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Trump Appears Uninterested in Winning Others Over, Content to Energize His Base

In previous columns, I have shared my belief that Trump supporters are unreachable. (They have been labeled “Cult 45.”) One could conclude from watching Trump’s rally in Tulsa that either he believes he can win over the rest of us or, more likely, that he sees electoral success in further demonizing us and thereby energizing his base to turn out for him on Nov. 3.

Rita and I watched his full speech at his Tulsa rally, fascinated as always at how he appeals to that base. But that base may be shrinking. He was understandably furious about the poor turnout, filling only 6,200 of 19,000 seats, but that was an improvement from when he boasted that attendance at his inauguration was the largest ever. (It was in defense of that claim that Kellyanne Conway made her famous statement about “alternative facts” on Meet the Press two days later, setting the tone for his presidency.)

We continue to be intrigued by how Trump supporters are able to overlook his lies, dog whistles to the “deplorables,” scorning of allies and flattering of dictators, obscene language and generally despicable behavior. How would *you* feel if someone you admired acted like that and was adored by white supremacists, neo-Nazis, racists and the like? (I wrote about Hillary Clinton’s September 2016 now-famous “deplorables” speech last week when this column appeared only online at www.JimSmithBlog.com.)

Talking Turkey



By JIM SMITH

Like me, you probably know respectable, college-educated professionals who say they like Trump, and I enjoy conversing with them to figure out why. What

I usually find is that they like how his tax cuts benefited them financially — as it did Donald Trump himself. One such supporter is a friend of mine, a highly successful Realtor whom I’ve known and admired for over a decade. She said she supports Trump because his tax cuts have benefited her personally. (She’s far more successful than I am, with 59 closings, two of them over \$1 million, in the past 12 months.) She told me she is willing to overlook his negatives because of that, which I find disappointing.

There’s another group of *non-deplorable* Trump supporters that surprises me, because it is in our local Rotary club, to which Rita and I both belonged. I love and appreciate Rotary for its “Four-Way Test of the things we think, say or do,” which Rotarians recite at every meeting following the pledge of allegiance. It goes like this:

- ◆ **First, is it the truth?**
- ◆ **Second, is it fair to all concerned?**
- ◆ **Third, does it build goodwill and better friendships?**
- ◆ **Fourth, will it be beneficial to all concerned?**

As Rita and I joined in reciting the Four-Way Test every Tuesday, it occurred to me after Trump took

office, that our president’s thoughts, words and deeds would fail that test. We will never forget when a visiting Rotarian leader gave a talk about the Four-Way Test early in Trump’s reign. During the Q&A part of the meeting, I thought it appropriate, despite the unspoken rule about avoiding politics, to ask the speaker how we as Rotarians should relate to a president who consistently violates all four tenets of the Test.

The following week, I was told by the club president that “several” Rotarians had complained about me asking that question — although not to me directly. The following week four female members of the club, including Rita, all resigned in protest. I stayed on, but only another year. I believe in my heart that the vast majority of Rotarians are good people who reject Donald Trump’s leadership or lack thereof.

I considered submitting an article to the Rotarian magazine raising this issue, but I never did. I decided — hopefully wrongly — that it would not have been published, because Trump’s 30% base probably includes many Rotarians, and the organization can’t afford to offend them. I’m happy to raise it here.

I’m disappointed that any Rotarian thinks the Test need only apply to them and it’s okay to support others who blatantly violate it, as Trump does every day.

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