



Thoughtful criticism of powerful people is responsible citizenship

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People who can't bring themselves to honestly critique the politicians they support are a danger to our democratic form of government, our society in general and ultimately to themselves.

No politician is worthy of unconditional support; their positions and perspectives – words and deeds – should always be subject to intense scrutiny. And the higher the office they hold, the more everything they say and do should be put under the microscope.

It doesn't matter if we are talking about conservatives, liberals, the right, the left, pedestrians or skydivers. The moment you give any politician a "pass" on their ignorance, their arrogance or their blatant disregard for truth or the rule of law because of all the other "wonderful" things you think they are doing is the moment you abdicate your innate responsibility as a citizen of this country.

When it comes to social media, here's how this typically plays out:

Intelligent people respond to posts they don't agree with by addressing the content of the post and not making it personal. If I say the president lied, for example, prove to me what he said was factual. Pretty simple. Intelligent people also don't dismiss an allegation out of hand simply because of where it originated. That is not critical thinking.

Ignorant people, on the other hand, often respond to posts they don't like by dismissing them based on their source. And very ignorant people respond to posts by deflecting to irrelevant comparisons to other people or to the past. Again, if I say the president lied, prove the statement he made is true. Don't tell me what someone else said or did.

Finally, stupid people respond to posts by attacking the character of the person who made the post. This is always the last resort of the desperate and the pathetic.

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