

VOTING CRITERIA

For the Fact-based, Informed Voter

Before I voice support for a political position or candidate, or cast my vote I will consider:

- **Self Interest:** What is my cost/benefit? Immediate and long-term? Does this improve or harm my socioeconomic position (middle vs. privileged class benefit)? Is this worthy of sacrificing my personal interest for the public good (public vs. private benefit)?
- **Societal Impact:** Will this improve our society? Is this a fair and beneficial way to address a real need? Is this the ethical or Christian thing to do? Will this meet a need for someone I care about?
- **America:** How will this impact the future of America? Does this move us toward the form of government I want to live under? Is this more important for America than for my immediate self-interest?
- **Ideology:** Is this consistent with my political ideology? Will I be able to confidently convey my support? Is this worthy of donating my time and money?
- **Proponents/Opponents:** What is the real intention of the proponents/opponents? What is their hidden objective/benefit (enrichment, fear, hate)? How does this reflect the character of the proponents?

. . . I need to filter out the empty propaganda slogans, the endless lies of ruthless politicians, the distracting noise created by cunning spin doctors, and the learned opinions of hired pundits.

Rich and poor alike are brainwashed from birth. The rich are taught to disregard the poor, while the poor are taught to disregard their true interests.

—Yuval Noah Harari

THE UNINFORMED OR MISINFORMED VOTER

By a lack of objectivity and with complicity I agree to effectively cancel my right to vote!

Some of the ways I **choose to give away** my vote:

- Someone I trust voted this way.
- My family has always voted this way.
- I support only those who protect the cause (single issue) I believe in.
- I embrace political propaganda.

I accept (and often enjoy) the manipulation of the rich and powerful through their carefully-crafted ***Persuasion Strategies***, designed to stop me from voting my true political interest:

The Fear Strategy (I believe what the talking heads and negative ads say - conspiracy theories):

- a. If they are elected our country will be ruined (the world as we know it will end).
- b. We will fall into sin, poverty, and depravity (on the eve of destruction).
- c. Must stand against evil (or the bad guys will win).
- d. Our opponents are the enemies of America (demons in sheep clothing)

The Corruption Strategy (When they are elected our government will be destroyed - more conspiracy theories):

- a. The sanctity of our institutions will be violated (corrupted by demons).
- b. Their motive is personal enrichment (selfish gain).
- c. Our rights and freedoms will be lost (at the expense of those who have sacrificed).

The Demagogue Strategy (Government is the enemy):

- a. The best government is no government (government is the root of all evil).
- b. They will unleash the power of government (Washington will control our lives).
- c. Your hard-earned status in society will be given to the less deserving (justice will be destroyed).

The Ridicule Strategy (At best the opposition is laughable):

- a. As always, they (the enemy) are incompetent, bumbling idiots.
- b. Would you put fools in charge of your government?
- c. Their latest blooper (always taken out-of-context) demonstrates again their stupidity.

The Attack Strategy (take the offense early on and sling the mud):

- a. Assassinate your opponents character, smear their name.
- b. Push negative labeling, resort to name calling.
- c. Sow division within your opponents ranks.
- d. Threaten with a legal suit.

The Diversion Strategy (avoid the heat through deflection):

- a. Shift the focus to another topic, even if you have to invent a new crisis.
- b. Deny that you did anything wrong.
- c. Blame others.
- d. Project your weakness and/or failure onto your opponent.
- e. Scapegoat someone else, even if it is your own man.

The Confusion Strategy (Lie whenever it is to your advantage)

- a. Attack and obfuscate the truth.
- b. Invent alternative facts and realities (repeat them often – they'll stick)
- c. Advance false narratives – followers love to believe delusions.
- d. Cry foul and pretend to be a “victim.”
- e. Take credit where not due.
- f. Fail at or break something, then take credit for fixing it.

*“The first principle is that you must not fool yourself – and you are the easiest person to fool.” -
Richard Feynman*

We appear to be living in an era in which many are speaking without thinking, encouraging emotional reactions rather than thoughtful responses. Whether it be on the national or international stage, in personal relations or in politics, at home or in the public forum, voices grow ever more strident, and giving and taking offense appear to be chosen rather than inadvertent.

Have we who have taken upon us the name of Christ slipped unknowingly into patterns of slander, evil speaking, and bitter stereotyping? Have personal or partisan or business or religious differences been translated into a kind of demonizing of those of different views? Do we pause to understand the seemingly different positions of others and seek, where possible, common ground?

It is far too easy sometimes to fall into a spirit of mockery and cynicism in dealing with those of contrary views. - Elder Robert S. Wood (April 2006, LDS General Conference)