



Letters & Opinions

Amendment 1 - "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press ... or the right of the people to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

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Letter

Calling In Virtue

By Tom H. Hastings

I am an academic, with publications in peer-reviewed journals and a terminal degree. And today I want to make what many certified smart people would regard as an anti-intellectual argument in one specific area.

I abhor the emotional and social corrosive effects of many aspects of "wokeness" and the calling out culture that it produces.

Yes, some brilliant intellectuals can display their gifts for dissecting even excellent behavior by others and calling it "virtue signaling," a term I despise.

You are a teen-age girl. You help a little girl across a busy crosswalk. The snobby intellectual would sneer and tell his students, "That's an example of virtue signaling. She's just making her socially acceptable bid for approbation based on this act that is actually done in self-interest."

Yup. And I thank you, teen-age girl, for helping. If you only did it for approval, you've got it!

But it takes a serious cynic to view such altruism as selfish.

What I teach my students is that figuring out how to help others can be also considered enlightened self-interest. By "enlightened" I mean that my goal is to figure out how to work with others to achieve mutual gain. And I also mean that, if I lose nothing and someone else is helped or made happy, I regard that as in my enlightened self-interest as well.

One of the smartest young people I ever met is Daniel Hunter, and in one of George Lakey's books (one I use in one of my classes, "How we win: A guide to nonviolent direct action campaigning"), Hunter is interviewed and tells a story about helping a young rural Indiana college student--we'll call him Jimmy-- start to see homosexuality differently than it had been framed and described to him as a boy growing up in a very Christian, conservative part of a red state.

Hunter's style is not to call out negative conduct but to call others in, to help them think more deeply and with more compassion, about others.

Jimmy wrote a letter to the college student newspaper and tried to explain his new acceptance of anyone who was gay. His letter used some outdated terms but anyone reading it with any sort of open mind could see his authenticity.

A few from the "woke" culture on campus took extreme umbrage at the Jimmy's failure to use the most current terms and attacked him on social media, in the paper, and on the campus.

Jimmy went to Daniel, literally in tears, and told him in no uncertain terms that was the last time he was going to try to say anything like that.

Daniel went on to tell Lakey that such calling out behavior is how social change happens--for the worse, back to intolerance, back to silence in the face of identity slurs, back to nonparticipation in events calling for inclusion.

I admit, it's hard to avoid calling out some behavior, but I've learned in my 53 years as a white dad to two African American sons that it's always possible to call people in and to begin the process of helping them pivot toward empathy, toward appreciation for all.

As a young dad, it took me a long time to develop alternatives to angry calling-outbursts. But when I stumbled on them it worked. Every time.

For instance, with some who might use the n-word, I learned to say something like, "You're a better man than that. You don't mean that."

With others, I've used some version of, "Yeah, you have the right to say anything you want. But I want you to understand that when you use that word, it hurts my heart. My sons are good guys and that word stabs me in the heart."

Those approaches work. Literally, one or the other works every time. I am not claiming that the person who used a racial slur is now all cured of racism, nor even that he didn't use it 10 minutes later when he was with other people and I wasn't around.

But I brought out the best in him, even if for a brief moment. And in every case for those past 53 years which-ever person that was never used such language around me again. So, to me, it's a minor example of enlightened self-interest. I was spared the rotten experience of hearing that word. He was treated like someone with power to hurt or not and he chose to stop hurting, almost certainly feeling better about himself for his compassion.

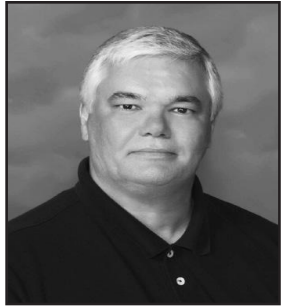
So, to conclude, I am hereby calling out those who call out others. Did I introduce myself as a perfect intellect, a consistent and brilliant guy? I did not. So please excuse my lapse as I call out those who call out others. No virtue signaling for me!

Dr. Tom H. Hastings is Coördinator of Conflict Resolution BA/BS degree programs and certificates at Portland State University, PeaceVoice Senior Editor, and on occasion an expert witness for the defense of civil resisters in court.

Opinions

The Big Picture Is World Conquest

One example will suffice. From 2016 on, the government, media, and academy uniformly agreed candidate Trump and President Trump colluded with Russia to steal the 2016 election along with any number of other nefarious and dastardly deeds. This week John Durham



Daniel L. Gardner

will begin to untangle a web of lies from the Oval Office down to the roots of corruption throughout the federal bureaucracy. Sadly, too many Americans will continue to believe the lies in which their brains have marinated more than six years.

Political games and corruption surprise no one.

Still many of us remain astonished to see and hear those in authority unabashedly describe the king's new clothing in glowing terms when the king is still wearing his birthday suit.

Less observed, but just as insidious are distractions that divert the masses' attention from the big picture to the mundane frustrations of daily living. The big picture is world conquest. Have you seen that coming? Or, have you been too distracted by unchecked crime, inflation, soaring gas prices, entanglement in foreign wars, escalating murder rates, unrestrained rioting, looting, and destroying private businesses and public property, along with illegal though "mostly peaceful" protests that frighten little children of judges and other public figures? All of these not to mention a frightening shortage of baby formula, a southern border wide open to fentanyl, sex trafficking, and international terrorism?

Don't forget the past two years of Covid-19. What

lasting impact did lockdowns have on our school children as well as businesses and freedoms of speech and worship? Does anyone question mandates "based on science"? Or, will we blindly follow the Judas goat when authorities call a health emergency and demand 100% compliance?

Coalitions have already formed to coordinate a unified worldwide response to the next Covid-19 pandemic. In the next week or so, W.H.O. is assembling a "Pandemic Treaty to Control Global Human Parasites." The treaty will teach nations how to manage problematic behavior of those who will not comply with universal health protocols.

How might global elitists implement such protocols? They will use the same fear they used during the Covid-19 pandemic. Fear tactics include food and commodity shortages, famine, pestilence, and chaos within society. They'll pit identity groups against other groups, spread disinformation about the government prosecuting extremist groups, and broadcast propaganda about an extremist insurgency.

How has our current administration signaled weakness? Have we become dependent on oil from adversaries? Have we opened our borders to drugs and terrorists? Have we raised inflation to historic highs? Have we compromised the supply line of vital baby formula? Are protesters calling for violence against federal justices? Do criminals kill with guns, knives, and cars?

We've laid a shaky foundation with symptoms like these. Has there been one phenomenon recently that has unified the world against a common foe? How will the world unite when this threat returns? Will national leaders accede to worldwide consensus? What if nations disagree? What if the threat cannot be eliminated? What power might rogue nations wield to ascend to power?

The big picture is world conquest.

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Letters To The Editor

Letters, or comments, are welcome on any subject. All letters are subject to be edited for length and contents.

In most cases, in criticisms of private citizens, names will be omitted. If the criticism is directed at political or government figures, the names will be printed, if the criticism is directed at their decisions affecting government.

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