

# Virus crisis illuminates value of dissent

Posted: Wednesday, April 15, 2020

“We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty,” Edward R. Murrow famously said back in 1954.

I’m fairly confident Murrow would be pretty disgusted with the growing number of confused people currently occupying leadership positions in the United States.

As we can all see from the White House coronavirus briefings, the president is notorious for ostracizing anyone who dares to suggest anything he does is not “perfect.”

Capt. Brett Crozier, the former commanding officer of the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, was unceremoniously fired for articulating the concerns he had for the safety of his crew.

All over the country, doctors, nurses and other health care providers are being let go for raising alarms about their working conditions.

Closer to home, after several Zoom meetings I participated in over the last few weeks, colleagues let me know privately that they really wanted to speak up, but they knew the meeting was being recorded and “you just never know.”

What the hell is going on here?

Throughout history, those in positions of authority have used crises to justify restricting the free expression of nonconforming viewpoints – especially if those perspectives go against their particular interpretation of events or preferred course of action.

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic is certainly no exception.

It is not being insubordinate to point out the glaring deficiencies and/or gross incompetence exhibited by our primary decision-makers – regardless of whether we’re talking about the leader of the free world or your immediate supervisor.

More important than the right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” is the right – indeed the moral obligation – to disagree with those in charge when you feel they are wrong.

“If you want to control someone,” Paulo Coelho, the Brazilian novelist astutely observed, “all you have to do is to make them feel afraid.”

No kidding.

**Aaron W. Hughey**  
**Bowling Green**

[www.bgdailynews.com](http://www.bgdailynews.com)