

“But They Didn’t Win”: Politics and Integrity

Ross C. Anderson

“WHY WOULD YOU EVER WANT TO GET INVOLVED in politics? Politicians are nothing but self-serving sleazeballs who will do anything to win. Nothing’s ever going to change that!”

That was the sort of wisdom I received from many friends and acquaintances about two years ago, when I was deciding if I should seek the Democratic nomination for U.S. Representative in Utah’s Second Congressional District in 1996.

CYNICISM VS. ACTIVISM

These were people who had my best interests at heart. They knew I had never before entered the political arena and wanted to disabuse me of my “naive” view that politics is an honorable calling. I was cautioned that integrity in politics occurs too rarely to justify becoming involved.

Although I was heartened by their concern for *me*, I was disheartened by their cynicism about electoral politics—and by their cynicism about their own politics. After all, such cynicism (and fatalism) often leads to apathy: “It won’t make any difference; *why* should I care?” often evolves into “I really *don’t* give a damn.”

On a personal level, politics is one’s own approach to public affairs. It is an application of our values—ethical, spiritual, and humanitarian—to the issues of how we should treat each other and what role our communities and governments should play. Unfortunately, the view of many, if not most, toward public affairs is basically, “Let the self-serving keep ahold of the reins, because that’s what happens anyway—no matter how we would like it to be different and no matter what we might do to change things.”

I have never been able to see it that way—as much as I might try when I get discouraged. Instead, I believe that each of us is an important

moral actor, with the responsibility—an unavoidable duty—to make things better.

There is no way out. Just as the person witnessing a rape should do whatever possible to stop it, and just as a person with access to food should feed a starving child, so too do each of us bear a moral imperative to help prevent wrongdoing and promote good. Our apathy (“I don’t *care* what happens to the homeless”), our ignorance (“We didn’t *know* our country was sponsoring death squads in Central America”), our failure or refusal to take action in the face of wrong-doing (“I *am* upset that the factory’s pollution is causing cancer, but I *can’t* break away to *do* anything about it”) make us participants in the wrong-doing. We meet our moral responsibility only by saying “No” to wrongdoing and taking action to defeat it.

Although I had found ways to serve my community, I wanted to do more. I hoped to get in a position where I could more effectively work to end the corrupt influence of money in our political system, to help tap the potential of children who are otherwise destined to fail in our public schools, to fight for the elimination of the waste in paying billions of dollars in interest on our nation’s debt, and to work to protect our environment and open lands against the forces of short-term greed and exploitation.

That’s why I chose to run for Congress.

POLITICS-AS-USUAL

What comes to mind when we think about electoral politics and politicians? All too often we picture men and women who will abandon principle in the pursuit of victory, listening not to their consciences but to what pollsters tell them they must say and do to get elected. We recall politicians mud-slinging and lying about their opponents. We assume that hotly-contested elections must entail deception and dirty tricks. And we know the media distorts and simplifies to a point where the public frequently doesn’t know whom or what to believe. I saw all of that, and more, during my race for Congress.

The Pollster’s Profile

When I explored with others the prospect of running for Congress, I was surprised at the resistance by several political insiders who, I had thought, shared many of the views I held. Several Democrats tried to convince me not to run for office, saying I was “too liberal.” When I asked what they meant, I was told, “You know, your involvement with the American Civil Liberties Union, your opposition to U.S. policy in Nic-

aragua in the 1980s, and your opposition to the death penalty."

I was astounded. "You mean that someone who has fought for years, on his own time, for the protection of civil liberties and human rights is unfit to run for office as a Democrat because he is 'too liberal'? And opposition to the death penalty, particularly when it is applied in such a discriminatory fashion against the poor and uneducated, disqualifies someone from running for office because he is 'too liberal'?"

Unmoved, these Democrats replied that a Brigham Young University professor, following the routing of Democrats in the 1994 election, had told them that the only Democrat who could win the Second Congressional District would be a "white, male, conservative Mormon." Hearing that made me more determined than ever. Democratic "leaders" were making race, gender, "conservatism," and religion the criteria for their candidate!

Groveling to Win

During the primary election, I was repeatedly told by leaders of the Democratic party that I would be defeated if I expressed certain controversial views, such as my opposition to the death penalty, my support for equal rights for people regardless of sexual orientation, and my support of a woman's right to choose whether to have an abortion in the early stages of pregnancy. The message was that I should avoid answering questions about those issues or that I should say something other than what I really believed.

After a televised debate, my opponent in the primary election opined that my opposition to the latest federal gay-bashing legislation, draped with the high-minded-sounding title "Defense of Marriage Act," would, by itself, guarantee my defeat in the general election. Later I asked if he didn't think that caving in to attacks on our gay brothers and lesbian sisters wasn't like politicians in the old South who profited politically from their bigotry against African Americans. "Don't you admire those who stood up for the civil rights of African Americans, even when it was an unpopular thing to do?" I asked.

"But *they* didn't win elections," he responded.

With that comment I was newly energized to make certain my opponent would lose. Although he wore his religion prominently on his sleeve during the campaign, I was convinced his positions on issues would shift according to the political winds, just as he had changed his position on abortion after having been one of the most rigid anti-choicers in the Utah State Legislature. For me, he represented everything I had learned to suspect in so many of those who covet elected political

office.

My experience with political opportunism was not to end with my victory in the Democratic primary election. My Republican opponent in the general election, Merrill Cook, made my opponent in the primary look like an amateur when it came to such flip-flopping. There can be little doubt that his pollsters and handlers led him by the hand, defining for him what issues he would address and what his positions would be.

He promised in July that he would not make an issue of same-sex marriage (see *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 July 1996), yet by October that issue formed the heart of his campaign against me. Two years earlier he had said that, as an independent, he “wouldn’t go back to the Republicans for \$10 million” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 19 June 1996, quoting a remark made in 1994; see also *Deseret News*, 8 Jan. 1994). By 1996, when he realized he could not be elected without running on the ticket of one of the two major political parties, he rejoined the Republicans and announced that he was “delighted to be the nominee of the Republican party” (KRCL Radio interview, 21 Aug. 1996). In 1992 he called Utah governor Michael Leavitt “a sanctimonious phony,” who was “an insider and ‘good ol’ boy’ handpicked by [former governor Norman] Bangerter and the GOP machine” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 Oct. 1992; A.P. news release, 15 Oct. 1992). Yet in 1996 he identified himself as a friend of Governor Leavitt, thereby riding the wave of the governor’s considerable popularity.

When he ran for Utah governor in 1992, he advocated “creation of a state health-insurance fund as an alternative to private insurers” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 13 Aug. 1992). However, in a debate before the Utah Association of Health Insurance Underwriters on 10 September 1996, he advocated just the opposite: “I think if we lose fee for service in this country ... the opportunity to buy insurance from private companies, the opportunity to sit down with an agent and talk about what coverage can best be tailored to our own needs and those of our families, that’s what’s so wonderful about the American system ...” He similarly flip-flipped his positions on gun control,¹ school vouchers,² the future of the U.S.

1. Compare *Salt Lake Tribune*, 22 Feb. 1994 (supported a five-day waiting period to buy a gun); *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 Oct. 1994 (would have voted for the Brady Bill); and *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 Oct. 1996 (would not support the repeal of, or any changes to, the Brady Bill or the federal ban on assault weapons); with KTKK Radio debate, 12 July 1996 (“I’m against the provisions of the Brady Bill that require waiting periods”) and *American Gun Review* 1996 interview (“I would have voted for the repeal of the assault weapons ban”).

2. Compare *Salt Lake Tribune*, 31 May 1992 (opposes school vouchers, saying they “would cause low-income families to subsidize wealthy families’ use of private schools”), with option chosen by Merrill Cook on Project Vote Smart Questionnaire, 1996 (advocating vouchers for public, private, and religious schools).

Department of Education,³ the Republican Contract with America,⁴ and even on abortion, jumping from pro- to anti-choice.⁵ These changes certainly made our debates interesting, for I never knew just *which* opponent I would be facing from day to day.

Among my opponent's supporters, with or without his knowledge, dirty tricks also became the norm.⁶ For instance, within a few weeks of the election, after one poll showed us to be in a dead heat, flyers on pink paper were plastered around downtown Salt Lake City, at bus stops, on telephone poles, on newspaper stands, and in the lobbies of office buildings. The color of the flyers was, of course, significant, just as the pink color of Richard Nixon's flyers during his 1950 race against Helen Gahagan Douglas was significant. However, whereas Nixon had intended to imply that Ms. Douglas was a "pinko," the color of the flyers against me was intended to imply something altogether different. The flyers read:

3. Compare literature distributed by the Cook for Congress Campaign during the general election in 1996 ("[s]upports eliminating the federal Department of Education"); *Deseret News*, 29 Apr. 1996 ("would dismantle the federal department[] of education"); and option chosen by Merrill Cook on Project Vote Smart Questionnaire, 1996 ("Eliminate the Department of Education"), with League of Women Voters/American Association of Retired Persons debate, 30 Sept. 1996 ("I have not called for the elimination of the Department [of Education]").

4. He changed his stance with his change in party affiliation. In 1994, when he was running as an independent, he was reported to have said, "[I]t's crazy to believe the Republican 'Contract With America'" (*Deseret News*, 4 Nov. 1994), and that "the GOP contract will result in soaring deficits in years to come" (*Deseret News*, 22 Oct. 1994). However, he bragged in 1996 that "I was contract before the contract was cool" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 June 1996).

5. In 1992 he opposed the prohibition of abortion, labeling Governor Leavitt as an "extremist" against abortion rights (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 Sept. 1992). At that time he unequivocally supported the basic right to elective abortion (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 13 Sept. 1992), and, again, in 1994 he stated: "I've supported the Casey law [affirming the right to abortion under *Roe v. Wade*] year after year" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 5 Nov. 1994). Yet, in 1996, he maintained that he's "always been anti-abortion" (*Deseret News*, 14 June 1996), and that he favored an anti-abortion amendment to the Constitution (*ibid.*). Even his opponent in the Republican primary election observed that "Cook has been flexible on abortion rights, sometimes playing to one side, sometimes to the other" (*Deseret News*, 14 June 1996).

6. Unfortunately my campaign was not completely innocent of dirty tricks. Although I constantly emphasized to everyone on my campaign that dirty tricks would not be tolerated, one of my campaign workers stuffed a straw-poll ballot box at the Salt Lake County Democratic Convention. I was mortified. I had been campaigning on a theme of "No More Politics-as-Usual," yet one of my campaign workers decided instead to follow the Chicago political maxim, "Vote Early, and Vote Often." The dilemma I faced at the time was what to do with the campaign worker. My first impulse was to fire him. However, upon reflection I realized that, outside of politics, I would normally give a second chance to someone who expressed remorse and promised not to engage in wrong-doing again. I chose not to fire my campaign worker, for which I took a beating from my opponent and the press. To this day I believe I made the right decision.

UTAH GAY & LESBIANS UNITE
WE HAVE A VOICE
ROSS ANDERSON
FOR CONGRESS
PRO ABORTION!
PRO ACLU!
PRO GAY CLUBS IN SCHOOLS!
PRO MORE GUN CONTROL
ANTI DEATH PENALTY!
UTAH GAY AND LESBIAN FOR ANDERSON COMMITTEE

Of course, there was no such thing as a "Utah Gay and Lesbian for Anderson Committee." The flyer, like so much else I saw during the campaign, was a fraud, obviously intended to exploit people's prejudices.

On election day a fax went out from an unknown telephone number, with large photographs of Jan Graham (Utah's Democratic Attorney General) and Merrill Cook, along with their campaign logos. Next to Graham's photograph, in quotation marks, was a fictitious endorsement of Cook for Congress. At the bottom was a listing of the equally-fictitious "sponsor" of the fax: "Democrats for Responsible Leadership."

At times I wondered if there was nothing my opponent and his supporters wouldn't do. Then something else would come along that would be even more outrageous. All just to win an election.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS:
TO SIMPLIFY AND DISTORT?

Labels such as "liberal" and "conservative" are superficial and misleading. I believed that, in order to get beyond being labelled a "liberal," all I had to do was communicate who I am, what motivates me, and how I would help make this a better nation if elected. With a free and fair press, reporting responsibly on the vital issues, I would have been right. However, I was dead wrong. As I soon discovered, the media was far more interested in sensational, divisive issues—particularly those having no place in the U.S. Congress, like same-sex marriage.

Throughout the campaign I consistently spoke out on the need for preschool opportunities for economically-disadvantaged children. Nary a word on that appeared in the media. I spoke often of the need to address important public health issues, including environmental and dietary influences on the rapidly-increasing incidence of breast cancer in the U.S. Again, silence in the media. I spoke many times of the effects on the poor and the middle class of our country's huge interest payments on the federal debt, and how that debt came about. The media ignored these

and other issues, central to my campaign, to focus instead on how my position on same-sex marriage was going to affect me politically, particularly since my views differed from the official position of the LDS church.

The betrayal of the media's noble role by its obsession with the sensational is compounded by its unwillingness to scratch the surface of difficult issues. Subtlety—or complexity—of thought seems to be too much for the media. If it's not black or white, yea or nay, liberal or conservative, it's too complex for most reporters or their editors. So what do they do? They force gray into black—or else label one a "waffler" if the answer to a question is not a simple "yes" or "no."

Early in the primary election campaign, I was asked if I would support the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act." That bill (which has since passed Congress) purports to allow each state to disregard same-sex marriages performed in states that may recognize such marriages. I responded that such legislation was disgraceful election-year pandering. That sort of legislation has no place in the U.S. Congress; matters involving marriage have always been uniquely suited for the states and the courts to determine. The primary provisions of the bill likely violate the Full Faith and Credit Clause of the U.S. Constitution. Also, and perhaps most important, the bill was clearly no more than a political maneuver to prey on misunderstanding and bigotry involving sexual orientation.

Later in the campaign I was asked if I supported the concept of same-sex marriages. I replied that I believe that everyone should have the equal protection of the law, regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation. I added that gays and lesbians should be able to live their lives with partners and be afforded the same dignity and legal protections as everyone else enjoys. Finally I urged my listeners to treat all people with love, respect, and understanding, regardless of their sexual orientation.

At that point the media went nuts. So did many Democratic candidates who were afraid they would be painted with the "liberal" brush because they were in the same party as that "pro-gay" Anderson. The headlines blared, "Anderson's Stands Split Utah Demos" and "Stance on Same-sex Marriage Is Likely to Handicap Anderson."

I had made the "mistake" of trying to deal with the complexities of the question. More was at issue than simply favoring or opposing same-sex marriage. I expressed my hope that some day gay and lesbian couples would be able to live in peace and harmony in our communities. But, as with the major national gay and lesbian advocacy organizations, I believed that this issue was not amenable to a political solution—at least at this point in time. I believed that on an issue such as this, where the institution of marriage was involved, there needed to be more discussion and consensus-building. Although I wanted to help lead toward change, I reiterated often that I did not believe it would be appropriate for a con-

gressional representative to force a change like this on his or her constituents, particularly when most of them disagree, when the issue is not ripe for a political solution, and when the matter should not be before the U.S. Congress in the first place.

Those were the considerations I tried to make clear to the media. I even wrote a lengthy press release explaining my views on the issue, noting that, as a member of Congress, I would not vote for same-sex marriage unless my constituents wanted me to. But, instead of recognizing and treating the complexities of the matter, some members of the press treated my position as "waffling" because I had not offered a simple "yes" or "no" answer. Although one newspaper attempted to treat the matter accurately, with the headline, "Anderson Clarifies Stand on Same-Sex Unions" (*Deseret News*, 9 July 1996), another chose to simplify my position, with headlines like "Anderson: I'll Put Aside Support for Gay Marriage" and "Issue Explodes in Anderson's Face" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 July 1996). The former newspaper quoted a representative of the gay and lesbian community as saying, "Ross has been incredibly consistent in his support of everyone's rights under the Constitution" (*Deseret News*, 9 July 1996); the latter quoted a gay man (who, ironically, had been an apologist for President Clinton's promise to sign the Defense of Marriage Act) as accusing me of having "flip-flopped" and "trying to backpedal" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 July 1996). In fact, I was simply guilty of dealing with a number of complex issues that led me to advocate the eventual recognition of same-sex marriage, while also stating that, under present circumstances, I would not vote for federal legislation requiring states to permit such marriages.

The inescapable fact is that, although "moderates" are the generally favored breed of politician, the media insist on forcing candidates into one of two extreme camps. You're either pro-same-sex marriage or against; pro-gun or anti-gun; pro-abortion or anti-abortion; pro-welfare or anti-welfare; liberal or conservative. Don't bother with subtle distinctions.⁷ When the press treats the issues, and candidates' positions, in such a superficial, misleading manner, so naturally do readers.

Such reporting fits hand in glove with those politicians who exploit superficiality and deception for their own political advantage. For instance, apparently before his pollsters and handlers told him what a great "wedge issue" same-sex marriage would be, and how he could exploit what the press had already begun, my opponent in the general election was quoted as promising, "We are not going to go out and campaign on

7. During the campaign I drafted a paper that emphasized the importance of getting past the easy, yet false, categorizations of "liberal" and "conservative" and trying to identify and address the tremendous common ground we all have. None of this was ever reported in, nor apparently ever understood by, the media.

that issue' of same-sex marriage" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 July 1996). However, he later made the issue the mainstay of his campaign. On television his ads blared: "Do you support same-sex marriage? Ross Anderson says, 'Yes.' Merrill Cook says, 'No.' He'll continue to uphold Utah's traditional family values and make sure they're represented in Washington." And in his campaign literature and newspaper advertisements, he insisted that I had "promis[ed] to support same-sex marriage legislation."

Once again, by first getting it wrong through superficial and erroneous reporting, and by letting negative ads set the agenda for "news" accounts, the media, exploited by an ambitious politician, contributed to the politics of deceit.

POLITICS-AS-UNUSUAL

Harry S. Truman, in his plain-spoken way, made the following, frequently-quoted comment about the environment of politicians: "My choice early in life was either to be a piano player in a whorehouse or a politician. And to tell the truth, there's hardly any difference."

However, politicians do not have to abandon their values or principles, and politics does not have to be a den of iniquity. There is perhaps no greater calling than public service, and no higher service than to lead in a manner that is honest, competent, and compassionate. Cynicism often blinds us to the fact that there are significant opportunities to serve our fellow men and women, and numerous examples of courageous, sincere, and ethical political leaders who have done much in the service of others.

However, to serve in a significant, moral way, we need not enter the "political" world. In fact, not much would get done if we all were involved in that world. In terms of our contributions to others, the real questions for each of us are What is our role? and How will we serve?

ACTIVISM AND INTEGRITY

Addressing the Massachusetts State Legislature in 1961, John F. Kennedy spoke of the obligations of public servants:

[W]hen at some future date the high court of history sits in judgment on each of us, recording whether in our brief span of service we fulfilled our responsibilities to the state, our success or failure, in whatever office we hold, will be measured by the answers to four questions: First, were we truly men of courage ... Second, were we truly men of judgment ... Third, were we truly men of integrity ... Finally, were we truly men of dedication?

Those four questions, rephrased to include women, apply to each of

us, regardless of where we serve. Inasmuch as we all have moral responsibilities to fulfill, our success or failure as members of our communities—our families, our neighborhoods, our schools and workplaces, our professions and occupations, our towns or cities, our states, our nation, and our world—will be measured by our courage, our judgment, our integrity, and our dedication. By demonstrating the best of those attributes, we will choose committed activism and service over cynicism and apathy. And we will make a difference, each in our own way.

Although I saw plenty of dishonesty, moral abdication, and self-serving opportunism during my venture into electoral politics, I have also known moral giants, whose lives serve as models to those who know them, or know of them. Some of these people are well known; most are not. I will mention just two of the many people who have provided great inspiration to me and whose lives have reflected tremendous courage, judgment, integrity, and dedication.

Frank E. "Ted" Moss served in the U.S. Senate for eighteen years. The "high court of history" has already judged him as being among the greatest of public servants known to our country. He never played it safe; he saw wrongs and vigorously set about righting them. During the days when our country was first becoming aware of many environmental problems, Senator Moss led the fight against air and water pollution. He was the Senate's foremost conservationist and leading consumer advocate. He was an ardent champion of civil rights, and fought effectively to protect the interests of vulnerable children and senior citizens. His private values were his public values, never backing off from principle for the sake of politics. Senator Moss's valiant service has been summarized as follows:

Moss believed government service to be both a high privilege and a public trust. He realized his lifelong dream to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Utah and the nation, and in so doing proved himself to be among the greatest ever to serve in the U.S. Congress.⁸

Suzanne Weiss has known—and demonstrated—for many years that excellent early education is crucial for productive, satisfying, law-abiding lives. More than twenty-five years ago, she saw the injustice of perpetuating poverty through inferior education for economically-disadvantaged children. As Executive Director of Guadalupe Schools, she has devoted her life since then to providing extraordinary educational opportunities for thousands of children in Salt Lake City who were otherwise destined for failure in our public schools—and who were, therefore, des-

8. Val J. Halamandaris, ed., *Heroes of the U.S. Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Caring Publishing, 1994), 128.

tinued for lifetimes of poverty. Although she considers herself to be "apolitical," nothing could be further from the truth. In the sense that we each have our own politics—our own approach to public affairs—Suzanne is a tremendously courageous, successful "politician." By switching students from a track of educational failure, poverty, and crime to one of literacy, success, and, perhaps most important, social responsibility, she has altered our community for the better in ways that we can never fully comprehend. Her work in the service of individuals, their families, and our community has been the actualization of her personal values—making for a life of extraordinary dedication to serve those most in need.

Our communities, our nation, and our world need Ted Mosses to lead in setting rational, humane public policy and Suzanne Weisses to accomplish good works. We cannot educate our children well if public policy does not support our schools; yet, without great teachers, all the good policy in the world will not make any difference in our children's lives. And all the best education will not make much difference if our children do not have nurturing homes and safe neighborhoods. We all play vital roles in the well-being of our brothers and sisters—in our homes, our communities, our nation, and throughout the world. Once we realize our responsibility to serve, we can assess what needs to be done, what we can do, and how to go about doing it. Then we can do it honestly, well, and with good cheer.

TEACHING OUR CHILDREN WELL

From the nihilism rampant in an age of unfulfilling consumerism and narcissism, we should have figured out by now that the happiness we want for ourselves and our children will not come from lives of self-indulgence. Satisfaction comes from involvement, honesty in our relationships with one another, and service. It's good to speak to our children about these things, but the only way to teach these values is to live them ourselves and be models for those who follow us.

Although study and life experiences have added some subtlety to my philosophical views and ethical judgments, the fundamentals are rooted in my childhood: learning to pray at my mother's knee for the underprivileged; a *Children's Friend* story about standing up for what we know to be right against the taunts of others; and my father's remarkable example as a role model through his consistently generous, gracious, and honest dealings with every person who crossed his path.

After moving from Logan to Salt Lake City at age seven, I began the third grade at Morningside Elementary School. My most vivid memory of that time is going with my mother to a meeting with the principal, Dr. John Fitzgerald, before the school year started. Dr. Fitzgerald radiated a

warmth and sincerity that I had seldom experienced. Without being preachy or talking down to me, he spoke from his heart about the Golden Rule and how it provides wonderful guidance in our dealings with others. That discussion was worth a thousand Sunday school lessons—and certainly has had greater impact on my views (and, I hope, my conduct) than the many hours spent during college and, since, reading about religious, political, and ethical theory.

We each are in large measure the products of our childhood experiences and the influence of adults we admired. If we can keep that in mind whenever we have any contact with children—our own or others’—we will contribute a great deal to them by providing examples of committed adults, involved in our communities, doing our best to serve. By setting that example, we also serve the future.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Integrity in politics is simply a component of integrity in one’s life. Integrity is wholeness, honesty, and dedication to what is right. There can be no integrity without a commitment to honesty in assessing moral choices, to action, and to service. Yet there is no single formula for a life of integrity. There are those who recognize the serious harm we are causing our planet and who act to reverse the damage. There are those who know what a difference education makes in the quality of lives and communities, and who dedicate themselves to being exemplary teachers. There are those who know that genocide and other human rights violations occur around the world, and who take some action—perhaps simply making contributions to relief agencies or supporting political action—to ease the suffering. By their *actions*, they demonstrate integrity—a wholeness of their personal values and the manner in which they live their lives.

In politics, as in every other facet of life, we must ask what it really means to “win.” Do racists, sexists, homophobes, and other bigots who win elections “win”? Do those who lie to win elections “win”? Do those who win elections simply by trying to fit what pollsters say is a “winning profile” “win”?

The true winners are those who earnestly seek the truth about moral choices and then *act* on those choices in the service of others. Those are the women and men who provide real leadership and inspiration—and who make a difference on our small planet during our short lives. And they are the people, whether engaged in electoral politics or their own personal politics, who prove that politics need *never* be “as usual.” They demonstrate through their values and actions that good people can indeed make our world a better place.