YOUR BRAIN ON 24/7 TELEVISION AND TALK RADIO "NEWS"

Just say no to the loud voices behind the microphones and in front of the cameras parading their opinions as facts.
Commit to good citizenship and dig deeper.

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THINKING IT THROUGH

THE FALSE DEBATE

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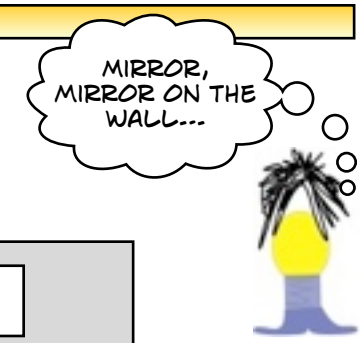
- LANGUAGE SHAPES THE FUTURE
- WHAT'S HIDING IN YOUR HAMPER



I. "LANGUAGE SHAPES THE FUTURE."

—attributed to a wise mentor and proven from personal experience to be true but maybe someone else said it first?

IF YOU HAVE BEEN TRAVELLING THIS THINKING JOURNEY WITH US IN PREVIOUS ISSUES, WE ARE TRYING TO BUILD A CONVINCING CASE THAT:

- socialism is an emotionally charged word and
- sometimes it is used to ignite fear and
- sometimes it is used to encourage hope, and
- in either case it its often used by people who don't share a common definition of the concept or have any sense of its history.

*REMEMBER WHEN THEY SAID...

I DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN A SOCIALIST COUNTRY, I WANT TO LIVE IN A DEMOCRACY.

MARCO RUBIO, U.S. SENATOR

I THINK THE CHOICE WE FACE IN THIS COUNTRY TODAY IS A CHOICE BETWEEN FREEDOM AND SOCIALISM.

MIKE PENCE, U.S. VICE PRESIDENT

IF YOU READ WHAT DEBS SAID ABOUT THE GOALS OF SOCIALISM, IT'S NO DIFFERENT FROM WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING — THAT ALL SOCIALISM IS ABOUT IS DEMOCRACY.

BERNIE SANDERS, U.S. SENATOR

* YES, THESE ARE DIRECT QUOTES.

The more we muddle up our conversation with mushy labels the more likely we are to remember only the mush and spout it back as if it means something.
Talk is not cheap. It changes the way we think about things. How we think about things changes the actions we take which changes the future we build.

SO WE SAY... JUST PLAIN IGNORANCE?

Sen. Rubio, let's assume you know the difference between economic systems and forms of government. Then why would you make a statement that misleads citizens who didn't pay as much attention in class as you did? Perhaps, a democracy could indeed have a centrally planned economy, as in socialism, if everyone had a say in agreeing on the "central plan." And, in a perfect world where everyone cooperated and no one cared about comparison shopping or owning their own property, they might all live happily ever after ...or not.

COME ON GUYS. MODEL SOME INFORMED AND INFORMATIVE CONVERSATION. THAT'S THE ETHICS AND DUTY OF LEADERS IN AN EFFECTIVE DEMOCRACY.

FEAR FACTOR!

Vice President Pence, your words surely infer that a vote for your political opponents is a vote for classic Marxist socialism. Indeed, a centrally planned economy is certainly susceptible to the rise of an authoritarian dictatorship. Do you worry that our democracy and its system of checks and balances is so broken that election of an opposing party candidate could result in the fall of our nation to a dictator? If we are teetering at the edge of such a collapse, then surely you might also worry such a fragile government is also susceptible to crony capitalism,* where an unregulated and unrestrained free market is easily corrupted leading us from democracy to oligarchy?

PROMISES, PROMISES

So, Senator Sanders, democracy is governance by all the people and socialism is about a centrally planned economy. So, when you say "all socialism is about is democracy" then are you talking about an economy governed by all the people? How would that work, exactly? On a daily basis, who would make decisions? Social cooperatives? Is there still room for private ownership? Can a guy make a profit by, say, writing a book, without checking with anyone else? That doesn't sound like classic Marxist socialism. So are you thinking more about the equity and justice for all "social" goal implied in democracy? Define your terms, sir, or you are part of the communication problem, not the solution.

...NO EXCUSES!

* **Crony Capitalism**: an economy that is nominally free-market, but allows for preferential regulation and other favorable government intervention based on personal relationships. In such a system, the false appearance of "pure" capitalism is publicly maintained to preserve the exclusive influence of well-connected individuals.
Read more: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/crony-capitalism.html

II.

BURNING QUESTION

CONFIRMATION BIAS

WHY DO WE GIVE CREDENCE AND AUDIENCE TO THE POLS AND PUNDITS WHO WANT TO KEEP MAKING MEANINGLESS LABELS AN ISSUE WHEN THERE ARE SO MANY REALLY IMPORTANT THINGS TO FIGURE OUT?

SHOCKINGLY SHORT ANSWER....

THEY ARE TELLING US WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR.

YES, SUCH IS THE CASE OF CONFIRMATION BIAS. WE LATCH ON TO THAT WHICH CONFIRMS WHAT WE ALREADY BELIEVE AND DISCOUNT THAT WHICH DOES NOT. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS NO CURE...NO VACCINE FOR THIS BRAIN VIRUS. AND IN ALL MY STUDIES AS A PROFESSOR AND DOCTOR, I HAVE NEVER MET ANYONE WHO DIDN'T SUFFER FROM THIS SADLY DEBILITATING HUMAN CONDITION TO SOME EXTENT.

I COULD MAKE THE ARGUMENT THAT SCIENTISTS ARE SOMEWHAT LESS SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE DISEASE. AFTER ALL, THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS REQUIRES ONE TO CHANGE ONE'S HYPOTHESIS IN LIGHT OF NEW DATA.

BUT AT THE MOMENT, I AM BEFUDDLED BY THE FACT THAT THIS GUY APPEARS ON STAGE IN ONE PAGE AND GETS A SPEAKING BUBBLE WHEN I HAVE BEEN HERE FROM THE START AND AM CONFINED TO THOUGHT BUBBLES...

HMMMM..HE IS WEARING A LIGHT BULB ON HIS SWEATSHIRT SO I CAN LIVE WITH IT.

...BY THE WAY

Kiss it goodbye. "Keeping It Simple, Stupid" may work for playing tic tac toe, but for practicing good citizenship in today's world? Well, not so much. Thinking it can be applied to unraveling the complexity of America in the global world of today is … well, embarrassing.

"The more you explain it, the less I understand it." —Mark Twain

ABOUT THAT ELEPHANT IN YOUR LIVING ROOM...

So what you already believe to be true about Rubio, Sanders, and Pence and capitalism and socialism will color your reaction to the statements they make. It has colored every reaction to what you have read in these pages. It colors which media outlets you use to get your news. The person telling the truth is the guy who says what you already agree with, right? So you think you are immune? Do you religiously listen to both Fox News and MSNBC so that you can hear two interpretations of current events and then do your own research to find out which outlet did a better job of sticking to indisputable facts rather than reporting opinions as news? Sorry, but confirmation bias has no prejudice. We are all susceptible victims and the symptoms are always apparent to everyone but ourselves.

AGAIN, IN THE WORDS OF HENRI LOUIS GATES, "HOW DOES CONVERSATION BEGIN WHEN WE DISAGREE ABOUT REALITY? "

CONFIRMATION BIAS TRAPS US IN OUR PRIVATE WORLD OF OPINIONS, NOT ALWAYS FORMED FROM AN OBJECTIVE STUDY OF GENUINE EVIDENCE. HOW DO WE ESCAPE?

- ACKNOWLEDGE WE EACH OWN IT.
- TRY TO KEEP IT ON A SHORT LEASH BY QUESTIONING OUR OWN REASONING AT EVERY FORK IN THE THINKING ROAD AND....

...AND CHECK OUT THE NEXT ISSUE FOR HINTS ON SPOTTING THE TRICKSTERS AND LIARS SPOUTING MIS- AND DIS- INFORMATION!

NEXT ISSUE:

THE END IS IN SIGHT.

- FAKE NEWS, FALSE JOURNALISM OR PROPAGANDA: AKA LIES AND LEADING SHEEP