

# Peanut Butter: The Glue That Holds Us Together?

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"I don't know about you, but I have no doubt that we'll have the opportunity to get our industry—and peanut butter—back."

The FDA is calling it one of the worst recalls in history. Peanut Corp. of America President Stewart Parnell released a statement saying the recall was "expanded out of an abundance of caution," but the practical results are the same—I am liquidating the pantry of all comfort food.

But tossing all of these food items was not really the core issue for me. Perhaps I'm being over-sensitive in my emotional reaction here, but: doesn't it feel like we're being kicked while we're down? What's more American than PB&J? And now I can't eat peanut butter? Not to mention, it brings to mind visions of 20th century socialist winter landscapes: As industry crumbles around us, here we sit with contaminated food in our cupboards.

I'll be the first to admit that I often vacillate between logical and impulsive thinking, but suddenly I was losing my grip on reality: What was going on in America—the bedrock of our political identities—and how were we going to fix it? Everything stable in life, down to the peanut butter crackers I used to bring in my school lunch, was being brought before a firing squad.

Step one, I soon realized, was centered around not allowing the news to change

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the shape of my conception of this country, and all it could accomplish. After the dramatically changing tides of the past year's events, I was allowing something as peripheral as peanut butter to be the straw that broke the camel's back.

This thought made me reflect more acutely on what exactly my 'vision' of America is. If I could break it down into three main tenets it would most embody these traits:

- **Ingenuity:** Americans invented the steam locomotive, the supermarket, the heart defibrillator—heck, even peanut butter.
- **Diligence:** Whether or not you agree with the standard the American workforce has set—as in, we consistently work more hours per week than Europeans—it does indicate a group that does not shy away from elbow grease. As jobs go away, it's comforting to know that this enviable work ethic will lie in wait.
- **Resilience:** This is perhaps the most important right now. My great-grandparents were immigrants and would probably read me the riot act over how soft I've become in my modern comforts (and then force feed me lutefisk). Things are tough right now, granted, but history has shown us that if any country can overcome hardship and economic turmoil, it's this one.

The point is, we can't underestimate our abilities to be overwhelmed by anxiety. I'm as guilty of this as anyone—case in point, using peanut butter as a watershed for letting my worst fears run wild. But at the end of the day, I can think back to some of the rougher patches in our collective past, and remind myself of how difficult times can be navigated—and even lend us a greater appreciation for our country, our abilities, and our perseverance.

Yes, there will be business-related casualties, but we've hung on through worse before. I don't know about you, but I have no doubt that we'll have the opportunity to get our industry—and peanut butter—back. And when we do, we'll be ready.

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