Weâ€™re all in this together: Part I

Description

This is a real stream of consciousness issue with me. I sort of have no clue where it will lead, but it can be somewhat coherent (well, at least from my point of view). Possibly you may agree with me, and if you do or you donÃ¢â‚¬â„¢t there is a link below each post for comments, so feel free to take advantage to voice your opinion. For several years, IÃ¢â‚¬â„¢ve thought about the influences we have had on at least two generations, and how that relates to events of today.

One recurring thought has been how the differences in how Ã¢â‚¬Å“authority figuresÃ¢â‚¬Â• have been portrayed. My perception, and itÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s certainly not from rigorous application of statistical methods, is that we have been through a long period where the leadership and authority positions have been directly or indirectly portrayed as, at the least, inept, and at the worst, just overtly criminal. This Ã¢â‚¬Å“attitudeÃ¢â‚¬Â• is promulgated by TV shows, commercials, and movies.

default watermark

Simply put, take something like Ã¢â‚¬Å“Ferris BuellerÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s Day Off.Ã¢â‚¬Â• Wildly popular, still much a part of the current cultural memory, but it said 1) ItÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s OK to blow off authority and 2) the authorities, in particular, the principal, were oppressive, and stupid as well, and therefore the object of ridicule and disdain. Movies like Ã¢â‚¬Å“Spy Kids,Ã¢â‚¬Â• Ã¢â‚¬Å“War Games,Ã¢â‚¬Â• and so many others provide us with a regular feed of the message that people in government are lazy and uncommitted to doing their job. Since this is the perceived case, then the follow on message is itÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s OK to go around them, or, better yet, take things into your own hands, as kids, teenagers, and young adults are immanently more knowledgeable and experienced. They then take on dangerous tasks, and win, showing that the stupid Ã¢â‚¬Å“authoritiesÃ¢â‚¬Â• would never have been able to solve the problem, or better yet,, they were so corrupted, they were actually hiding the bad guys.

Then come Michael Moore, trying to feed us some story about how the President really knew about all that went into the current war, and he invaded Iraq just for the oil. There are many sources that can factually refute portions of what Ã¢â‚¬Å“Fahrenheit 911Ã¢â‚¬Â• said, to include showing how images were graphically manipulated, then presented as the reality.

I have pointed out a few examples to support my conjecture, but there is Ã¢â‚¬Å“The Simpsons,Ã¢â‚¬Â• Ã¢â‚¬Å“South Park,Ã¢â‚¬Â• and many others. In music, rappers want to kill police, as well as many others around them and Green Day gets a Grammy for Ã¢â‚¬Å“American Idiot.Ã¢â‚¬Â•

So, what does this several decades long assault on authority and basic decent interpersonal behavior get us? We elect a president and a substantial portion of the country wants to deny he is the president. School children disrupt classes, denying learning opportunities to those who want to learn, and parents come down on the school administrators. The rule of one offended becomes the loudest voice, regardless of how wrong they may be. Lawyers are eager to jump in and take on the authorities.

Maybe IÃ¢â‚¬â„¢m off base, but the lack of basic civility we experience today seems to be the natural outgrowth of the message that those in authority deserve to be mistrusted, and are all out to take advantage of us for their own gain, regardless of the cost.

The Ã¢â‚¬Å“reflective resultÃ¢â‚¬Â• (thatÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s a new term I just thought of) is authority becomes calloused and distrustful of the youthful, and even well intentioned things are turned aside, which, in turn, fuels this fire, and none of it to our benefit.

As the son of a career federal civil servant, and as one who spent 20 years supported by and working with many federal civilians, yes, there are the lazy and stupid ones who help make for good jokes. In the grand scheme, and the far more likely case, they were (and still are) hard working people, who are prone to make the same mistakes and omissions as many of us do. We expect sometimes impossible performance, and knowledge that approaches omniscience, yet we would never want to be held to the same standards.

For most of my career, I didnÃ¢â‚¬â„¢t work directly with the civil servants, but a few times I did. Several gave us more than our moneyÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s worth, most al of them gave us a fair days work for a dayÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s pay, and a few were Ã¢â‚¬Å“skatingÃ¢â‚¬Â• when they could, and only a handful were approaching the criminal aspect of performance.

Enough for one post. WeÃ¢â‚¬â„¢re in this together for many things, but itÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s a Ã¢â‚¬Å“hot buttonÃ¢â‚¬Â• with me to see how itÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s culturally Ok to be disrespectful of those who have been charged to help the next generations to grow and thrive.

default watermark

Continued in Part I A.

Category

1. Military

Date Created
February 23, 2005
Author
admin