



# FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #242 — OCT. 8, 2012

*Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.*  
<http://www.FriendsOfTheMiddle.org> [FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com](mailto:FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com)

**INDEX: Click here.**

## **Maybe Someone You Know?**

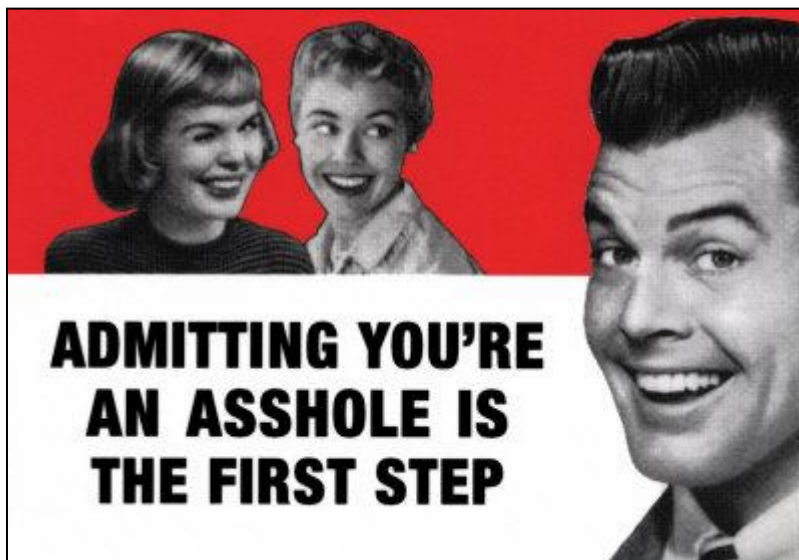
(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Oct. 8, 2012)

For sure, none of you and no Friends of the Middle, but there sure seem to be a lot of them out there, huh?

"The A-Hole in the Mirror" (book review) by Alex Balk, Slate

Oct. 5, 2012,

([http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/books/2012/10/ascent\\_of\\_the\\_a\\_word\\_by\\_geoffrey\\_nunberg\\_and\\_assholes\\_a\\_theory\\_by\\_aaron\\_james\\_reviewed\\_.html?google\\_editors\\_picks=true](http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/books/2012/10/ascent_of_the_a_word_by_geoffrey_nunberg_and_assholes_a_theory_by_aaron_james_reviewed_.html?google_editors_picks=true))



(On being *that* guy.)

A friend of mine who grew up in Los Angeles once declared that transplants to Gotham only truly become New Yorkers when they exchange the exhortation "motherfucker," which, to be sure, has a satisfying sting, for "cocksucker"—a designation more mellifluous, the ugliness behind its origin notwithstanding. And yet, as comforting as both those epithets may be, in the colloquial currency of a city where you are constantly confronted by a teeming mass of narcissists hell-bent on thwarting whatever goal you hope to achieve (even something simple as completing a speedy transaction at an ATM), the most common denomination of irritant—the dollar bill of swearsy, frustrated descriptors for those exasperating sacks of skin swarming our space—is "asshole."

This is not to suggest that the asshole is some sort of miscreant unique to the urban environment. There are assholes everywhere; the fact that cities are so densely packed simply provides us with more frequent opportunities for contact with them. Anyone who has ever driven on a highway, attempted to make a quick purchase in the express aisle at the grocery, or attended a family holiday gathering has encountered an asshole. One need only turn on the television to find oneself subject to the spectacle of an asshole condemning or defending another asshole, while yet a third asshole provides commentary on the assholishness of the previous two—a veritable Möbius strip of assholism. While so many of our natural resources seem to be running short these days, the supply of assholes appears to be a growth industry with unlimited upside.

But who and what exactly is the asshole? Two new books attempt to answer the question. U.C.–Berkeley linguist Geoffrey Nunberg's *Ascent of the A-Word* and U.C. –Irvine philosophy professor Aaron James' *Assholes: A Theory* focus on this commonplace scourge. Befitting their respective disciplines, Nunberg's book is more concerned with the evolution of the appellation while James grapples with the existential reality of the asshole in hopes that in understanding his (and the general consensus is that it's usually a he) essence one might more successfully manage him. Both books acknowledge their sizable debt to Harry G. Frankfurt's 1986 essay *On Bullshit*, popularized by its 2005 publication as a stand-alone volume. (In retrospect, it's a bit surprising that the book's success did not launch an entire genre of treatises based on bad words; pity the poor philosopher who missed the chance to explore the semiotics of "douchebag" before that word lost its cachet circa 2006.)

Here's how our anthropologists of assholes characterize their subjects. James:

A person counts as an *asshole* when, and only when, he systematically allows himself to enjoy special advantages in interpersonal relations out of an entrenched sense of entitlement that immunizes him against the complaints of other people.

Nunberg:

*Asshole* launches its attack from the ground level, in the name of ordinary Joes, people whose moral authority derives not from their rank or breeding but from their authenticity, which is exactly the thing that the asshole lacks. Inauthenticity is implicit whenever we speak of a "sense of entitlement," another phrase that entered the American idiom around the time *asshole* did. ... The connection is intrinsic to the idea of the asshole, who imagines that his role or status gives him privileges that aren't really his to claim. ... The asshole's obtuseness makes him incapable of separating his sense of who he is or what he does or what he has or what he knows, which is what it means to be inauthentic.

As general summary, these definitions are difficult to argue with. One might, in fact, wonder whether these books are strictly necessary, given that we all pretty much know what makes an asshole an asshole. But both works are enjoyable in their own right; those more interested in language will take more away from Nunberg, who is the livelier of the two writers, while seekers of philosophical meaning will find much to ponder with Jones. More importantly, they make us confront a crucial question, which, I believe, we ask ourselves all too infrequently: How much of an asshole am I?

Discard for the moment the idea of political assholism (although I would be remiss if I did not mention Nunberg's flawless observation about how much of it these days is predicated on the joy the political asshole and his adherents take in the assumption that they are infuriating their opposites through their assholishness). Forget those times you have been unpleasant to a customer service representative (no matter how convinced you were that you were completely in the right). Let's dispense with that day when, mid-commute, you buried your face deep in the newspaper and read the same sentence over and over rather than acknowledge the human being in front of you in desperate need. Instead, if you dare, allow yourself to summon up a Big Cringe.

It shouldn't be hard to do. After all, it's a memory that comes rushing unbidden to the forefront of your consciousness at the most inopportune of moments and prevents you from doing anything else but acknowledging the fact that, in whatever horrible situation you are now being forced to recall, you were an asshole. For those of us who are assholes by habit rather than circumstance, there's a vast storeroom of these experiences with which to grapple; the only bit of novelty on these occasions is discovering which random selection your bastard brain has

chosen to bring forth. You may have been a drunk asshole, you may have been an insensitive asshole, you may even have been an accidental asshole, but there is no getting around it: You were an asshole.

I offer you my most sincere sympathies. Though I am an unrepentant asshole, that doesn't mean I am somehow immune to the cringe. Indeed, sometimes I spend my entire day in a near-catatonic state of shame and regret. What I mean by unrepentant is that I *continue* to be an asshole, I don't take proper steps to prevent being an asshole in the future, and sometimes I am actually aware that I am being an asshole *in the exact moment that I am being an asshole*. I have spent more time than I care to remember explaining why "gender essentialism" is a theory absurd in its very conception to women who have spent years studying—and living by—the ideals of feminism. After a friend lost a not-insubstantial amount of money on a risky but tenable proposition, I passed the better part of a week forwarding him various spam come-ons, with the subject line: FW: Investment Opportunity! Naturally, I cc'd a large group of our acquaintances in such a jovial manner that it seemed churlish for the mockee, surely heartsick, to call me out. I once went three hours listening to someone very close to me describe, in choked-up detail, the end of a relationship that had lasted six years, which coincided with her being laid off from her job. When she finally dried her eyes and asked how things were on my end, all I had to say was, "Oh, same old, same old."

In short, my bloated sense of entitlement will overcome my massive collection of insecurities every single time. Yes, I am that kind of asshole. You know someone like me. You are inexplicably friends with someone like me. Perhaps you have, on one or two regrettable occasions, been someone like me.

For we are all the asshole every now and again. It's just a question of degree. For an asshole of my caliber, there is, I am sorry to say, no chance for redemption. (The fact that I am actually claiming superiority in the arena of assholery proves, I think, what an asshole I actually am.) But the beauty of these two light-hearted yet thought-provoking books is that they identify the characteristics that make us, however involuntarily, assholes. Our capacity for love and compassion—the better angels of our nature, as it were—is what we like to think makes us special as a species, but without the other side of that coin, we would, in fact, be only angels. It is being an asshole that rounds out the whole flawed condition of our existence. It also keeps things interesting.

Still, let me offer this: If you know you've been an asshole, you're actually less of an asshole than you think you are. Whatever terrible torments you recall with fingers pressed fiercely to your face, the very act of acknowledgment means there's more good in you than you really comprehend. Unless you're a total dick, in which case no book is ever going to help.

***Ascent of the A-Word: Assholism, the First Sixty Years* by Geoffrey Nunberg. PublicAffairs,**  
[http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1610391756/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=1610391756&linkCode=as2&tag=slatmaga-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1610391756/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=1610391756&linkCode=as2&tag=slatmaga-20).

***Assholes: A Theory* by Aaron James. Doubleday,**  
[http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0385535651/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0385535651&linkCode=as2&tag=slatmaga-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0385535651/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0385535651&linkCode=as2&tag=slatmaga-20).



## FotM NEWSLETTER #242 (Oct. 8, 2012)—HYPERTEXT INDEX

<u>DATE-ID</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>SUBJECT/TITLE</u>
<a href="#">20121008-00</a>		SteveB	<b>Maybe Someone You Know?</b> by Steven W. Baker / SteveB ("The A-Hole in the Mirror")
<a href="#">20121005-01</a>	08:59	Lianne	"President Obama's Take on Last Night's Debate (You're Going to LOVE This)"
<a href="#">20121005-02</a>	14:45	Ben	Photo: Today's Lunch at Apple
<a href="#">20121006-01</a>	15:28	Dick	Fw: Fox News
<a href="#">20121006-02</a>	19:36	Tom	Photo: Cheap iMac 2.0
<a href="#">20121007-01</a>	07:39	SteveB	"Men of Principle' & the Lost Art of Compromise"
<a href="#">20121007-02</a>	23:45	SteveB	"Hugo Chavez Celebrates Re-Election in Venezuela"
<a href="#">20121007-03</a>	23:59	SteveB	Photo: Sucre, Bolivia

<a href="#">20121005-01</a>	08:59	Lianne	"President Obama's Take on Last Night's Debate (You're Going to LOVE This)"
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Well worth reading...

"President Obama's Take on Last Night's Debate (You're Going to LOVE This)" by Eclectablog

Oct. 4, 2012, (<http://www.eclectablog.com/2012/10/president-obamas-take-on-last-nights-debate-youre-going-to-love-this.html>)

Who are you and what did you do with Mitt Romney???

UPDATE: My response to all of you hand-wringers that are convinced President Obama was a big loser at the debate is [HERE](#). Go. Read it.

President Obama got back on the campaign trail today in Denver and it's clear that (a) he's not the least bit deflated by last night's debate and (b) Mitt Romney's massive shift in several positions has not escaped him in the least.

Video: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChSeqAZRXqk&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChSeqAZRXqk&feature=player_embedded).

Before I get to the video and transcript, I wanted to say a couple of things. First, on a conference call with media today, David Axelrod was asked why President Obama didn't push back against Mitt Romney's copious lies. His answer was basically that President Obama was there to talk to the American people and, had he spent his entire time refuting and debunking Romney's lies, misstatements and newfound positions on a number of issues, he never would have had the chance to talk about his own positions.

Related to that, I read an fascinating piece at Daily Kos this afternoon that I commend your attention to. It's called "Romney Won Using a Debate Technique Called the Gish Gallop". Here's a snippet:

As fact checkers busily highlight the myriad number of lies and distortions offered by Mitt-Etch-A-Sketch-Romney during last night's debate, and the spinners spin their polls with impunity, I find it interesting that the debate tactic itself has not yet been discussed nor properly analyzed. In fact, the lies and distortions offered by Romney in last night's debate are the very ESSENCE of his tactic — and is therefore quite pertinent to the discussion. Romney used a debate tactic known as the Gish Gallop.

Here's what Wikipedia says about the Gish Gallop:

[Duane] Gish has been characterized as using a rapid-fire approach during a debate, presenting arguments and changing topics very quickly. Eugenie Scott, executive director of the National Center for Science Education, has dubbed this approach the "Gish Gallop," describing it as "where the creationist is allowed to run on for 45 minutes or an hour, spewing forth torrents of error that the evolutionist hasn't a prayer of refuting in the format of a debate" and criticized Gish for failing to answer objections raised by his opponents.

This is what Mitt Romney did to a tee last night. He spewed so many untruths that there was simply no way President Obama could have refuted even some of them and still get out his message.

Anyway, here's a bit of his speech from Denver today. The transcript is below.

OBAMA: Now, the reason I was in Denver obviously is to see all of you, and it's always pretty, but we also had our first debate last night. And when I got on to the stage, I met this very spirited fellow who claimed to be Mitt Romney. But it couldn't have been Mitt Romney because the real Mitt Romney has been running around the country for the last year promising \$5 trillion in tax cuts that favor the wealthy. The fellow on stage last night said he didn't know anything about that.

The real Mitt Romney said we don't need any more teachers in our classrooms, but -don't boo, vote – but the fellow on stage last night, he loves teachers, can't get enough of them.

The Mitt Romney we all know invested in companies that were called pioneers of outsourcing jobs to other countries, but the guy on stage last night, he said that he doesn't even know that there are such laws that encourage outsourcing. He's never heard of them. Never heard of them. Never heard of tax breaks for companies who ship jobs overseas. He said that if it's true, he must need a new accountant.

Now, we know for sure it was not the real Mitt Romney because he seems to be doing just fine with his current accountant. So you see, the man on stage last night, he does not want to be held accountable for their real Mitt Romney's decisions and what he's been saying for the last year and that's because he knows full well that we don't want what he's been selling for the last year.

So Governor Romney may dance around his positions, but if you want to be president, you owe the American people the truth. So here's the truth – Governor Romney cannot pay for his \$5 trillion tax plan without blowing up the deficit or sticking it to the middle class. That's the math.

We can't afford to go down that road again.

We can't afford another round of budget-busting tax cuts for the wealthy.

We can't afford to gut out investments in education or clean energy or research and technology.

We can't afford to roll back regulations on Wall Street or on big oil companies or insurance companies.

We cannot afford to double down on the same top-down economic policies that got us into this mess.

That is not a plan to create jobs, that is not a plan to grow the economy, that is not change, that is a relapse. We don't want to go back there. We've tried it, it didn't work and we are not going back, we are going forward.

Now, I've got a different view about how we create jobs and prosperity. This country doesn't succeed when we only see the rich getting richer. We succeed when the middle class gets bigger. We grow our economy not from the top down, but from the middle out. We don't believe that anybody's entitled to success in this country, but we do believe in something called opportunity. We believe in a country where hard work pays off and where responsibility is rewarded and everybody's getting a fair shot and everybody's doing their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules. That's the country we believe in. That's what I'm fighting for, that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States, and that's why I want your vote.

AUDIENCE: Four more years!

OBAMA: What I talked about last night was a new economic patriotism, a patriotism that's rooted in the belief that growing our economy begins with a strong, thriving middle class. That means we export more jobs and we outsource – export more products and outsource fewer jobs.

You know, over the last three years we came together to reinvent a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world. We've created more than half a million new manufacturing jobs. And so now you've got a choice. We can keep giving tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that are opening new plants and training new workers and creating jobs right here in the United States of America. That's what we're looking for.

We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports and create a million new manufacturing jobs over the next four years. You can make that happen.

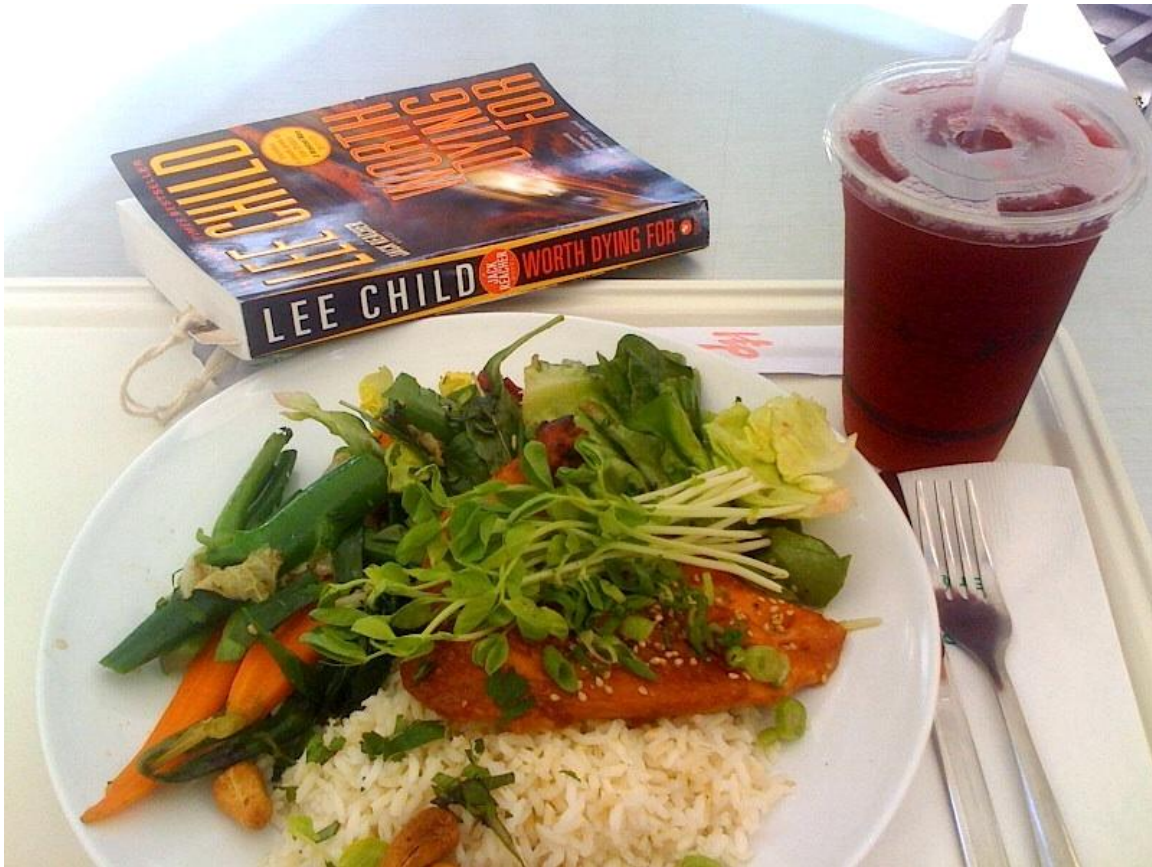
I want to control more of our own energy. You know, after 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will be going twice as far on a gallon of gas. We've doubled the amount of renewable energy we generate from sources like wind and solar, and thousands of Americans have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. The United States of America today is less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last two decades. So now you've got a choice between a plant that reverses this progress or one that builds on it.

You know, last night my opponent says he refuses to close the loophole that gives big oil companies \$4 billion in taxpayer subsidies every year. Now, we've got a better plan where we keep investing in wind and solar and clean coal and the good jobs that come with them, where farmers and scientists harness new biofuels to power our cars and our trucks, where construction workers are retrofitting homes and factories so they waste less energy, and we can develop a hundred-year supply of natural gas that creates hundreds of thousands of jobs and, by the way, we can cut our oil imports in half by 2020. That will be good for our economy, that will be good for our environment, that will be good for Colorado, that will be good for America, that's what we're fighting for, that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Friday's Fine Lunch... I Chickened Out

With this yummy 'Airline' sweet soy roasted chicken breast with Asian-style salad and white rice. Tasty, well-balanced, and lovely on the plate, accessorized with hibiscus lemonade.

Busy, so no lurid descriptions today:



Sweet Soy Roasted Airline Chicken

This getting very ugly

[Source of original email unknown. –SteveB]

Don't know what's true here, but interesting and a little scary

Remember when we were told to watch Fox News on a Sunday night that was going to air something about Obama and we watched but never saw anything? Well, read below and click on the video to see why it got pulled before it could air.

**[Is this what happens on the Right??? They are "TOLD" what to watch??? –SteveB]**

Now we know why Fox News never broadcast it as they had originally planned to. This piece was pulled.

I encourage you to please send this to everyone on your email list ASAP.

Remember all the notices we kept getting to watch Fox News on Sunday at 9PM? What Happened?

This is the clip that got pulled due to pressure from the Administration.

Obama Puts Heat on Fox News to Prevent Sean Hannity from airing this piece.

This is a video that Sean Hannity of FOX News has been trying to show that we are told has consistently been blocked by the Obama Administration for several weeks. It was a matter of time until the internet picked it up.

Watch it now before it gets pulled from the internet!

Video: [http://www.youtube.com/watch\\_popup?v=tCAffMSWSzY#t=28](http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=tCAffMSWSzY#t=28).

[20121006-02](#) 19:36 Tom Photo: Cheap iMac 2.0



[20121007-01](#) 07:39 SteveB "Men of Principle' & the Lost Art of Compromise"

"Men of Principle' and the Lost Art of Compromise" by David M. Abshire and Christopher O. Howard, Real Clear Politics

Oct. 6, 2012,

[http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2012/10/06/men\\_of\\_principle\\_and\\_the\\_lost\\_art\\_of\\_compromise\\_115646.html?google\\_editors\\_picks=true](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2012/10/06/men_of_principle_and_the_lost_art_of_compromise_115646.html?google_editors_picks=true)

"I won't compromise on my principles!" -- it's the battle cry of the modern congressional candidate. It also reduces campaigns to fights over which principles will not be compromised and produces a Congress where there is agreement on just two things:



1. "Even though voters don't like Congress, they like me."
2. "That's because I don't compromise on my principles."

Many incumbent and newly minted members will explain their stance on matters of principle by wrapping themselves in the mantle of the Constitution. They will say, "The Founders were men of principle" and "Men of principle do not compromise!" Whether the issue is taxes, abortion rights, the role of government, or the sanctity of entitlement programs, Congress is full of people who seem to believe that "never compromise" is the right approach to American governance.

The phrase "never compromise" has produced an unprecedented level of party discipline on both sides of the aisle, always in the name of principle, often in the name of the Founding Fathers. That's ironic, since the Founders saw parties as pernicious and explicitly rejected parliamentary democracy. In an effort to keep the business of national government from being outsourced to parochial party caucuses, they opted for representation of people and places over parties and philosophies. And they compromised.

The Constitutional Convention was a 3½-month-long exercise in compromise. The Constitution itself is one big compromise comprising a myriad of smaller ones. In the end, the Founders signed it because George Washington and Benjamin Franklin convinced them that compromise was the best outcome possible -- a win for everyone and a win for the nation.

The Founders were warriors for their cause, but whenever possible, civility was their martial art of choice -- respect, collaboration, and compromise over a saber, musket, and cannon. That's why the Founders would find the claim that "politics is about winning, not about compromise" to be a false choice. Politics is about winning, but compromise is how you win.

The art of compromise is in identifying points of value differentiation and arbitrating them. Rejecting compromise is not about winning, it is about making sure the other side loses. Properly executed, compromise produces victory for everyone and no losers. The Founders understood that losers foment conflict and instability. That's why they created a system that mandates government by compromise. The House of Representatives must be able to compromise with the Senate; the Congress must be able to compromise with the executive branch; even the "United States" must be able to compromise with the "several States." Without compromise, the system does not work.

But what about principle? What about commitments to the voters not to raise taxes or to protect entitlements no matter what? Those are matters of policy and politics and it is dangerous to conflate them with principle. The one true principle of American government -- the principle every member of Congress swears an oath NOT to compromise on -- is the Constitution itself:

Article VI (paragraph 3): "The Senators and Representatives before mentioned...shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution."

What about the claim that refusing to compromise is a Constitutional obligation implied by the enumerated powers of Article I, Section 8? That is a logical fallacy. Excusing intransigence by claiming to defend one specific provision undermines the Constitution as a whole. Members of Congress cannot be "cafeteria constitutionalists." The Constitution is a complex weave of compromises; pull out one thread and it all unravels.

**Supporting the Constitution means supporting the system of government it establishes, otherwise the Constitution has no meaning. Supporting the system of government means keeping it functioning, otherwise it serves no purpose. Keeping it functioning means compromising. If that means breaking some other pledge to voters, so be it. Having the character to make such choices, and the courage to explain them to the voters, is what it really means to be a leader of principle.**

(David M. Abshire and Christopher O. Howard are president and senior adviser, respectively, of the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress.)

The worst news of 2012, so far...

"Hugo Chavez Celebrates Re-Election in Venezuela" by the BBC

Oct. 8, 2012, (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-19867445>)

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has hailed a "perfect victory", after defeating Henrique Capriles to secure a fourth term in office.

Mr. Chavez won 54% of the vote, the electoral council announced, with turnout at about 81%.

Brandishing a replica of the sword of independence hero Simon Bolivar, he pledged Venezuela would continue its "march towards democratic socialism".

But he also vowed to engage opponents and to be a "better president".

Noisy celebrations among Chavez supporters erupted across the capital, Caracas, following the announcement of the result.

Mr. Chavez addressed them from the balcony of the presidential palace:

I promise you I'll be a better president. Truthfully, this has been the perfect battle, a democratic battle. Venezuela will continue its march toward the democratic socialism of the 21st century.

But Mr. Chavez also accepted that there had been a significant opposition vote, reducing his victory margin from 27 points in 2006 to just 10 points over Mr. Capriles.

Almost all of the votes have now been counted, with Mr. Chavez securing 54.66% to Mr. Capriles' 44.73%.

Mr. Chavez said: "I extend from here my recognition of all who voted against us, recognition of their democratic weight."

He praised the opposition for recognising the election result, and said he was "stretching out my hands and heart on our behalf because we are brothers in Bolivar's homeland".

He also invited to dialogue all those he said were "sowing hatred and social venom".

Mr. Chavez recognised his new government would need "to respond with greater efficacy and efficiency to the needs of our people", adding: "I promise you I'll be a better president."

Jubilant Chavez supporters held impromptu street parties in central Caracas, blaring horns and waving flags.

"I'm celebrating with a big heart - Chavez is the hope of the people and of Latin America," said Chavez supporter Mary Reina.

Construction worker Edgar Gonzalez said: "I can't describe the relief and happiness I feel right now.

"The revolution will continue, thanks to God and the people of this great country."

At the Capriles' campaign headquarters, some opposition supporters were in tears at the news.

Mr. Capriles congratulated Mr. Chavez but told opposition supporters not to feel defeated.

"I want to congratulate the candidate, the president of the republic," he said at his campaign headquarters.

He added: "We have planted many seeds across Venezuela and I know that these seeds are going to produce many trees. I will continue working to build one country."

Mr. Capriles said he hoped Mr. Chavez would recognise that almost half the country disagreed with his policies.

Mr. Capriles said: "There's a country that is divided and to be a good president means to work for all Venezuelans, to work for the solution of all Venezuelans' problems."

Mr. Chavez, 58, was diagnosed with cancer last year but says he is now fully recovered.

He has been in power since 1999 and has nationalised key sectors of the economy.

Venezuela is a major oil producer and high oil prices have allowed his government to fund healthcare, education programmes and social housing.

In his campaign, Mr. Capriles, who headed a coalition of 30 opposition parties, said the president's policies had led to bureaucracy, inefficiency and shortages.

Analysts say Mr. Chavez's victory will be welcomed by several countries in the region - including Cuba and Nicaragua - that benefit from his Petrocaribe scheme which provides Venezuelan oil at preferential rates.

He also has strong ties to Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, backing Argentina's sovereignty dispute with Britain over the Falkland Islands.

After the election result was announced, President Fernandez tweeted: "Your victory is our victory! And the victory of South America and the Caribbean!"

President Chavez's new six-year term will begin on 10 January.

[http://famouswonders.com/page/33/?attachment\\_id=thcuimiwr](http://famouswonders.com/page/33/?attachment_id=thcuimiwr)



—Friends of the Middle,  
Steven W. Baker (SteveB), Editor/Moderator

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Welcome to all our new members who may be here for the first time. We want to hear from YOU! To submit your comment, you can use the form on our website or blog, or reply to this email with your two cents worth. Be sure to sign with your desired user name.

Your email address will always be kept strictly confidential.

Feel free to forward this Newsletter to anyone you know on the Right or the Left, though your motives might be different in each case. Regardless, PASS IT ON! Help keep your friends and acquaintances informed and thinking.

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