

When Did Telling the Truth Stop Mattering in American Politics?

I was raised in a staunch Republican home. I don't think my parents ever voted for a Democrat for president. Dad, like Richard Nixon, was born a Quaker, although he and Mom raised us as Episcopalians. Ethics and morality were important. When I found a dollar bill in the church parking lot, I was told to put it in the collection plate, and I did.

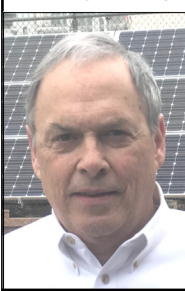
Integrity was paramount. I remember Dad telling me, "Just because other people steal apples doesn't make it right for you to steal apples," and similar teachings.

I attended the same boarding school Dad attended, and I remember having to write on every test paper, "I pledge upon my honor that I have neither given nor received help on this paper."

Another truism Dad taught me was "From those to whom much is given, much is expected." In other words, be

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Talking Turkey



By JIM SMITH

as charitable as I can, which in my case has taken the form of planned giving to the three private schools and one university which even today contribute to my success in life.

(By the way, Ivanka Trump attended the same boarding school as me. A classmate in a position to know tells me that she has never donated to the school, which amazes me.)

Telling the truth and giving back is in my blood. That's a big reason that I have been shocked, even stunned, by the affection with which a third of the American electorate holds our current president, even though none of those supporters can deny that he is a habitual, if not pathological, liar. How can that be sustainable for four years, much less eight?

Telling the truth is a core trait when it comes to assessing a person's character. What we see with Donald Trump is that building fear about the election of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris is key to having Trump supporters overlook the man's character, and lying is just one part of that character, albeit a very im-

portant part. After all, who among those supporters would tolerate lying in a friend or colleague? I myself have fired broker associates for lying.

The question for Trump supporters to ask themselves (they won't answer me, of course!) is, what is "a bridge too far" for them, and is the fear mongering about communism, socialism, gun confiscation, and you-name-it really justified, or will someone finally turn the tide against our president by playing the role Joseph Welch played when he struck back at Sen. Joseph McCarthy during the Senator's hearing into communist infiltration of the U.S. Army, saying to him, "Do you have no sense of decency?" It was the confrontation which finally brought down the Senator, ending his groundless communist fear mongering, which we see repeated now by the Trump campaign.

Of course, communism and socialism (the distinction is not offered or understood) is not the only fear mongering. There's the blatant racism, such as saying that blacks and other minorities in "Democrat cities" will bring crime and violence to the suburbs, or that the 2nd Amendment will be abol-

ished (as if that could be done simply by electing the Biden ticket and a Democratic congress, which it can't), or that any of the absurd Qanon conspiracies theories are true.

But what about those other elements of Trump's character? We know he evaded military service and that he said captured or killed soldiers aren't heroes ("I like heroes who aren't captured," he said in denigrating Sen. John McCain, who he called a "loser" when he died.)

Trump's authoritarian words and actions remind Americans, especially those who emigrated from Europe after WW II, of Mussolini or Hitler, and his calling the free press "the enemy of the people" is definitely a bridge too far for me and for countless Americans.

It's becoming clearer day-by-day, especially with the increased investigation of the man triggered by November's election, not only in television documentaries but by numerous books and articles by persons who have been in his inner circle, that he is not fit for the office he holds. Also, with the latest brouhaha over Trump's alleged calling dead WWI soldiers "losers" and "suckers," generals may now speak up, too.