



The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth

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In this era of misinformation, disinformation, and out-and-out lies, it's hard to know what to believe anymore. It's easy to get disillusioned, discouraged, and depressed. Some have given up altogether.

But take heart, all is not lost. The truth is still out there – and you can figure out what it is if you are willing to dust off those critical thinking skills you set to auto pilot a few years ago.

To jump start this process, let me offer a few doses of reality that have been obscured in the Orwellian landscape we seem to be living in these days.

First, let's start with a couple of economic truths.

Tariffs increase what you pay for stuff. There are no real beneficiaries – except for the government - when tariffs are imposed on goods brought into the United States from other countries. When a company has a tariff imposed on their products, they simply pass the cost along to the customer. It's just a way to augment federal revenues at the consumers' expense.

Rich people don't need tax breaks. The idea that the wealthiest among us deserve to keep even more of their money while those in the middle and lower classes should pay more is one of the biggest scams ever perpetuated on the American people. If anyone needs tax relief, it's the folks living paycheck-to-paycheck who are struggling just to survive.

Next, let's consider a couple of truths related to discrimination.

Systematic racism exists. Oppression, bias, prejudice, and injustice are not made-up concepts, indicative of a "victim" mindset as some falsely claim. They are the everyday, lived experience for many Americans. Moreover, any claim that we are living in a "post-racial" society isn't worthy of serious consideration by anyone who has spent more than five minutes in the proverbial real world.

Some people are privileged. Privilege is an unfair advantage due to factors that have nothing to do with innate ability. If you are looked at more favorably – or with less suspicion - because of your race, ethnicity, gender, family, or anything else you didn't choose, you are privileged. And denying you have it is the best indicator that you do. To admit otherwise would diminish the idea that you alone are responsible for your success, which no one is.

Moving on, let's look at a couple of health-and-wellbeing truths.

Everyone deserves access to quality healthcare. Whether or not you get the medical treatment you need should have nothing to do with the size of your bank account or what type of insurance you have. Call it whatever name you think will scare people, but no one in your family should ever be denied the care they need based on your ability to pay. Ever.

The LGBTQIA community are not second-class citizens. Sexual orientation is not a choice and who someone loves is none of your business if you are not involved in the relationship. Similarly, trans individuals deserve access to whatever medical procedures and treatments they and their healthcare providers consider appropriate. So live and let live and stop trying to impose your religious beliefs on your neighbors.

Finally, let's reflect on a couple of political and foreign policy truths.

Nazis were (and are) bad people. Any political party that seeks to emulate the policies and practices of the worst scourge on humanity of the last century should be shunned, ostracized, and universally condemned by everyone. Further, anyone expressing any admiration or support for far-right regimes such as the Alternative for Germany party should be considered unqualified to hold any political office and relegated to the dustbin of history along with the original Nazis.

Russia is the enemy. Putin is engaged in an unprovoked and illegal attempt to annex Ukraine, a sovereign country, via a military campaign designed to inflict as much pain as possible on its citizens. The attack was orchestrated by a murderous dictator obsessed with re-establishing an evil empire. Russia deserves none of the territory it currently holds in Ukraine. None.

So there you go. Remember, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Who knows what else you might discover if you open your mind and look just below the surface. Question everything, especially what comes from the self-appointed gurus among us.



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