

# Substantial Disruption



## The Time for Trump-Shaming Has Come

By Mike Tully

*"Every crowd has a silver lining."*

- P. T. Barnum

*"There's a sucker born every minute."*

- Barnum Associate David Hannum

*"(Y)ou idiots just don't understand ...TRUMP understands ME!"*

- Trump Supporter Maxon Roads

On April 6<sup>th</sup> New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof published a column entitled, "[My Most Unpopular Idea: Be Nice to Trump Voters](#)." Kristof was motivated by a reaction to a column that asked his mostly progressive readership to keep an open mind about those who voted for Trump. "One problem with the Democratic anger is that it stereotypes a vast and contradictory group of 63 million people," Kristof wrote, adding, "Sure, there were racists and misogynists in their ranks, but that doesn't mean that every Trump voter was a white supremacist." Addressing his liberal readers, Kristof wrote, "The blunt truth is that if we care about a progressive agenda, we simply can't write off 46 percent of the electorate."

Another blunt truth is that we have to write off some of them by publicly shaming them. As Kristof notes, many Trump voters supported Obama and switched sides because of anxiety over the direction of their lives and concern over changes in demographics and public policy that made them nervous. Those voters are peelable: Trump peeled them away from the Democratic ticket, and Democrats are likely to peel them back in 2020. This column is not about the peel; it's about the rotten core of narrow-minded and bigoted Trump-heads who would continue to support the Donald even if he – yes – shot somebody on Fifth Avenue. These are people Hillary Clinton referred to as a "[basket of deplorables](#)." She took heat for that comment, but she got it right: they're basket-cases and they are deplorable.

Robert Creamer [explored](#) why many Trump voters continued to support him 100 days into his shambolic administration and argues that the lure is emotional, not intellectual, like falling in love. "When you fall in love," he wrote, "it is more than anything else because you feel good about yourself in the presence of the other person. It is because your lover makes you feel special, empowered – because he or she pays attention – to you." "The same is true in politics," he adds. "People become committed to leaders who make them feel good about themselves – who make them feel strong and respected – empowered and cared about." Trump, the consummate con-man, recognized and capitalized on that need. The author [Pamela Meyer](#) put it a bit more realistically. "Con men look for human frailty to exploit," she wrote. "Trump found a different vice: anger. The emotional are always the most susceptible to manipulation."

Trump “understands” them.” So do we. All of us have known people who were so concerned about feeling good that they were blind to the consequences. Years ago, a local newspaper changed its payment policy for home subscribers. Instead of directly paying the carrier, subscribers had to send payments to the newspaper. An acquaintance of mine liked his carrier and preferred to pay her directly. When the policy changed, he canceled his subscription in protest, to “teach the newspaper a lesson.” In the process, he reduced the carrier’s income, but he didn’t care. His action made him feel better and, shamefully, that’s all that mattered. That’s how Trump-heads are: they don’t care who suffers as long as they feel good, and Trump makes them feel good. He’s not a statesman, he’s a political fluffer.

True-believer Trump-heads are a subcategory of Kristof’s 46%, unreachable through logic or compassion, but there are social controls that can reach them. "Social control is the study of the mechanisms, in the form of patterns of pressure, through which society maintains social order and cohesion," [wrote Jason Carmichael in 2012](#). "These mechanisms establish and enforce a standard of behavior for members of a society and include a variety of components, such as shame, coercion, force, restraint, and persuasion." If Trump-heads are immune to logic and compassion, they are not immune to shame. "The mechanism for the experience of shame is carried in the genes, and built into the biological organism," [wrote James M. Schultz in \*The Jung Page\*](#). "It is universal, at least among humans. It is a part of our makeup."

Perhaps it’s time to abandon the Kristof approach, at least for the hard-core cases, and shame them instead. Donald Trump is a pathological liar who makes Jon Lovitz’s [Tommy Flanagan](#) look like George Washington. Liars are dishonest and immoral and, if you support a liar, you should be *shamed*. Donald Trump praised white supremacists and Nazi and KKK wannabes. If you support him, you should be *shamed*. Donald Trump has bragged about sexually assaulting women. If you support him, you should be *shamed*. Donald Trump is trying to destroy every federal program designed to help people who voted for him because they needed the help. If you still support him, you should be *shamed*. Donald Trump is profiting from his Presidency in clear violation of the Constitution. If you support him, you should be *shamed*.

Shame is an effective social control, even for the shameless. It’s time to use it.