

## Trump's Worst Legacy May Be Modeling His Communication Style to His Followers

Actually, President Trump will have many “worst legacies,” but the one that’s most present for me at this time is how he has emboldened ordinary people to think it’s okay to communicate like him. That’s what presidents do, after all. They become role models for Americans.

Let’s look at the role model being demonstrated day in and day out by our current president.

I received a hand-written letter just this week from a reader, who wrote as follows:

*Dear Mr. Smith,*

*I enjoy your column and wanted to say my piece.*

*Being 89½ years old and a retired R.N., I’ve seen much in my lifetime but nothing like Mr. T. His Narcissistic Personality Disorder disturbs me most. Each time he speaks, all the symptoms come forth: Profound arrogance, hypercritical, public ridicule, no sympathy, a bully.*

*It is a mental illness and is untreatable. Were he my child, he would have been put in time-out long ago. As you said, his supporters are unreachable and that is baffling. Look forward to reading your thoughts. —Sincerely, Mrs. Vivian S.*

Yes, Vivian, one wonders whether his supporters would tolerate those “symptoms” in anyone else. Who among them would like a person displaying “profound arrogance, hypercritical, public ridicule, no sympathy, a bully”? I doubt any of his supporters

### Talking Turkey



By JIM SMITH

like those traits in another human being — *any* human being — but they accept them in Donald Trump. Worse, they are adopting those traits for themselves.

Unless your circle of friends includes Trump supporters, you may not see that behavior in them, but, thanks to this column, I receive emails every day from them, evidencing such language.

Here’s a recent email from Steve M.:

*“You are a lousy journalist. You cant even spell my name correctly. No wonder you cant earn a living doing journalism. So you resort to petty name calling and a completely lame attempt to sell real estate. You or your parents wasted a lot of money at MIT.”* (The writer continues at length.)

Trump supporters, while they admit he’s crude and rude (“but gets things done!”), they deny those symptoms. One admitted the narcissism this way:

*The potus is a narcissist? Not really startling news! Btw, bho’s picture is featured in the DSM-5 manual in the section defining a narcissistic personality? Trump simply took a page from bho’s book? Why doesn’t bho’s narcissism bother you?*

(“bho” is Obama, referred to by another Trump supporter in emails only as “B. Hussein O.”)

The president also is a role model for lying — even when it’s not necessary. While he said, metaphorically, that he could shoot someone in the middle

of Fifth Avenue and not lose a supporter, it’s just as likely that he could say the earth was flat (okay, metaphorically) and his supporters would accept it as the truth — and Fox News would promote it!

It’s one thing that supporters don’t think Trump lies, despite repeated evidence of it, but, worse, he’s made bending the truth acceptable by modeling it.

Parents of bullies and the bullied alike have decried bullying in our schools, yet millions of Americans have learned from “Mr. T.” that bullying is acceptable in adults. This is nothing less than hypocrisy, unless they now accept bullying in schools.

The same for ridicule. Who thinks that ridiculing others is acceptable discourse? Again, it’s being normalized by this president in virtually every tweet. I expect to receive emails ridiculing Vivian S. for her letter. That’s what has been taught — by example.

Maybe the tide will turn, now that we are seeing the generals speaking up. And what will we learn from Steve Bannon’s book, due this month or next?

Speaking of books, I’m currently reading *A Warning* by “Anonymous, A Senior Trump Administration Official,” available for as little as \$3.99 on eBay with free shipping. It’s an insightful and scary look inside the Trump White House. I consider it a must-read!

I welcome emails, both pro and con. I learn so much from each. Email me at [jimsmith@ecentral.com](mailto:jimsmith@ecentral.com), or write to me at 17695 S. Golden Rd., Golden 80401. Columns are archived at [www.TalkingTurkey.online](http://www.TalkingTurkey.online).