

Mary Fisher's Speech About AIDS

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Mary Fisher as an AIDS Advocate

Usually, we think of heroes and great people as those who have fought solid battles. However, there are those heroes who have fought no battles on solid ground but through their speeches. One such great person is Mary Fisher, a Republican who gave a speech on the battlefield of the Republican National Convention in 1992 (Fisher, 1992). She is battling AIDS. In her [speech "A Whisper of AIDS,"](#) Mary, who is a mother and is HIV positive, talks about how awareness remains essential to finding a cure.

This paper will analyze Mary's speech using Aristotle's method of rhetoric, which applies ethos, logos, pathos, and pathos (Fisher, 1992). She says that more than two Hundred thousand citizens of America are dead or rather dying, and more millions are infected. Mary's purpose is to create awareness by providing statistics on the increasing infection rate of diseases. She talks about the risks in the protection from the disease. Mary's holocaust metaphors, as well as allusions to various historical events such as the holocaust, are intended to arm her audience with the understanding of the seriousness of the danger awaiting when protection from the disease is not regarded seriously.

Fisher applies a symbol of the three appeals, which include" logos, pathos, and ethos. First, she authenticates herself and her credibility, which is the ethos, by demonstrating early in the talking that she (Mary); herself has HIV and comprehends that many individuals do not believe they will ever contract the disease since before her assessment, she did not understand either (Fisher, 1992). Mary seeks to make her announcement more reachable by sharing further that she is not gay while asserting that she is married and she is a mother. She reports that she got the infection while she was married and not from an accidental partner. She appeals to Pathos, or rather the audience's emotions, through her referencing of a tragic event and a famous quote, which further appeals to emotions (Cyphert, 2010). For instance, to relate AIDs to the holocaust was a good move that incriminates the terrors of the infection, and the incidence of risks is not known to everybody. She ends her speech with a wealth of emotion, asserting her love for her loving family and her future hope and she requests God to bless her audience. The metaphors Mary applies in her speech imply that the danger of AIDs is compared to that posed by the Holocaust.

Historical Context of the AIDS Pandemic

Admittedly, AIDS has been a worldwide pandemic claiming the lives of several human beings across the entire universe. It was discovered in 1982 despite claims that it existed much earlier than the year it was discovered (Foss, 2017). AIDS community member Mary Fisher is happy about her positive

HIV status, and she is one of the few who can speak up about their HIV status. She has been at the forefront of defending the rights of HIV patients and as well helping them come to terms with their status, spreading the gospel of positivity despite being HIV positive (Fisher, 1992). Mary Fisher learned her HIV status in 1991, her second husband infected her, and since then, up to now, she has been an international figure being the world's number one activist fighting HIV and AIDS. In one of her several speeches, *A Whisper of AIDS*, she uses specific diction to enable her to create awareness of the AIDS crisis. She uses words meant to express the fear the general public had concerning AIDS at the time she was infected.

Audience Appeal and Rhetorical Strategies

Fischer tried to address her primary target with her speeches, that is the HIV patients and American citizens. She scared the audience into believing her words, and through this, everyone could take all the advice she gave seriously (Foss, 2017). She used to say that it does not matter whether you're a Democrat or Republican, male or female, black or white, gay or straight, old or young. Through this, the audience would automatically realize she was addressing everyone, as long as you're a human being who can listen.

She was very successful in getting the attention of the audience and making them listen by instilling fear in them by saying AIDS is for everyone; it is not for specific people or groups of people (Leff & Mohrmann, 1974). Another joint statement of inflicting fear in the audience she used was, 'Whoever believes she is safe is in great danger of contracting the incurable disease'. In that statement, Fischer was tactical in scaring her audience by telling them that no matter what they do, the virus can still get into their bodies, and they get the disease (Fisher, 1992). The main intention of all her speeches was to ensure AIDS should be recognized as an international disaster and that those suffering from AIDS should not fear speaking up with confidence for them to be heard. She used herself as an example of a female who can stand up and speak with confidence. She says that being a woman who contracted HIV in marriage, she enjoys her family support; she is a man lonely after being neglected by her family for having contracted HIV and AIDS. This speech was received by warm applause from the crowd, who cheered her on her excellent communication skills.

Impact and Significance of Fisher's Speech

In summary, Fisher uses her speech to create awareness and make people make them fully understand what she said and with their full attention to the address. She successfully pressed on making AIDS recognized by both national and international communities. This led to the beginning of serious research on the treatment of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

References

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