

In our family, from the age at which we began to speak, we learned to follow certain rules of civility. While the standards to which we were expected to adhere were not precisely the same as in other families, most of the people I grew up with—from kindergarten through my college years—had rules of politeness, vocabulary, and demeanor that were important in maintaining a workable society.

In our family, if we needed to refer to parts of the human anatomy, for example, words would be used that would not embarrass anyone, including the most sensitive persons. And vulgar words were just not used. We heard swearing and vulgarity at times, of course. Nobody is immune to that when talking to all kinds of people, but we did not personally need to use this language to make ourselves understood.

Now, this may seem like an outdated form of “old fogyism” to some folks in our society these days. I read a lot, and I read all kinds of books. It does not bother me at all to read novels that routinely use a vocabulary that includes many expressions that I would not utter myself. But, I also know that a civil society and a vocabulary that respects people go hand in hand. One cannot publicly refer to other persons in such ugly and disparaging terms as we have lately heard from people in our government without damaging the ability of a society to conduct a civilized dialogue.

Just when schools have begun to address the problem of bullying, a situation that can be verbal as well as physical and psychological, children and adults alike in this country are being bombarded by bullying from the highest office in the land. And, it seems, a certain percentage of people approve of this.

But, most of us do not. Most of us in the U.S.A. want to see our government run in a responsible, civilized manner. We know there will be many differences of opinion among our elected and appointed government officials, but these varied views must be aired in thoughtful and respectful terms. When the President of the United States and his appointed staff cannot conduct themselves in a civilized manner, and when they, by unstable and dangerous narcissistic, egomaniacal actions promote chaos in this country, they should be removed from their jobs. The U.S.A. has become a laughingstock in the world. Any President, and especially a person who—far from earning the right to call his election a “mandate”—was put into office by a minority of voters, has no right to misuse

the highest office in the country.