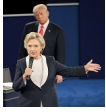


Blue Jean Nation 'Election was tale of 2 rules'

Written by Mike McCabe, Blue Jean Nation
Thursday, 24 November 2016 14:59 -



Elections are about representation, and never, ever insult the voters.

ALTOONA, WI - Never insult voters. That should be the first rule of politics.

Hillary Clinton broke that rule when said out loud that half of Donald Trump's supporters are "[deplorables](#)" and "[irredeemable](#)." She said what she and many of her own supporters surely believe to be true. And she probably lost the election at that very moment. Mitt Romney made the same mistake in 2012 with his "[47 percent](#)" remark when he assumed he was speaking privately to supporters who undoubtedly shared his belief that close to half of Americans are deadbeats and slackers. Breaking the first rule did him in as well.

Which brings me to what should be the second rule of politics: Elections are about representation.

Sifting through supposedly scientific exit polling data in hopes of explaining one of the biggest upsets in American political history, a mystified *Washington Post* reporter [concluded](#) that "people weren't voting on issues. Like, at all."

They usually don't. Like, hardly ever.

Oh, it's not out of the realm of possibility that an occasional election could become a referendum on some burning issue. But that's not the norm. Elections aren't generally about issues. They

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are about representation.

Voters are shopping for someone who represents them, someone who is saying what they are feeling. A few among us might be single-issue voters, but most of us are just looking for someone who reflects our current thinking generally speaking, and hoping those we elect will look out for our best interests. It's simply not possible to find candidates who agree with you on every single issue. It is possible to find ones who seem to share your values and appear to be thinking what you are thinking.

Politics is about relationships. Academics try to treat it as a science, but like friendships and marriages it's far more art than science. Issues don't typically decide elections. Connecting with voters decides elections. Hillary Clinton lost here as well. She ran on her qualifications, her experience, her readiness for the job. The problem for her was that voters weren't in the mood to buy what she was selling. If large numbers of voters had been more or less satisfied with the direction of the country and more or less satisfied with how our government is functioning, maybe they would have looked for a steady, seasoned hand. Maybe they would have put a premium on what Clinton offered. But tens of millions of voters were thinking America is on the wrong track and their belief in government has been badly shaken. Donald Trump's talk of draining the swamp better reflected their thinking.

Most of those tens of millions were willing to overlook what they [intensely disliked](#) about Trump because overall he had done more to connect with them than Clinton had. They overlooked what they find distasteful about Trump not only because he said what they were thinking. It's also what he didn't say. He didn't tell working class people who supported Obama in the past two elections but Trump in this one that they are irredeemable.

Democrats have been losing most elections for the past several decades, and after each beating they react with a mixture of utter bewilderment and anger directed at tens of millions of voters who are obviously (to Democrats) ignorantly voting against their own interests. Even if they don't say it, they think it: These voters are deplorable, irredeemable.

Going forward, Democrats would do well to think long and hard about the first two rules of politics.

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— *Mike McCabe*