



Never Give In!: The Best of Winston Churchill's Speeches

Winston S. Churchill

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Winston Churchill was the most eloquent and expressive statesman of his time. It was as an orator that Churchill became most completely alive, and it was through his oratory that his words made their greatest and most enduring impact. While the definitive collection of Churchill's speeches fills eight volumes, here for the first time, his grandson, Winston S. Churchill, has put together a personal selection of his favorite speeches in a single, indispensable volume. He has chosen from his grandfather's entire output and thoughtfully introduces each selection. The book covers the whole of Churchill's life, from the very first speech he made to those of his last days. It includes some of Churchill's best-known speeches as well as some that have never before been published in popular form. Today, Sir Winston Churchill is revered as an indomitable figure and his wisdom is called upon again and again. Reading these speeches, from the perspective of a new century, we can once again see Sir Winston Churchill's genius and be moved and inspired by his words.

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TarasProkopyuk says

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Reagan Ramsey says

I'll quibble with the author and say that, including Churchill's speeches on the Atlantic Charter and the Balfour Declaration were unnecessary to understanding his great oratorial powers. However, it was wonderful to read many of his accounts during the two world wars, his views on socialism and the atomic bomb...and his opinion on the general sorry-ness of politicians. amazing to think how some things truly don't change...not just in that latter point, but in matters of very serious moral import. In particular, Churchill's

assessment of Hitler and his advice to the nation and the world did credit to his foresight and leadership.

I'll include a couple of excerpts, the first from a speech he gave at the beginning of WWII:

"We shall not fail or falter; we shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle, nor the long-drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools, and we will finish the job."

and the second from the eponymous "Never give in" speech:

"never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never--in nothing, great or small, large or petty--never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy"

Fritz says

I read this entire book after reading Churchill's biography. His is one of the photos on the wall of my study.

Amazing to me, how his warnings against socialism are still true (and needed) today.

Example: "Nationalisation! What an awful flop! Show me the nationalised industry which has not become a burden on the public either as taxpayers or consumers or both." (p 466)

Perhaps he was right when he asked: "Is it the only lesson of history that mankind is unteachable?"
(p 429)

So - several famous speeches. Many that are relatively obscure, but still pure Churchillian genius.

Keith says

A great quick read of excerpts from speeches given by Winston Churchill. A voice we'd do well to heed today. Peace isn't won through willful ignorance. Fear is often given the guise of political correctness. At 89, he was made an honorary citizen of the United States and our country could be weighed the better for it.

Melliereed says

A speech should stir one to action: either to cast off despair at the very least or at the most to plunge forward without looking back. No one since Churchill has had this effect in our modern day. He had the background that really none have in this age to lead in difficult times. I read this book because I thought if his speeches could have that much effect on a nation to stir it to win an impossible war, then surely it could help me with some words of encouragement to face the daily war of life. Not a day goes by in this age that somewhere people are struggling, even dying because of a connection of events we are part of, be they so insidiously innocuous as global commerce or so immediately terrible as the overthrow of a government. Our own life may not be what it once was and only God knows if it will be again. And then, if we are open to the world of others, if we are truly awake, we can't help but imagine the headlines we read as human eyes pleading,

staring back at our mind and heart. One wants to hear something stirring every once in awhile in the midst of the war of plain hard life. After we have put on the Ephesian armor and are ready for the daily battle, Churchill's speeches can be recalled to mind in those moments when they are needed most: when you need someone to tell you not to give up!

Samuel says

I listened to this on audiobook, it is Churchill giving Churchill speeches, doesn't get much better than that. Some of the audio quality was not great but the content, wisdom and wit is brilliant. We may need his kind again... Soon.

James says

"We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender."

Jonathan says

If Winston Churchill had only been a writer he would have been an exceptional human being. This collection of the best of his speeches, ranging from his first political speech in 1897 to his reply to being awarded honorary citizenship of the USA in 1963 (delivered by his son Randolph as he was too unwell to travel by then), is a comprehensive look at the responses by a man to 20th Century world events, who was undoubtedly one of its most outstanding figures.

When I started reading this book it made me realise how much politics has lost in not having leaders who use words in the way that Churchill and others used to. Whether he was speaking about his late friend Lawrence of Arabia at the unveiling of a plaque at his old school, addressing the House of Commons during the Second World War, warning the world about the dangers of the Communist Soviet Union during the 1950s, or his subtle disagreement with the politics of Prohibition in the States, there is an attention to detail in his syntax and a power in his delivery that is pretty much unequalled. Can anybody imagine David Cameron coming out with

'Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few'?

This maybe an obvious quote, but as I write this there are surely few people who do not recognise it 73 years later.

Occasionally the speeches highlight Churchill's biased outlook at a world that was dominated in his youth by the British Empire - the loss of which he never really accepted, but at the same time they show a man who embraced change when it improved the lot of the people, had a fierce defence of the democratic process in government, had an understanding of the world around him, and a humility about his place within it. A fascinating book and a great companion to any biography.

Jean says

It is great to listen to Winston Spence Churchill's speeches. The slight lisp makes him seem vulnerable. The book is a compilation of WSC's speeches compiled by his grandson Winston Churchill. The book also contains sections of Churchill reading excerpts of his writings with explanations about why and when he wrote them. Winston, the grandson, provides the introduction to each speech with a bit of historical context and scene setting.

I enjoyed his speech explaining about the British Parliament and how it had evolved into its current format along with pros and cons of its current form. There were a number of speeches such as the one about parliament I had never heard probably because they were given in parliament rather than over the radio to the world. The opening was great considering this is the anniversary of World War One. He says "It is the eleventh day of the eleventh month just before the eleventh hour and I am standing looking out across Trafalgar Square watching Big Ben getting ready to strike the eleventh hour." I could picture it as if I was standing there with him.

I can now understand why he was such a great orator. I felt he was speaking to me as an individual even over my iPod. I have been a fan of WSC's writings and of his exquisite use of the English language but listening to him I could hear the eloquence and rhythm of his spoken word. This book is a must for the fans of Winston S. Churchill and would make a great gift.

Frank says

I saw this quote:

"You see these dictators on their pedestals, surrounded by the bayonets of their soldiers and the truncheons of their police. Yet in their hearts there is unspoken - unspeakable! - fear. They are afraid of words and thoughts! Words spoken abroad, thoughts stirring at home, and all the more powerful because they are forbidden. These terrify them. A little mouse - a little tiny mouse! - of thought appears in the room and even the mightiest potentates are thrown into panic."

and knew I had to read more by this man. will be getting it soon

Mary Kelly says

He is better heard than read, but still a compelling book.

Peter Ellwood says

A fine collection of many of his great speeches.

Initially, the book was a mild let-down for me in one way. I suppose many of us come to Churchill's collected speeches, secretly hoping to discover gems hitherto hidden from view. But for the most part, the most memorable sound bites have long since been out there in the public arena. On the contrary, one reaction I had - superficial admittedly - was to realise how much relatively blank space he inserted in between those immortal turns of phrase.

No, that's not fair, his prose was never blank, it was always sinuous and masterful and absolutely to the point; and it is obviously quite unrealistic to expect every line to contain another winner. But somehow, unfairly, you do.

The memorable lines are all there too of course, plus some new ones. I don't remember seeing this one before, from the Dunkirk moment in 1940:

"If this long island story of ours is to end, let it end only when each one of us lies choking in his own blood upon the ground".

Imagine him saying it out loud, in that unique cadence of his. It makes your toes tingle.

One after another, familiar or otherwise, these luminous tones and sentiments waft out: they'll still be quoting them in 500 years' time.

That in turn is the pointer to the real impact of this book for me. There's something much more profound than the memorable words it includes. Increasingly as I went on, I was struck somehow by the bigger, underlying picture, at the cumulative effect of those speeches in their totality.

He is occasionally derided for his inconstancy as a younger politician, crossing the House of Commons for example as if it were a zebra crossing. And yes, he presided over the mother of all tactical disasters at Gallipoli, and so on.

But when you lay his speeches end to end as the book does, you can almost feel a truly great man, and I mean a truly great man, a colossus, emerging.

Not for one moment does he complain in these speeches, and you almost have to rely on wider general knowledge, plus the editor's helpful notes, to place them in the context of an apparently insuperable enemy and the hopeless odds. And yet he hung on, he produced this relentless outpouring of raw courage dressed up in that vibrant, luscious English. And in the process he changed our bit of the world, and beyond it the rest of the world too. In that sense it's a book about greatness. No, it's more than that. These words are the very words he used to hold a nation together, against all the odds. Obviously, his focus and resolve form the core of that greatness, but his use of words, designed to hold his people together, are more than the window-dressing here, they are a central component of the greatness too. He couldn't have achieved what he did without these words. By the time I finished, I felt I was reading a blast of greatness itself.

"...it was on our country that the whole brunt of the burden fell for more than a year of saving civilisation and the world. We did not flinch, we did not fail."

Margaret Lozano says

Disclaimer: This is just an extremely honest, personal observation. I listened to the audiobook version, and I was rather disappointed. Some of the speeches were well written (the ones you probably know already). The rest were pretty mediocre, and his delivery was frankly terrible, for the most part. Clearly he was a better strategist and politician than he was a speechwriter.

secondwomn says

highly recommended reading. churchill's genius was not only in his intelligence and his thoughtfulness (which allowed him to accurately assess the international developments of his lifetime) nor in his dedication to language and literature nor in his steadfast belief in the ideals of british culture and history. the true genius of churchill is in his generosity, openmindedness, and flexibility. (his ability to separate the german regime from the german people, or the communist dictatorship from the population of russia, is particularly moving. has any other eminent statesman so clearly called for abolition of tyranny and preservation of all peoples?) all of these sterling qualities shine in the words he so carefully crafted over a long political career in defense of his people, his nation, and his way of life.

Lamec Mariita says

The speeches of Churchill are famous and well known and available in different formats. The merit of this book is that his grandson has selected the best and most interesting ones, almost 200, and that with each one he presents with few well-chosen sentences the context. If you like history, you must read these speeches. These speeches were historical actions of the first order which had meaning in the great struggle to save freedom and human civilization.
