

Saving Democracy - Selected Paragraphs

Judging Experience--What Counts?

During this 2016 election campaigning, some candidates have boasted of his or her political “experience,” and gullible voters have bought that claim. But, consider that point closely—do years spent in leadership roles give a candidate an advantage in dealing with future crises? Perhaps, but only if the person demonstrated real success during that period. Would you trust a coach who had thirty years of experience managing a baseball team but had a terrible win-loss record? Would a team even keep such a coach for more than a couple years? Certainly not! What if that coach promised to do this and that to make next year a winning year? Would you swallow that promise? Would you wonder why this and that hadn’t been done somewhere in the last thirty years? How can an “experienced” leader promise reforms when she or he has been in power during the period that needs reforming? Obviously, by promising fixes, such a person is condemning her own record!

Assume further that the coach’s actual record of “experience” includes a lot of obfuscation, deceit, gross payola, and cover-ups. Any rational measurement of a long-term sub-par *and* corrupt performance should conclude, “no more!” But, re-electing dishonest and faulty leaders has become a commonplace in today’s partisan politics. It is time to find a strong and determined leader--and say goodbye to the crooked professional politicians.

What Really Matters?

It is obvious to most people that a society that has offered personal liberty and a chance to participate in four hundred years of unprecedented growth and prosperity, fully deserves to be praised as a very exceptional nation. The Declaration of Independence rings out with the earliest Americans' stirring demand for liberty and all the benefits it has conferred. That inspiring guarantee of liberty is what has always made democracies the preferred choice of responsible men and women.

However, America was built by prior generations— the people of fifty years ago and a hundred years ago, and two hundred years ago. Our current leaders are merely living off the momentum of past Americans and there are signs that, like all democracies in history, we may not be able to retain our greatness much longer. But note that, if we do falter, our failure will not occur because of what is decided over abortion rights, gun control, climate change, legalized drugs,

women's rights, or any of those social issues. None of those issues will make or break America. Instead, the failure will be caused by the almost fanatical ideological arguments expended over those hot button issues; the feverish passion, fanned and inflamed by political demagogues, all of which diverts us from what really matters.

On Fairness and Justice

It is my hope that every reader will become aware of why we must restore "justice" as a fundamental foundation of American culture. Government actions are increasingly being designed to help particular segments of the nation. Now, for many of you, "helping" may sound good, but when parceled out to selected groups, it becomes *preferential politics*, which is, in essence, unfair to everyone not included. For example, the 10 percent ethanol mandate helps corn growers but hurts everyone else; ethnic quotas help one group while creating an injustice for others; and the "carried interest" tax loophole helps Wall Street traders but hurts everyone else. Our leaders are playing with us, setting one group against another, handing out freebies for votes. That's how you train a dog! But there's no justice in it for those of us not being thrown a bone!

We need a return to fairness, where every child will be assured of equal opportunity, and there will truly be *liberty and justice for all*. This will require a persistent War on Corruption and the creation of a level playing field for everyone. America's biggest enemy is not external, like ISIS or China, but right here at home—from the corruption and inexperience of our government officials.

On Why Good Management Should Overcome Partisan Bickering

Successful candidates for office have usually won by convincing voters that they are passionate about their ideas to make things better. The voters have usually been attracted more by the promises and so-called "expertise" of a candidate than by any evidence of honesty or management ability. Unfortunately, the candidates are not concerned with the millions of recipients in the Social Security system that were born before 1901 (apparently the computers are not equipped with a delete button). They are not concerned that the State Department cannot locate the hundreds of thousands of visitors who have overstayed their visa periods. Let's face it—the candidates just want to get elected, and re-elected. Honest intentions are notably missing.

The result is that most officials elected to the executive or legislative branches do not manage or supervise anything. Instead, they spend their time arguing over political topics, renaming post

offices, voting wasteful "pork" to their constituents, campaigning, fund raising for the next election, and living the good life in Washington. And the president is often the worst offender.

What we need is for our elected representatives to spend less time on the non-essential issues, such as the need for transgender bathroom facilities, and instead, simplify the government and the tax code, stop giving money to foreign governments that hate us, stop appointing Wall Street bankers to run the Treasury Department, and bring our troops safely home. Their job should be easy—just set aside the divisive ideologies, restore honesty and sound management to the government, and stop the bickering.

Cultures Are What We Make Them

The first thing to understand about *cultures* is that they don't just emerge suddenly out of thin air—they are formed by generations of people over hundreds, sometimes thousands of years, and can be modified by each new generation. Therefore, when someone says that culture shapes people, they really are saying that the prior generations that created the existing culture are the actual people shaping the generations that followed. To quote Ludwig Von Mises, everything comes from individual human action!

The term "culture" refers to the traditions, customs, technologies, and organizational elements of a society. A culture goes beyond the mere mechanics of a society to influence the attitudes and beliefs of the people. Different cultures have been created by the various groups of people all around the world as they transitioned from hunter gatherers, to agricultural groups, and finally into today's more cosmopolitan and urban dwellers. Because cultures around the world have taken many different paths, the resulting cultures have achieved very different results--and where there are differences, there are differences in quality!

If you ever discuss "multiculturalism," remember that, as a compassionate human, you should respect all people but not necessarily their culture, for there are a number of awful cultures that condone shameful practices!

On Utopias and Governments; Why Character Counts!

Think of this: If everyone in a community just took care of himself or herself and did little or no harm to others, what a fine place that would be to live! There would be little crime, empty jails, and small relief rolls. And imagine what it would be like if all members of a society avoided harming others, and also contributed in some meaningful way by means of their work and positive social behavior. That would be a utopia! But note that such a utopia would be one that

was created by the people. A government can never create a utopia, only the people in a society can do that.

But leaders in government have a choice: They can either pursue policies that encourage the people to honor the civic virtues essential for a decent society or they can display gross dishonesty and avarice by their own behavior and encourage cheating and dependency in the public's behavior. Ours for the most part pursue the cheating and lying path. That is why America is in trouble! It's not the "people;" it's the people in government! That is why we must find ways to measure a person's capability better than we have in the past. We can't keep electing political hacks, with no management experience, and expect them to do anything good!

Abstract Thinking, Utopian Dreams, and Concrete Thinking

Let's start by admitting one thing: It is totally unrealistic to hope for world peace, orderly nations, honest people, and equality for all. Those four optimistic visions of a brighter future have set many minds afire. But such hopes and dreams for radical change can turn to ashes of despair when they fail, which they always will! The fact is that you cannot create a perfect world unless you populate it with perfect people and there lies the problem.

Intellectuals, who adore abstract theories and grand plans, are especially prone to reach for utopian goals. . . The twentieth century displayed in stark reality the results of such fantastical dreams. Pol Pot, and fellow intellectuals, educated in Paris at the best universities, killed 20 percent of their Cambodian countrymen in an effort to create a new perfected society. Pol Pot had been steeped at school in some of the more unfortunate elements of French intellectual thought—Rousseau's hatred for society, his romantic illusions about the simple rural life, and the so-called glory of the French revolution.

Like Pol Pot, the Jacobins, Japanese, Nazis, and Communists, abandoned the moral tenets of virtually every religion to seek an abstraction based on pure reason, a failed reasoning whereby they killed twenty or thirty times the "mere" 1.5 million citizens that Pol Pot killed—and they also still failed to create anything other than death and destruction.