 1987, this great communicator delivered another "strike right down the middle" in the words he told Mikhail Gorbachev, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He said, "Mr. Gorbachev, "_____ " (which had encircled West Berlin since 1961).
5. Rowe noted that "seven years before the Berlin Wall came down, thanks to a few unscripted words from the great communicator, another wall was going up, thanks to the insistent words of 275,000 Americans who demanded a wall to commemorate" _____, "even if they had to pay for it themselves," which they did, without a dime of _____."
6. Rowe explained that today _____ are what makes the wall so special.
7. While visiting this monument, Mike Rowe met Scott Tucker, who had come with his employees to _____ the wall and reflect on what it means to honor the men and women who had paid the ultimate price on our behalf.
8. As Tucker reads notes left by caring friends and family, he thinks about the high cost of war. He wants his two sons, ages 3 and 6, to understand that _____ and sacrifice come at a price. One day he will tell them about the tumultuous time in our country when those homecoming soldiers were judged very harshly because some citizens who opposed the war couldn't see the difference between our military defenders who fought and the elected officials who allowed it to unfold. Others, however, Rowe is happy to say, "were not inclined to judge."

STORY #7



Perhaps the most humorous story Mike Rowe shares in this film involves a 20-year-old girl, Sandra, who brings boyfriends home to meet her father at his Lazy B Ranch. When Harry's daughter introduced the handsome and brilliant Bill, Harry challenged the Stanford student to the strangest test he'd ever taken. In conversation, the rancher explained how emasculation, branding, and dehorning cures aggression in bulls and that, due to a lack of trust, you should never turn your back on one. During her growing up years, Sandra had become accustomed to this work and to handling the animals' testicles. Despite his lack of enthusiasm for Harry's expectation that he eat the harpooned body parts (jokingly described by Harry as "chestnuts roasting on an open fire," "Rocky Mountain oysters," and "shish kaballs"), Bill managed to swallow a mouthful. He was appalled, but not inclined to judge. While Bill waited that summer to propose marriage after graduation, Sandra had already committed to marry another Stanford student named John (who apparently had also passed Harry's test).

Still, this was the beginning of a remarkable journey that would see Bill and Sandra grow old together, make history together, and serve America as Supreme Court judges. Thirty years after both Bill and Sandra had started families of their own, another cowboy asked Chief Justice William Renquist if Sandra Day O'Connor would be fit for a position on America's highest Court. In response to President Ronald Reagan's question, the old boyfriend Bill answered, "Sir, this woman is perfectly qualified for the task at hand. She's fair, decisive, and trust me, she is in no way intimidated by the presence of testosterone." And so, in 1981, the 40th U.S. President did something no other had done. He "nominated a candidate without testicles, a genuine cowgirl who shattered the glass ceiling of the ultimate boys' club when she took her place among eight old bulls, one of whom just happened to be Bill". The two sweethearts, who didn't become husband and wife, became famous as Chief Justice William Renquist and Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Conner. They worked side by side on the Supreme Court, where they were always careful to "never bite off more than they could chew."

1. Did this story cause you to research more about O'Connor and Renquist? If so, what other interesting facts did you learn?
2. Does your family have any special "tests" they expect future in-laws to pass? If so, describe one.
3. Renquist was considered "strongly conservative," and O'Connor was thought to be a "moderate conservative." If time allows, review some of the Court's decisions during their long terms of service.
4. What is your opinion of Harry's test? Could you have passed it?
5. Do you have a "remarkable friendship" story to share – an endearing or enduring one?

STORY #8



Mike Rowe begins this story with pondering questions about why we build historical monuments, what they mean today, and why America's park rangers care for them with such diligence and respect, while others deface them and call for their removal. He shares about one old soldier who, after paying the ultimate price for defending our freedom, relaxes now for eternity at the Arlington National Cemetery. Encompassing 639 acres overlooking the Potomac River across from Washington, D.C., this burial ground was established on May 13, 1864, on land confiscated from Confederate General Robert E. Lee. Annually, more than 4 million people visit the hallowed ground, where 8,500 trees from 300 different species are considered "living memorials."

Since 1921, this sacred space has provided a final resting place for one of America's unidentified World War I service members and the Unknowns from later wars added in 1958 and 1984. As Rowe imagines the possible details about the brave men who lost their lives in the wartime efforts, we think about the old soldier whose family includes the extended family of every soldier who never made it home and their loved ones left behind. Today, because DNA testing ensures proper identification of military members, we realize there will never be another like him. Originally, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier consisted of a simple marble slab, but now the white sarcophagus is decorated with three wreaths on each side panel (north and south). On the front (east), three figures represent Peace, Victory, and Valor. The back (west) features the inscription: "Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God."

1. Have you ever visited the Arlington National Cemetery? If so, share a memory.
2. Were you aware that more than 400,000 U.S. Veterans and their dependents are interred there?
3. Describe your thoughts as you visualize those many, many white crosses precisely lining the 639 acres of impeccably manicured landscape where 8,500 trees from 300 different species are considered "living memorials."
4. Do you know any soldiers who have experienced the Honor Flight trip to the military memorials in Washington, D.C.? If so, recall their names.
5. Soldiers who volunteer to become Tomb Guards must undergo a strict selection process and intensive training for the precise routine. Each element is significant as The Guard marches 21 steps down the black mat behind the Tomb, turns/faces east for 21 seconds, turns/faces north for 21 seconds, and then takes 21 steps down the mat. Next, the Guard executes a sharp "shoulder-arms" movement to place his/her weapon on the shoulder closest to visitors, signifying their stance between the Tomb and any possible threat. The number 21 symbolizes the highest symbolic military honor that can be bestowed: the ____-_____ _____.
6. Mike Rowe's grandfather, William Rowe, fought in which World War?

STORY #9



This intricate tale (paraphrased from Rowe's telling) identifies six men whose historical roles provide the perfect wrap up to his film, *Something to Stand For*. Enjoy the recap and please share your thoughts with the younger generations.

At age 21, Private Williams was preparing the fort for survival from the Royal Navy's anticipated bombardment. The runaway slave who had escaped his master four months earlier knew the British navy would offer him freedom for his service, but Williams didn't want a king any more than he wanted a master. Instead, he joined the Maryland Militia under an assumed name.

Meanwhile, in the woods eight miles away, two Baltimore teens with rifles, Daniel Wells and Henry McComas, hid in the forest and marveled at the sight, wondering why a general who didn't want to be shot would dress himself in a bright red coat and sit on a white horse 100 yards in front of them. They only knew the Red Coats had burned Washington, D.C. a few days earlier and now had come to burn Baltimore. So, the boys fired shots and severely wounded the British general. During the transfer back to his warship, the bleeding commander probably thought about the American doctor he had sequestered on the vessel, the one who had already saved many other British soldiers' lives.

On that ship, the doctor was commiserating with a Baltimore lawyer he'd invited aboard about the prior week's citizen's arrest he'd made to stop British soldiers from harassing women. After he had them imprisoned, the British General arrested the doctor and confined him on the boat.

The good news was that, while the American doctor and lawyer pondered the possibility of a pardon, the British army postponed their planned attack. This delay, brought about by the shots of 18-year-old Daniel Wells and 19-year-old Henry McComas, allowed Private Williams and others at the fort eight miles away to better prepare for the British attackers. Meanwhile, the two teens lay dying in a firing volley, while on the ship the General's naked body was immersed in a bottle of Jamaican rum in preparation for his burial.

When the British attack finally resumed, the doctor and lawyer had a great porthole view of the battle. The lawyer kept looking for a sign that his beloved Baltimore would survive. Since the morose doctor could not help the wounded, he could only pray.

While at the fort, Private Williams had experienced the reality of a 25-hour shelling that took his leg off at the knee. As the runaway slave looked up from a pool of his own blood, he could see the broad stripes and bright stars of a flag still there, flying defiantly over his head. Two miles away, the American doctor's lawyer was staring at the same flag, and his thoughts are now a matter of public record. It must have been an incredible sight, with a lawyer scribbling, a doctor praying, and bombs bursting in air, while a British general marinated in a tub of rum and a runaway slave died a free man under the Star-Spangled Banner waving proudly over Fort McHenry.

Anyone who has studied American history knows our National Anthem was written by a stubborn lawyer who would not stand for injustice. But Francis Scott Key would have never been on General Ross's warship in the Battle of Baltimore during the War of 1812 if not for William Beanes, a stubborn doctor who wouldn't stand for bad manners. The battle would have gone in a different direction had not two stubborn teens resisted the Red Coats marching to burn their city. And the most unlikely patriot of them all was Private Williams, the runaway slave who would not stand for living in bondage, even if it meant standing for the country that had not yet stood for his independence.

Rowe concluded his ninth story with this parting thought: "War is often confusing, and so too is history, but our National Anthem isn't. It's a simple tribute for those who refuse to stand for kings or masters. That's why we stand when we hear it today – not because our country is perfect. We stand simply to honor all those Americans who died, trying to make our country better. In the land of the free and the home of the brave, we stand because standing is the very least we can do."

1. Which of the six men could you relate to most?
2. Were you aware that the Wells McComas Monument is in Baltimore?
3. It's been said that the past determines our future. Share a comment with the group on this thought.
4. What other metaphors can you mention that might represent America's positions in other contemporary wars.
5. Have you been inspired to revisit some history and perhaps even some monuments? Maybe it's road trip time!

CONCLUSION



Fort McHenry was the destination of Rowe’s very first field trip as a fifth-grade student in 1973. Then he listened to a park ranger share the story of the HMS Tonnant, the British ship on which Francis Scott Key wrote the National Anthem, situated not too far from the bridge built in his honor 160 years later, although a big part of the Key Bridge is now at the bottom of the Patapsco River. Quite a thing for a kid from Baltimore to come back and see – a metaphor perhaps, for a divided country. Thankfully, Rowe explained, “that bridge is going to be built back, someday soon, even bigger and better than before.”

As Rowe reminds us “that these United States are a work in progress – always under construction,” he concludes with, “That’s what we do. We move forward, we fall down, we get up, we come back – better than ever.”



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As these credits roll at the end of the film, credits for the production team members are interspersed with clips from the filming process, which is also an interesting watch.