

**(1) There's only one way the Democratic Party can win back the White House and Congress:
Toss a lit match into the gas can of Trump voters' perpetual anger**

March 22, 2017

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<http://frankschaefferblog.com/2017/03/theres-only-one-way-the-democratic-party-can-win-back-the-white-house-and-congress-toss-a-lit-match-into-the-gas-can-of-trump-voters-perpetual-anger/>

Put it this way: How does one talk someone mired in irrational beliefs into accepting fact-based reality? More to the point these days, how does one change a Trump voter's mind and get her or him to reject Trump's multiplying lies and vote for a Democrat next time?

(2) As one of my Facebook friends astutely commented "How do you reason someone out of a position that they themselves did not reason into?"

My answer is—you can't.

But you can pry enough Trump voters out of the Republican Party and incite them to vote for Democrats, and thereby put a Democrat in the White House and dominate both houses of Congress for years to come.

(3) First you have to understand how to do this.

Forget reason. Forget facts. Forget rational argument. Forget policy. Rather, think of distracting a greyhound chasing a rabbit. You won't talk him out of it. There's only one way: distract the mindless creature... with another rabbit.

Because I was an evangelical religious right leader in the 1970s and 1980s and then fled the fact-free netherworld I'd been reared in, when it comes to questions about the subject of changing minds perhaps I know what I'm talking about. I changed my mind about politics and theology. Most of my old evangelical friends and family did not. They also resisted (and resented) my attempts to talk them into joining me in what I regarded as the sunlight.

(4) I have another sort of dark "expertise" besides knowing about changing minds related to my evangelical days: making people angry and using that anger to motivate political action.

For instance my late father (Francis Schaeffer) and I teamed up with C Everett Koop (who became Reagan's surgeon general) to more or less single-handedly launch the radical evangelical antiabortion movement. I became a Bannon-like blustering inciter of the "Take Back America" movement, using evangelical anger against women and feminism to deliver millions of voters into the hands of the GOP. (5) I even wrote an evangelical bestseller, *A Time for Anger*, which Dr. Dobson, of the Focus on the Family radio empire, used as a fund-raising fulfillment, giving away over 150,000 copies of my incendiary screed.

Other than being too pushy, why did I fail to talk evangelical friends and family into "seeing reason" and joining me in my flight from fundamentalist fantasy-land? For instance, how come actual facts about evolution or global warming or how and why some people are gay seemed never to count in arguments? (No, it isn't because they "chose that sinful lifestyle.")

(6) I didn't change minds. I was just branded a traitor.

As the writer of a New York Times profile on me said of my fleeing from the myth-based religious right:

In every line of work, there are family businesses. But no business is more defined by dynasties and nepotism than evangelical preaching. Lyman Beecher, Bob Jones, Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, Robert H. Schuller, Jim Bakker: all had sons who became ministers.

(7) *It is never easy stepping into Dad's shoes, of course. But when the family business is religion, it is especially perilous. That is one of the central laments, anyway, of "Sex, Mom, & God," a new memoir by Frank Schaeffer. To secular Americans, the name Frank Schaeffer means nothing. But to millions of evangelical Christians, the Schaeffer name is royal, and Frank is the reluctant, wayward, traitorous prince. His crime is not financial profligacy, like some pastors' sons, but turning his back on Christian conservatives.*

(8) So... how does one entice a Trump voter to consider better options as the Great White Leader flails and fails?

One might mistakenly try to start by explaining that (as a Facebook friend commented) "there are no talking snakes or magic rib women," that the Earth is very, very old, that "science uses empirical evidence, and then finally explain exactly what the word lie means..." For instance one might point out that on Trump's allegations of wiretapping, none of the people who might have provided him with such secret intelligence have supported him. In fact he's been proven—again—to be a pathological liar.

(9) As I said, one might "try." I should add try and fail. Reason isn't a talking point with the delusional.

The real question is this: Do Democrats want to try to win arguments or actually win elections?

Turns out that with the unhinged you can't do both. With a whole swath of American voters Hillary's sober charts, facts and policy statements never did stack up against Trump's raw emotion. I get it. I left the evangelical fold (as I explained to Terry Gross on NPR's "Fresh Air" a few years ago) because of raw emotion, not reason.

(10) I left when engulfed by a wave of disappointment. I was lured out by my sense that I'd been betrayed.

The more big-time leaders I got to know personally—people like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell—the more I felt we were all just in a giant con game and all my ideals were betrayed. I became disgusted with myself and what I was helping to turn into a vast hate machine designed to rip people off: "Send us \$25.00 and we'll save America from the liberals, gays, feminists..." And so on and so forth.

(11) I did not make a reasonable "choice." Only later did I quit believing in most of the theology too. No one "talked sense" to me. I just couldn't look in the mirror and keep spouting nonsense. My reaction was from the gut. That's all.

Facts? Not so much. Anger? Disappointment? Lashing Out? Conspiracy theories? Yes, we can!

Trumpism can't be cured or reasoned with. But many Trump voters can be goaded through their default-position anger to vote against the Republicans. To them this will soon feel like getting sweet revenge on Trump and "these Republicans" for betrayal. It will be another way of expressing rage as former Trump fans begin to perceive themselves as victims of Trump and the quiescent GOP. And for once that perception of victimhood will be factual.

(12) Facts were never the evangelical white voters' "thing."

Take a “born-again” white evangelical Trump-voter like Jerry Falwell Jr. I was a friend of his dad. I preached from his pulpit. I spoke to his entire student body. I “get” Falwell Jr. He shares my pastor-kid, weird background. Trump voters such as Falwell didn’t reason their way into voting for Trump any more than they reasoned their way into “accepting Jesus” (or these days into believing that guns make them safe).

(13) Nor did Trump voters like Falwell “think through” the entire biblical mythology that their becoming “born-again” demanded they accept as true. No wonder such folks also fall for conspiracy theories. The entire fundamentalist take on the Bible is a conspiracy theory about God, the devil, creationism, morality and how Liberals are generating fake science and fake facts about things “I just know in my heart is true!” that aren’t so.

(14) In other words, they’ve long since turned off their brains as the “fee” for buying into the evangelical version of “salvation.”

White evangelical Trump voters had been floating in a fact-free zone for ages, training, as it were, for accepting Trump as another version of their personal savior. Reason wasn’t the point. Conversion was.

Put it this way: the Reformer John Calvin, who shaped the evangelical Protestant view of God, wrote that reason has nothing to do with salvation: “For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others” (Inst. III, 21, 5).

(15) For Calvin, choice had nothing to do with how and why people “accept Jesus” and get “saved”—let alone reason. That any one of us wicked sinners makes it into heaven is a miracle, according to the theology inherited from Calvin. As Billy Graham used to say, “A miracle is something only God can do. It’s the impossible, made possible by the power of God! In light of this amazing truth, the greatest miracle of all is the miracle of salvation!” Franklin Graham took this to the next level when claiming Trump’s rise was ordained by God: thus a miracle.

(16) So how does the Democratic Party compete with “miracles” like Trump?

A miracle is (according to Wikipedia) an event not explicable by natural or scientific laws. “Such an event may be attributed to a supernatural being (a deity), magic, a miracle worker, a saint or a religious leader.”

This perceived as a miracle Trump did not rationally convince his voters to vote for his charade. He fed their anger, not their reason. His anger-feeding message was that The System is rigged by and for the elites. Already resentful voters heard this in their own ways. Evangelicals heard “rigged against the Bible.” (17) Secular voters heard “rigged against lower class whites like me.” All Trump’s voters arrived at the Trump party angry, and he made sure they left twice as angry and convinced they’d been victimized by Liberals.

But Trump’s supporters were not voting for what they’re getting:

Trump soon reverted from lavish promise-maker mode to his MO as a failing and flailing plutocrat/autocrat with an agenda that steamrolls the working class and poor as it destroys their most essential programs. Moreover, Trump wants to fund the military instead of medical care and education.

And Trump’s military buildup will soon lead him to start wars as frivolous as his cascade of lying Tweets.

(18) Trump is arguing for a military buildup before even producing a strategic vision or laying out priorities to guide the new spending. Instead he has justified it, so far, with two lies: that President Obama slashed the defense budget and that as a result the military is depleted and needs to be “rebuilt.”

In other words, Trump just loves the idea of power, and playing with guns (and nukes) makes him feel like a big leader. And Bannon (who always looks like he’s coming off a 3-day meth binge and the OxyContin just kicked in) is like some overwritten character out of a cartoon when it comes to being a warmonger’s warmonger. This alleged wife abuser who loves war now whispers apocalypse into Trump’s ear.

(19) I fear that Trump will soon be killing the working class’s children serving in our “all volunteer” military (something that I’ve written about extensively). Working-class Trump-country sons and daughters will die out of all proportion to upper-class kids like Trump’s children who tend (to put it mildly!) to not volunteer. The flag-draped coffins from the Bannon/Trump wars will not be returned to Trump Tower-type addresses.

(20) We must take a page from the Trump/Bannon “anger-incitement” playbook.

As his failures multiply, Trump could—and I predict he will—use a military confrontation, such as the one brewing now with North Korea, to look (briefly) like a commander-in-chief and to distract from that day’s self-inflicted fiasco. And another terrorist attack on the Bannon fantasy “white Christian homeland” would give Bannon/Trump a sick rationale (“justification”) for sweeping new executive actions.

(21) And having lied about everything else, if Trump happens to go to war, no one—not even most Trump voters—will buy his Tweets explaining why. Even less will they buy his next round of Tweets “explaining” how the inevitable debacle was someone else’s fault.

As Trump disappoints his voters and kills his voters’ kids, I believe that informed progressive people will be on the cusp of great victories for justice, kindness, mercy and common sense. But these victories will only take place if reasonable people embrace and use the Un-Reason of the Trumped. In other words, overly nice and civilized Americans will have to become a bit more ruthless.

(22) In other words, we need a Democratic Party version of jujitsu rather than more futile reasoned debate.

Here’s where to begin: As Trump enters his third month in office, he’s already established at least one record: he’s the president most open and willing to use the prestige of the White House to enrich himself and his family.

As health care slips away for the working elderly poor, as lower middle-class students are crushed by debt, as vets languish, as the lies mount... hammer home the Trump self-enrichment scheme! Turn his much bragged-about wealth against him!

(23) From late night comedians, SNL, Samantha Bee, to Congress and the pages of the New York Times, opponents of Trump must pound on and repeat this theme: Trump is getting rich as he spreads misery on others. Trump is a fraud! Trump is NOT keeping his promises to his voters. Trump has let his voters down. Trump is betraying the people who put him in power.

Jujitsu uses the philosophy of yielding to an opponent’s force rather than trying to oppose force with force (or Un-Reason with reason).

(24) Manipulating the Trump/GOP attack on reason by using its irrational anger and resentment-based force and direction allows jujitsu ka (to control the balance of your opponent) and hence prevents the opponent from resisting the counterattack.

Thus, as Trump voters cry “Betrayal!” so let Democrats amplify this cry and redirect it!

Thus, as Trump voters claim to be victims, tell them they are victims—of Trump’s ego and greed!

No one likes to be betrayed. That’s why and how Democrats will win.

(25) Democrats may count on Trump. He always runs true to form.

Trump is a betrayer by nature. Trump can’t change. He’s the serial sociopathic betrayer of wives, women everywhere, business partners and now the GOP. He may even have knowingly betrayed us to Russia. And soon Trump is going to betray every working-class mother who will receive a coffin back with her dead son or daughter from Trump’s lie-based and/or incompetent military adventures.

(26) Trump will also betray that waitress who voted for him but now won’t get overtime.

Trump will betray the southern family who loved him for his white-power KKK-loving shtick but now is about to lose their mom to cancer because she can’t get insurance.

Trump will also betray the white evangelical voters’ self-respect as his escalating tsunami of Tweet lies takes on unstoppable chaos-inducing momentum.

(27) When the many coffins come home (and they will); when the jobs in coal don’t come back; when the weight of Trump’s mental instability takes on a life of its own (in ballooning “I was wiretapped” type farce); when the Russia scandal comes home to roost and becomes a criminal case; when medical care for the Trump voters is lost and stories are told about dying children in the same news cycle as stories about how the presidency is enriching Trump’s children... we can’t expect most Trump voters to admit they were wrong. (28) What we can do is urge the Democratic Party redirect Trump voters’ anger against the Republican Party that’s empowered this fraud.

Amplifying resentment at Trump’s betrayal of his own voters is the Democratic Party’s best (perhaps only) winning strategy.

You don’t argue Trump voters into anything (because they do not acknowledge the existence of objective facts) any more than you can convince that rabbit-chasing greyhound to stop. You just need to show them the next shiny object on which to refocus their anger.

(29) Thus every rebuttal of Trump, every comedy skit, every op-ed, every TV commentary—no matter what it’s “about” — has to really be about one thing: Expose Trump as the betrayer of his own followers.

Let it be shouted from the housetops: Trump didn’t “drain the swamp” but led his base into the swamp and then mugged them there!

The Democratic Party must assiduously nurture feelings of disappointment and personal betrayal in the (aptly named) Trumped. Disappointment with and growing anger at Trump is the match that—when willfully, cleverly, and ruthlessly tossed again and again and again into the gas can of perpetual right wing resentment—will incinerate the GOP.

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