

Marketing traditionalism

Full disclosure, I am a traditionalist. Saying that puts me at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to those I am trying to 'convert' to my way of thinking AND to my survival as a species. The fact is that we traditionalists have been slow to recognize the threats to our way of life and the pressing need to improve our marketing skills.

To prove my point, all we need to do is look at the progress made in several social areas. One of them is human sexuality. Alternative lifestyles like homosexuality and other forms of social interaction have made great strides in getting noticed, getting their issues debated and getting laws passed to preserve their positions. Same-sex or homosexual marriage is one of them. A few years back, we were also all a flutter about transgenderism and the need for millions of new bathrooms in public and private spaces. We were told we needed new pronouns to reflect the new genders that were out there. Recently, I heard that the statue of former Mayor of Philadelphia, Frank Rizzo, was due to be pulled down because Rizzo was too aggressive in policing the city's homosexuals. It was therefore suggested that the statue be replaced by some sort of monument to the LGBTQ community.

That led me to think about the whole issue of statuary in the United States and how it is reflective of our changing social mores. You will recall that many statues in a few southern states have come under fire for their linkage to the Confederacy and slavery. Young people have been the principal protagonists about the existence of these statues and their symbolism. Because of their insistence and marketing of their cause, many have come down. But what is to replace them?

That's where the traditionalists and the activists part ways. We traditionalists believe that history is to be remembered if not respected, that our monuments do not necessarily reflect our current views or politics but are a reminder of our history, be it good or bad. Modern day activists believe that we must be cleansing ourselves of our past and that translates into removing our past. The Rizzo statue in Philadelphia is an example of that. How do we figure out what statues must be replaced and what should we replace them with? As a traditionalist, I would suggest that the statue of Frank Rizzo should be replaced with something historical that we can all agree on. One example might be a statue of a traditional pioneer woman who would symbolize true grit, perseverance and the American spirit.

If we don't want to glorify motherhood then what about recognizing our principal form of sexual congress, heterosexuality? I'm not suggesting that we show a graphic representation of people engaged in the sex act, but why not depict a man and a woman holding hands or in a loving embrace? Or better yet, why not show a nuclear family with a child or two? Whether you like it or not heterosexuality is the norm so why not celebrate IT? Promoting the majority view does not equate with repression or ignorance of other views. That's my point.

I realize that any time we engage ourselves in a discussion of what is traditional, we will alienate some people. The reason quite simply is that many people object to traditional views and attitudes. You can see this play out in the rioting and protesting that is now going on in major cities across the United States. Granted, most of these protesters are there out of a strong feeling of disgust for the way authorities can abuse the public trust and result in the deaths of innocent people. White or Black. There is no question that the murder of George Floyd was a heinous and brutal act by one policeman in one city in America, but it does not reflect institutional racism. We tend to be highly reactive to injustice, especially after we have been pent up in our own houses for over three months, living with the prospect of dying from a contagious disease.

It is a shame that our weapon of social change has become the protest and a rejection of traditional views many of which are contained in our Constitution. It is also a shame that many see the Constitution as a collection of 'suggestions' that can be ignored at will or applied as they see fit.

To defend the Constitution should never be considered a 'traditionalist thing,' something antiquated or from the past that is no longer relevant today. Should we traditionalists who believe in the consistent and fair application of the law and a demand for social order be thought of as a vanishing breed? Should we simply recede into the background and let social activism replace us? America has never been a nation of capitulation. We have repeatedly stood up to tyranny whether that tyranny is the tyranny of an idea or the tyranny of real physical danger. Why should today be any different?

If traditional values are to survive, we traditionalists are going to need to learn new methods, especially if we are to compete with the powerful radical Left. In the late 60s, reactionary and activist groups like the Black Power movement and the Weather Underground, to name just two, saw their popularity increase among social activists. And while both groups receded into the background over the years, they spawned new organizations like Black Lives Matter and Antifa that share their ambitions. Unfortunately, one of those beliefs was and is the overthrow of the United States, itself. Back then, the Black Power movement under Huey Newton and the Weather Underground with Bill Ayers and others at the helm were hell-bent on destruction of our institutions through fear, intimidation and terror. Fortunately, the power structure did not stand idly by and passively watch all this happen. They saw to it that law and order was established and encouraged change through the ballot box. Social activists saw that while their efforts did work to increase their numbers, they did not increase them sufficiently to overthrow the status quo. Such is democracy.

Fast-forward to today. Black Lives Matter and Antifa are on similar paths. Both use the Constitution and the First Amendment to give them cover while they pervert it through violence. Their marketing pitch is to question the relevance of our economic and social status quo and to portray traditional America as somehow anathema to liberty, democracy and equality. Their 'gods' are technology and idealism. Their movement has gained strength because they have pointed out certain real deficiencies in our society such as economic disparity and social/racial injustice. As with any successful marketing message there is some truth in their complaints, but it is on the margins and is not systemic or structural. There are no laws that buttress their argument that the cards are stacked against America's minorities, not any more.

What do traditionalists offer these disaffected groups? Conservatives point to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights as the argument for law and order, that without them no opportunity can exist. We make one big mistake, however, and that is we say, "look at our recent history if you want an example of what can go wrong with protests and violence." Young people don't know history, nor are they interested in it. I realize that is a generalization, but I firmly believe that it is rooted in fact. For youth, history is about dead people and the past. For many it has no relevance to the present or the future. Unfortunately, those people are the very ones that need to read it and understand it and see how it can apply to their actions and the consequences of their actions.

How then do we go about encouraging those in our society that feel that history is irrelevant to their actions to read it and to apply it? That will require some pretty fancy footwork, and I am not sure that we traditionalists are able to learn those new steps. One thing is for certain; we need to return to law and order and normalcy on our streets and THEN begin a discussion of what it means to be an American in the new millennium. This may not be exciting for most people, but it is necessary if we are to reverse the curve and the path we are currently on. If we don't, everything that we hold dear in America will be blown away by the winds of this new social unrest.

For the last few months, and I would submit the last few years, we have all been suffering under one form of malaise or another. Some of them we've brought on ourselves. One is we have allowed our children and grandchildren to become indoctrinated in our universities by a group of ideological zealots from the Left that have stoked the fires of youthful passions and discontent. By not challenging our children on what they've learned, we have abrogated our responsibilities as stewards of this great social experiment we call America.

We have told ourselves that in time our children will wake up and realize that they should be grateful for their birthright and responsible enough to carry the torch of freedom to the next generation. We have failed, miserably. We underestimated the power of the new social media and its influence on them from the likes of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and all the other parental substitutes that our children have embraced. We also underestimated the power of unemployment, and we misread the tea leaves of social change. Now, we are paying the price for our unwillingness to act. As President Obama's preacher said, "the chickens have come home to roost" and I would add, "they aren't willing to lay eggs, but are intent on throwing them."

If we look at the great strides that have been made in improving our racial contract with our minorities, we can see that the civil rights legislation of the 60s and the integration that followed in both our universities and our workplaces has yielded fruit. Admittedly, we have not eliminated poverty in the black community, nor have we encouraged more absentee fathers to rejoin their families in those communities, but we have improved the unemployment situation for hundreds of thousands of formerly unemployed black citizens. The last three years of the Trump Administration saw to that as the statistics on black unemployment became the lowest in history. It is a shame, that that fact and the traditional methods of improving unemployment and creating jobs have been ignored or at least pushed to the background because of the Coronavirus.

This has led many young people to believe that those real statistics were somehow manufactured or could not be sustained. We are bound to see a revival of those jobs in the near future, but changing people's attitudes may take a little longer.

It has always been the case that companies or people who saw themselves as *number two* had an incentive that was stronger than those people or companies that were number one. The desire to climb the ladder must be accompanied, however, by defensible methods that are not rooted in disadvantaging everyone else while attempting to make the climb. The playing field must be level, and that means that those with power and are *number one* must recognize that they cannot occupy that position forever, nor should they unless they can justify they achieved it by merit. THAT'S the American way.

Traditionalists have not told their story well enough. We've been derelict in our duty to describe the American dream and to prove how it was possible. We have allowed the disparity in our society to become that ONLY truth instead of one of the consequences of the struggle. There will always be a gap between rich and poor, well-educated and poorly educated, people with luck and those without. No one is guaranteed success in life, not even in America. But, everyone should be guaranteed a shot at. That message alone has been buried beneath the constant claims of racism, White supremacy, White elitism, etc. No one is arguing that there are gaps in our society, but traditionalists need to take a page from the marketing book of the social activists to tell the whole truth instead of just half of it. We must make our case strongly, forcefully and with passion AND FACTS. We must use the same tools of social media and other forms of public discourse that the Progressives and would-be anarchists are using.

It will do no good for traditionalists to try to take the moral high ground and look down on those scrambling up the hill. In five months we will have what many are calling an existential election. Traditionalists, though they may not agree with the President's methods or his speech, understand that he must be given another four years to re-make our economy. A swing to the Left would give the social activists who see wealth as the enemy the actual high ground from which to remake America in their own image, and that would not be a pretty picture for millions of Americans who are already unemployed.

If we allow that to happen, we will not have an American dream. We will have an American nightmare. That's why I am pleading for Conservatives and traditionalists to recognize the real threat that is upon us.

If we do not engage with our ideological opponents now and counter their phony cries of a United States of Victims...they will overwhelm us. America will not survive another Obama-like presidency.

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