

The hatred election of 2020

As I write this, over 75 million Americans have already voted. With four days to go until Tuesday, it is expected that we will crack the ceiling of 2016 by millions more votes and a few percentage points. On its face, that's good news. The greater the participation rate, the more democracy wins, at least in theory. This year, I'm afraid, we need to add a caveat or a question. Do votes cast out of anger count as much as those cast with our country's health and well-being in mind? Obviously, according to the law, they count just as much, but I would consider unbridled and irrational anger or hatred for one candidate over the other a poor reason to vote against one's country's self-interests.

In many states and in many places these days we must get our temperature taken before we can enter a hospital, clinic or even a state-owned building. That's probably a good thing as it is one more prophylactic method of identifying potential Covid-19 victims. If temperature-taking does indeed help weed out the likely from the unlikely Coronavirus-affected persons then why not consider giving every would-be voter a blood pressure exam at America's polling places? THAT might help identify the truly angry-over-the-top voters from those of us who are making our decisions based on facts rather than uncontrollable emotion.

While I know that's not going to happen, I mention it to illustrate that the level of unabashed anger that is motivating millions of people to throw caution and reason to the winds and vote AGAINST a President that has kept his promises these past four years and instead give away their precious vote to a man who's definitely not up to the job is hard to understand. Taking emotion out of politics is like removing love from sex. Sure, it's possible to consummate the act, but love adds another valuable dimension and enhances its importance for all concerned.

It seems that we Americans have elevated anger and all its downsides by justifying its application to everything that smacks of politics and ideologies that don't track with our own. In so doing, we have sold our souls to the devil and emboldened the darker angels of our better nature to lead us around by the nose. We have, in other words, rejected the free will that God gave Man and succumbed to that which we've always feared...becoming a prisoner of our feelings.

No one, least of all me, is trying to remove passion from decision-making. Passion is essential to living a full and enriching life, but when passion gives way to anger and anger begets actions that fly in the face of our country's self-interest, passion without thoughtful reflection becomes a catalyst for destruction. When we do such harm to ourselves, we call it masochistic behavior, but when we do it to everybody around us it becomes a true national tragedy and something akin to a 'hate crime.' There is a reason that we humans have emotions and a reason that we are thinking, deliberative creatures. And for those of us who are religious, we see those reasons as part and parcel of 'God's plan' for us - the free will aspect of life.

We in the U.S. have taken that faith-based belief in the exercise of free will one step further and enshrined it into our Constitution. We have stated and re-stated that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights like the pursuit of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and that those rights must endure and stand firm against any attempt by the unscrupulous who would take them from us...by whatever means.

Why then, with all that protection would we want to punish our fellow man by giving in to our anger and allowing that anger to control us? It just doesn't make sense to me. By the way, I am not making the case that all this anger resides solely with the Left. It doesn't. Many of my friends on the Right absolutely despised Bill Clinton and Barack Obama and voted to keep them out of office, in part due to their anger at the way they were treating Conservatives. So, anger then is non-partisan, but so is narcissism and the blindness that comes from ignoring the 'greater good.' That term 'greater good' is used by many on the Left to mean that anything that benefits the collective also automatically benefits the individual, but that is where the Left and Right part company.

Those of us on the Right believe that when any decision disadvantages or ignores the individual's rights it must be opposed. The Left regards that thinking as uncaring and unsympathetic and attempts, time and time again, to paint us as unpatriotic. There are many issues and situations that have raised the ire and anger of the Left these last four years and that anger has grown exponentially and has now reached the boiling point. We are seeing it play out at the polling stations as millions of 'unsatisfied customers' are casting their ballots out of a sense of desperate anger.

Mary Szromba made that point in an article in the student-run newspaper, the Observer, last December. She said, "If it is between Donald Trump and a ham sandwich, I will vote for a ham sandwich — and so will the rest of America." She heard that remark from her father no fewer than 20 times over that Christmas weekend and reflected on why he would be willing to cannibalize his own party by voting for a sub-standard candidate. She admitted that the Progressives seem to have a death wish by demanding all or nothing and ultimately ending up with nothing, but later in the article she found her *center* and said of the Democrat primary candidates, "Don't get me wrong, you should be fighting for your favorite candidate now, but you shouldn't do so at the total expense of the others."

I think I know how Szromba's father is going to vote and that goes for many of those who voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016. My only hope is that maybe a few million of them will put their anger aside before they do and think about what kind of world they will experience with a 47-year career politician who appeals to your fear, stokes your hatred and who is more than willing to take your vote, especially if it's cast out of anger.

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