

## HOW TO TRUMP THE MEDIA: AVOID CONSERVATIVES' BIGGEST MISTAKE

A good friend of mine wrote me recently. He complained about smug Leftist neighbors who are “making decisions to ‘feel good’ with virtually no regard for true factual input or testing.”

I get this a lot.

If you want to understand Donald Trump, you need understand why this complaint is myopic. Once you do understand, you'll never see politics the same way again. You'll also begin to grasp that Leftism does work, and that you've just failed to understand how.

Which is why you lose so often.

Want a clue?

“Feel good” about what?

Not about being right, which is best described as “useful, to a point.” Aristotle noticed\* over 2,000 years ago that many people aren't persuadable by logical arguments. So what's the “feeling good” all about?

### **The Right's favorite mistake**

Try this on for size: *People often take public positions in an attempt to increase their social status.*

If you've been in a corporate setting, or settings with certain friends, I don't need to offer further examples of this idea. You've seen it happen, and you also know that you need to be “reading the room” at all times before you speak and act. Failure costs status. [People notice this dynamic](#), and act accordingly.

I didn't say it was an ideal state of affairs. But a truly rational person must notice reality. My friend and his wife are picking up on a “we're higher status than you” signal, and it's part of the reason they're so upset.

Macro examples also abound:

Do you really think it's a coincidence that Leftism and its "Diversity Pokemon Points" amount to a full caste system?

Do you have any doubt about [the Left's hatred](#) for those who will not stay in their assigned status? Have you noticed their quickness to turn on their own allies? Fail to follow the latest fad, and your status is demoted.

Perhaps you've noticed that endlessly callous [virtue signaling](#) is the identifying badge of our modern [try-hard Striver Class](#).

Maybe that's because American public education is now a 20-year [Milgram Experiment](#). *Where the meta-message inside political correctness is to override your own judgment, in favor of deliberately-shifting judgments from people with higher status.*

Before you dismiss all this as trivial, out-of-control leftist status signaling was the behavioral [engine behind China's Cultural Revolution](#), which killed tens of millions.

These aren't accidents. They're clues.

Leftism isn't a policy machine or an economic machine. Its economic results would tell you that much in a hurry. But the machine keeps running. Which means it must work for *something*. The correct question is: *in what way* does it work?

### **Analysis:**

*Leftism is a status machine. A very, very successful status machine. Conservatives have lost status battle after status battle, often because they fought it as a policy battle. It rarely is.*

That's conservatism's most consistent and most damaging mistake.

### **From theory to practice: Trumping the media**

President Trump's systematic thrashing of the leftist media is the example that illustrates the theory. See his literal thrashing in the YouTube above.

Conservatives complained about the media for a long time. Aristotle's dialectic approach, against people uninterested in truth. Net effect? Very low. Sad!

So let's apply what we've learned.

Why do the media have power? *Because they have social status* with ordinary people. Are we still hearing about Watergate — decades later? The Pentagon Papers? How many movies seem to exist just to show journalists as heroes?

Or let's take a different tack: What's the attraction of such a low-paying profession? Status given by the profession, and status from rubbing shoulders with high-status people. Status by acting as a vector for status signals, which is what every women's magazine is.

*Ditto publications like WIRED, which is just Cosmo for geeks.*

The media offers people clues about what things are high status within the areas they cover. People notice, and act accordingly. Yet most conservatives still don't understand Trump's response:

*If I lower the media's status, I will wreck their power.*

So The Donald says that the media has "some of the most dishonest people" he has ever seen. Not an arm's length complaint. *A direct and personal status attack, rooted in truth.*

Trump also acts in ways that cause journalists to fulfill his [pre-suasion](#) labeling. He makes "outrageous" statements, which many people outside the Beltway Bubble agree with. Those statements receive over-the-top media attacks, which make his enemies look ridiculous.

Then events swiftly show that Trump had a point. Trump rubs it in, using the media's own "Fake News" term against them and pouncing on every sloppy and dishonest mistake. As a final topper, Trump makes the dishonest media a focus during every massive rally. Which strengthens his out-grouping effect among participants and viewers.

He uses ridicule and *lèse majesté*, not bended knee and appeals — note that subordinating word — to logical argument.

The result?

American belief in the credibility of their news media is now [at about 32 percent](#). That's the lowest ever polled, and an 8 percent drop from the lowest point of the 2008-2015 period. The media has lost audience, and a *lot* of power.

When Vogue tried to damage Melania by ripping her wardrobe, activists promptly made memes from [a photo of the weird-looking critic](#). Like this comparison of Vogue critic Lynn Yeager and Melania:



(Note the photo of her is not a photoshop – [Google the images of Lynn Yaeger](#), that’s how Vogue’s famous fashion critic really looks.)

The attack instantly lost its power.

Facebook has tried to fight these trend lines by flagging items as “fake news.” Recently, the social media giant decided to stop. Too many [people sought out flagged articles](#).

Or, put another way: In many circles, the mainstream media’s status has become negative.

What an amazing amount of damage to a hostile institution.

Rational people notice and acknowledge real-world results. Even [the Left has noticed](#).

So, why hadn’t anyone ever done this before? In fairness, Newt Gingrich had some success in the 2012 primaries, and Ted Cruz has also tried. But they lacked the full array of tools. Worse, they didn’t understand *how* to make the media their enemy.

Once you understand conservatives’ biggest and most consistent mistake, it all becomes clear.

Now, how about a 12-step program to finally stop making the same mistake? That will be a coming TTP attraction.

\*Cf: [Aristotle, Rhetoric, Book I Part 1](#): "Rhetoric [as opposed to logical dialectic argument - JK] is useful (1) because things that are true and things that are just have a natural tendency to prevail over their opposites, so that if the decisions of judges are not what they ought to be, the defeat

must be due to the speakers themselves, and they must be blamed accordingly. Moreover, (2) before some audiences not even the possession of the exactest knowledge will make it easy for what we say to produce conviction. For argument based on knowledge implies instruction, and there are people whom one cannot instruct."

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