

Symbols of compliance

There have always been secret societies just as there have been many overt ones, but they all have one thing in common...they use symbols to recognize one another. The most famous may be the Christian religion that used the crucifix to signal membership and the fish to symbolize peace. Another is the Freemasons that boast a variety of symbols like the square and compasses and even one that made it to the back of our dollar bill (the 'Eye of Providence'). A secret handshake also connects the group with its brothers.

Man has used symbols for 40,000 years to communicate complex ideas, and symbology is still used today in everything from branding to replacing cumbersome text. Look at the dashboard of your car or on just about any electronic device or in your software. Icons stand in for words everywhere you look and it's not just because many people can't read, either. We humans are in a hurry. Why read when you can just 'image' something and get the same meaning? They're everywhere...in art...in music...in literature. Look at the movie the Davinci Code to see how important symbols were to the plot.

Then there are overt symbolic gestures like the salute or the doffed fedora of days gone by or hand and finger gestures. Each communicates a very specific message (some good and some pretty nasty). They vary by culture and by period. Matter of fact, some are even timeless while others have evolved over the years. Think about the ones you use on a daily basis, like the friendly gestures of the wave, the 'thumb's up' and the 'V' for victory. Body language, when combined with symbols/gestures forms a very complex set of messages and can be easily misinterpreted by people of a different culture from those doing the gesturing.

Take American Sign Language (or ASL). It was originated in Hartford, Connecticut in 1817, and it was a spin-off of French Sign Language from 1755, developed by a French priest by the name of Charles Michel de l'Eppe. Unfortunately, there is no one universal sign language in the world, and even countries that speak the same spoken language have different sign languages (the Brits' are different from ours, for example). Even regions of the same country that have different dialects have different signing symbols.

All this symbolism can be very confusing, to be sure. Most of us signal to each other in many different ways: through our clothing choices, our hairstyles, body adornment, the products we use, etc. When it comes to politics (you knew I was going to go there, didn't you?), there are symbols that say, "I'm one of you." While there are no secret handshakes among Democrats or Republicans that I know of, there are ways we show membership in the group. One of them is the flag lapel pin. Republicans proudly wear theirs to show their patriotism. Then there is the bumper sticker, although it is becoming dangerous to display them in some cities and states. How about the 'MAGA' hat (Make America Great Again)? That one is the equivalent of painting a target on your back in some places.

The latest is the ubiquitous surgical face masks we have now taken to wearing. For those on the Left, the face mask has become the symbol of obedience to governors' executive orders and is the latest 'virtual-signal' (a term used to describe "the action or practice of publicly expressing opinions or sentiments intended to demonstrate one's good character or the moral correctness of one's position on a particular issue"). To many on the Right, wearing a face mask is the equivalent of the 'Obama bow' - acknowledging deference as Obama did with the Saudi King in 2009 - to Governors' mandates. It is not a sign of virtue but rather one of capitulation to what many believe are autocratic rulers exceeding their authority.

What makes matters worse is the conflicting science revolving around the wearing of face masks. Some medical studies say it prevents the penetration of Covid-19 particles to the wearer and to others, while other studies say the jury's still out and that masks have little or no real preventative value.

The symbolism is clear, however. If you wear a mask, the Left views you as kind, considerate, sensitive and compliant. If you don't, you're seen as reckless, inconsiderate and a menace to your fellow man, not to mention flagrantly flouting governors' executive orders. This symbol or the lack of wearing it can also get you killed as was proven in Albuquerque just this week when an altercation about mask-wearing ended in the death of a man at a Southwest Albuquerque auto shop.

Virtue-signaling sounds like something straight out of George Orwell's books, and while it may have been on Orwell's mind, it was first mentioned in 2015 in the Spectator magazine in an article by James Bartholomew.

There's a lot of duplicity and disingenuousness in virtue-signaling. The Democrats have been practicing it for decades with their constant claims of being for the 'Black man' when in fact a look back through the last 70 years or so has revealed the opposite. It still amazes me that when the facts concerning the Democratic Party's lack of support - and sometimes downright opposition - for 'leveling the playing field' for America's Blacks is revealed, that more Black voters don't wake up and realize that they've been voting for the wrong party for generations.

In a new book called, "The Iron Triangle," its author, Vince Everett Ellison (a Black Christian Conservative man), makes that very case. Ellison characterizes the Black community's relationship with the Democratic Party as one that resembles the 'Stockholm Syndrome.' It is a compelling read and a book that will probably fill up Mr. Ellison's email box with a ton of hate mail from Democrats who are profiting from the virtue-signaling of that party. Whether you agree with Ellison's hypothesis or not, it is a solid commentary on the state of racism and victimhood in America.

As for me, I'm going to obey the law and wear my mask when it's required of me. Do I agree with the way it was forced on me by an overreaching Governor? Absolutely not. Will I continue to oppose it until the science is settled? Yes, and so should you if for no other reason than it infringes on your personal right to choose. There are other ways to protect ourselves that make more sense and that do not include coercion and we should be talking about them instead of automatically performing the Obama bow to our governor.

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