

The Audacity Of Reality

Every day, I am am bombarded by the ever-present drivel that we call "news" in this country. By the time my head hits a wrinkled, unintentionally drool-stained pillow, my mind is awash in opinion, conjecture, and a range of commentary that is inexcusably vast. I've heard from Stewart, Colbert, Limbaugh, O'Reilly, Will, Dowd, Huffington, Morriss, and countless blogs that drive me toward outrage, boycotts, and protests in front of my local Starbucks.

Mostly they talk about Bush, arguing that he is competent/incompetent, Iraq is one of the worst/not-so-bad things to ever happen. Then, they move to the election: Hillary is a lying hag, Obama is a jihadist Muslim AND a racist Christian, and McCain is a warmongering Uncle Fester who may fall down dead any minute.

In their wake, I am left adrift, trying to find my center. I find myself tired of feigned neutrality. I find myself angry at the candidates for having such glaring weaknesses. I find these people have been born, quite unfortunately, into the human race. They came into the world with these weaknesses.

"That's not true.", you may say, "People are good at their core. They are merely a product of their environment, or genetics." Really? Have you ever had to teach a child to lie or disobey you? Do children naturally share their favorite toy?

The candidates know the answers to these questions. Why else would they hire image consultants, pollsters, or conduct focus groups? These are the mind-molders, trained to hide the flaws of the man or woman behind the curtain from the general public. The reason that these people still have jobs is because of human nature. No one wants to appear badly. No one wants to be perceived as weak. No one wants to humble themselves and admit that they are no better than the next person; they just haven't been caught yet.

In an election where all I hear is "Hope this!" and "Hope that!", I wonder what I am supposed to put my hope in. Not to pick on Obama or anything, but his underlying message seems to be that I should place my hope in him. He relies on words and feelings to sway the hearts and minds of people. It is not hard to tell people what they have been longing to hear. Anyone can do that. Is it any wonder that Obama has a lock on the youth vote?

These are people who have lived relatively sheltered lives of yet. Many of them are still in school, living on the largesse of their parents. They have not yet had a mortgage payment, a fight with their spouse, or worked a 40 hour week yet. They like Obama because he's charismatic, a nice guy, and good with rhetoric. People got mad at Bill Clinton for calling Obama's candidacy "a fairy tale", but I can't say that I disagree with him too much.

The Audacity of Hope, indeed. I'd be appreciative if just one of these candidates stood up and had the audacity to get real. The audacity to say this:

"Look, I know you think you're electing someone who you think will be able to solve your problems, but the truth is, I won't be able to. I'm just one person. There are 535 people in the Congress and Senate. At least half of them have to agree with anything I would like to get done. Then at least five people in the Supreme Court have to agree that what I signed agrees with the Constitution.

If I do manage to get something past these people, chances are you will be left out entirely. It may benefit someone who is rich, and may in more rare cases benefit someone who is poor. If you are middle class, we assume you are doing okay. We only mention you in speeches so you don't feel you are being left out.

If we institute Universal Health coverage, you will all complain about it, and want to go back to the previous system, because your taxes will go up. We'd rather just stick with what we know, if it's all the same to you.

We won't be able to stop illegal immigration, so I suggest you make friends with that family down the street. His children work harder than yours do, and there is a good chance that they will be your child's boss in the future. No time like the present to get the leg-up on a promotion.

Social Security and Medicare will not exist for your generation. Get used to it. The money's gone from your paycheck, and you'll never see it again. I know you already know that, but I'm just stating it for the record.

The educational system in this country is in bad shape, and it will not improve until you get your kid off MySpace, and make them do their math homework. It would also help if you instilled a little respect for authority in them, so they wouldn't terrorize their teachers on a daily basis. Take a little responsibility for that, please.

Oh, one more thing: I am am destined to disappoint you. Sorry about that, it's just the way things are. You can't expect me to make thousands of

decisions a day, for an entire nation, over the course of four years, and not have one of them be impossibly bad. I'm good, but I'm not that good.

With that said, I suggest you vote for me, because I will be the least disappointing, and will make the fewest "really awful" decisions.

Good Night, and God protect America from whoever gets elected."

Human beings are flawed. Our leaders are even worse. They are a reflection of us as a society, of the will of the people. Perhaps that is what keeping me up late at night. We can be so self-righteous when it comes to politics. We've lied, used people, and befriended others who turned out to be snakes. We have friends who are crazy, flawed, and intolerant. We've compromised, hurt others in the pursuit of wealth and power, and taken favors when offered them. Yet we crucify politicians who do the same. Somewhere, deep down, we are taking vengeance against them for things we are unable to rid ourselves of. We are desperately seeking something or someone to annihilate the cynicism and evil in us. No politician can do that for us, no matter how much hope we place in them.

That's reality.

About the Author

Kurt Hartman is an unfortunate consumer of all things political and tech related. He has been caught playing Devil's Advocate several times, after which Satan has sought better representation. When he isn't writing, he works as a Web Analyst for a firm that sells [otr tires](#) or [otr tyres](#)(depending on what part of the world you hail from).

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