

Pulling a Chair Out From Under the Conservative Table

Have you ever had a friend betray you and after a period of time pretend like nothing ever happened and then expect you to move on and be okay with him or her from that point forward?

If the good folks at #NeverTrump are to be believed, this is precisely what they're assuming will happen in November after the election. In reading their daily rantings against the Trump-Pence ticket, they seem assured of a few things:

First, that Trump and Pence will lose. Today is August 22. School hasn't even started for much of the country's kids, Labor Day barbecues are still unlit and already #NeverTrump is swearing on their (lack of) honor that Hillary Clinton is going to be president.

Second, the never-ever Trump people insist the blame for Trump's future loss lies not with them but with the people who back Trump now. And it's not just those who preferred Trump from the beginning of the primary process that earns their ire; no, the fault is with *any* Republican and conservative who supposedly abandoned principle to get behind a man that the naysayers are certain will destroy the Republican Party and conservative movement at the same time.

Lastly, #NeverTrump thinks everything will be hunky dory after the election when conservatives will finally be Trump-free and everyone will then let bygones be bygones and come together to forge a new coalition that will unite behind some unnamed candidate and defeat Hillary Clinton's reelection bid in 2020.

Perhaps most humorously, the #NeverTrumpers insinuate they're going to lead this effort and they "may" let everyone else back in their good graces.

This belief shows an astonishing blindness to reality. As gently as I can put it to you #NeverTrumpers, you folks are full on mental ward if you think you're going to lead any future movement if Trump ends up losing.

As an example of the nuttiness, leading #NeverTrumper Erick Erickson wrote at The Resurgent late last week, "[Trump's] supporters are now fixated on the idea that those of us who warned them of the consequences of their actions are to blame for those consequences. It is akin to being blamed for a death when you warned the person the gun was loaded so they shouldn't point it at their head and pull the trigger ... "

Then, after Erickson blamed the conservative movement for being stuck in a 1980's mentality with Reagan's ideas, he continued, "These are all conversations conservatives were on the verge of having until Trump.

"Now we can, at least, have them without having to give the Trumpeteers seats at the conservative table. They've chosen nationalism and rejected conservatism. They've chosen the strong man, not the strong citizen. Conservatives should remember the American dream is for everyone, not just for those already here. Conservatives should deny seats at the table to those who believe we need a strong man in Washington to solve our problems instead of strong citizens solving their own problems while government keeps them safe."

A *strong man* in Washington, Erick? Seriously? What happens if Trump loses? There will be a strong and corrupt *woman* in the White House trampling on our rights and bankrupting our country all at the same time.

Reading Erickson's work the past couple months, you really have to wonder what happened to him. He's basically picking on anyone who now supports Trump because the nominee embodies ideas like border enforcement and fair trade policies. It's more than just a personal assault; Erickson is against any

kind of change and in the process has become an ardent defender of past candidates like Mitt Romney and John McCain.

Further, Erickson's got a lot of nerve to talk about "seats at the table" when the people he's talking about (conservatives who support Trump) aren't going to want to let him in the front door, let alone sit down with him. #NeverTrumpers are going to be awfully lonely after the election (if Trump loses) because the vast majority of the conservative movement has already recognized the threat Hillary represents and have rallied around Trump accordingly.

And to a large extent, Trump is finally showing signs of giving conservatives the candidate we've wanted all along, a man who fights and still is big enough to concede he isn't perfect.

Byron York of the *Washington Examiner* wrote on Friday, "In general, in a campaign filled with controversial statements, it's fair to say Donald Trump doesn't do apologies and he doesn't do regret. Which is why it was extraordinary that in his speech in Charlotte Thursday night—one of his first under a new campaign management—Trump did that rarest of things: he expressed regret for rhetorical excesses of the past and conceded that they may have caused pain for some people...

"Trump's speech in Charlotte suggested a candidate willing to take a new approach to the formidable problems he faces in this race. Perhaps the old Trump will come roaring back at any moment. But Trump in Charlotte was something entirely new."

If Trump wants to win, I'm thinking the "new" Trump is here to stay. Trump is well liked by those who know him on a personal level; he just needs to bring those qualities to the national stage.

Does a changed Trump mean everyone's going to drop their long-held opinions of him? No. But if he sways three or four people out of every hundred, he's back in the game.

But it doesn't sound like the #NeverTrumpers will budge on the issue no matter what. They've got their own agendas, though I'm not sure what they are anymore. Openly taking a position that could lead to a Crooked Hillary victory isn't likely to get them that seat at the conservative table Erickson was talking about.

And forgiveness will come very dear, indeed.

The problem with Erickson's and other #NeverTrumpers' reasoning that they will be included in the post-election rebuilding effort is that the betrayal involved here isn't something personal like failing to pay on a bet or show up at your weekly Happy Hour. These things are a matter of degree and don't really go towards your friend's character as much as they convey an apathetic attitude towards things that are important to you.

What #NeverTrump has done this year is throw the entire country under the proverbial bus in the name of simple stubbornness and petty personal bickering.

This is one dinner party that doesn't end well for them if they continue on as they have been; someone might just pull the chair out from under them at that future conservative table.