



## When Conservatives Follow the Left's Vulgar Lead

Many of us have heard the [story](#) about the North Carolina schoolteacher who shrieked at her students that they could be “arrested” for criticizing Barack Obama. The teacher’s words speak for themselves and have been, as is only right, roundly condemned. But it’s not her behavior that bothers me most.

It’s no secret that schoolteachers often seek to instill their leftist tendencies in students or that conservatives recognize the problem. What conservatives don’t recognize so well are the leftist tendencies in themselves.



What do I mean? Consider the following exchange between said teacher (her name hasn’t been released) and the student she locked horns with:

Teacher: Do you realize that people were arrested for saying things bad about Bush? Do you realize you are not supposed to slander the president?

Student: You would have to say some pretty f\*\*\*\* up c\*\*\* about him to be arrested.... When Bush was President everybody talked s\*\*\* about Bush.

Teacher: Because he was s\*\*\*\*y.

The problem is not just what the teacher said, but *how* she said it. Do you find it at all striking that profanity is accepted as part of dialogue in this classroom, on the part of both teacher and student? Because I haven’t heard any conservatives mention it.

This is perhaps because they’re part of the problem. Recently Ted Nugent gave an interview to *CBS Morning News* and went on a [profanity laced tirade](#). Now, even though I consider his reaction disproportionate to begin with, okay, I can understand giving leftist media types a dressing down. But why participate in the defining of deviancy down in the process?

Some will say that Nugent is a rock star. But not only isn’t this an excuse, the fact is that I’ve seen coarse language, such a “pompous a\*\*” and “c\*\*\*,” creep into high-brow conservative websites as well. Alright, this is where many will roll their eyes and wonder if I’m *Saturday Night Live’s* Church Lady. As an example, a reader left the following message at my website in response to my liberal use of asterisks: “I’d just like to know what the #!\*% you consider foul language. It’s not uncommon for some of us less affluent types to use colorful lingo that those pansy a\*! little lard fontleroy[sic] would eschew.”

But I won’t apologize for being a keeper of the flame. And understand that I grew up in the Bronx; I’ve heard and used (I’m sorry to say) it all. But then I learned something: There’s this thing called virtue. It matters. And a civilization succeeds to the extent to which its people cultivate the quality in themselves.

The Founding Fathers knew this well and [often emphasized](#) the inextricable link between virtue and liberty. George Washington wrote, “Virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government.” James Madison stated, “To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness



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without any virtue in the people, is a chimerical idea.” John Adams echoed this, writing, “The only foundation of a free Constitution, is pure Virtue.”

And cursing like a drunken sailor is not a virtue. Have you ever seen profane language in the Founders’ writings? What do you think they’d say about such loose use of the tongue in the public arena if you could ask them?

So I’ll put my conservative friends on the spot. If you’re any kind of Christian, ask yourself what Jesus would say about a person “defiling” himself with what comes out of his mouth. If you’re a Catholic, you can in addition ask yourself what the Pope would say. If you’re Jewish, you can envision a wise old rabbi’s reaction. And if you’re anyone, you can ponder what our great-grandparents would say. Would you like to have to make the case as to why you should indulge a potty mouth in the public square with any of these people? My point is that when we listen to our better angels, we often know what is and isn’t virtuous.

Here’s something else to ponder: Even today people will generally watch their language around children. Well, whenever we put something on the Internet, some tender eyes will see it. And the excuse that parents have to monitor their kids’ behavior cuts no ice. Am I my brother’s keeper? The answer is supposed to be yes.

Unfortunately, some will now say, “What does it matter? It’s not as if kids don’t know these words, anyway.” This is the same argument used to justify children’s exposure to sexual material, and it completely misses the point.

Let’s put it in perspective: Would it be a good idea to continually expose kids to snuff films? No? Why not? I mean, they already know – or soon will find out – that serial killers who torture their victims exist. The answer is that it’s one thing if children have an *awareness* of something.

It’s quite another if that thing is *normalized*.

Of course kids know about curse words; that’s no big insight. But their knowing is far different than adults showing. For adults acting as if vulgarity is normal leads, obviously, to normalization. Remember that it is what is assumed that is learned best.

As to this, it’s not uncommon to hear complaints about the young being disrespectful; it’s a problem that has steadily grown worse over decades. But we should ask, who raised these kids? Who teaches them? Most importantly, who sets examples for them? One of the reasons adults aren’t respected today is that they’re not respectable. That North Carolina “teacher” is a good (bad) example.

We also ought to ask ourselves who instigated the coarsening of society. Leftists did – and do – as they use relativistic mantras about non-judgmentalism to justify ever worse behavior. And just as we’re aghast today at their latest efforts at defining deviancy downwards, so were our grandparents and parents at their initial and secondary efforts; you know, the behavior and language “innovations” today’s conservatives are inured to – and unthinkingly embrace.

This is why I long ago stopped calling myself a conservative. Those sworn enemies of today’s status quo, liberals, propose changes and keep pushing until they’re normalized and part of tomorrow’s status quo. Then what happens? Those great defenders of the status quo, conservatives, will uphold in the next generation what the previous one’s conservatives eschewed. Conservatives are always the caboose to the liberals’ (loco) locomotive; sometimes they make themselves heavier, sometimes lighter, but they always end up where they’re pulled. And then they unwittingly defend the liberals’ decades-old



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victories.

But understand that Truth is timeless. We simply cannot be one kind of people and have another kind of economic system, social arena, business practices and foreign policy. A people cannot practice vice personally and expect virtue publicly. As John Adams also said, "Public virtue cannot exist in a nation without private, and public virtue is the only foundation of republics." And an edifice whose foundation is habitually degraded isn't long for this world.



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