



## What Republican Voters Must Do Now

What must conservatives in “the conservative movement” do to win in the future? This is the question with which many on the Right have been grappling since Barack Obama won his reelection.

First and foremost, they must recognize that *they are not conservatives*. Rather, they are neoconservatives.

The differences between conservatism and neoconservatism are fundamental.

Conservatives believe that, in reality, human rationality has none of the competence that utopian ideologues of one sort or another insist upon ascribing to it. As Edmund Burke said: “We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason,” for “this stock in each man is small.” Rather than fall back upon their own meager intellectual resources, individuals should turn toward *tradition*, the distilled wisdom of a thousand generations. They “would do better,” Burke said, “to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages.”



Because of the intractable limitations on individual reason and the all-importance of tradition to the cultivation of intellectual and moral virtue, conservatives hold that liberty requires a wide diffusion of authority and power. Translation: that government works best that works — and can only work — least.

Those who are truly conservative support a truly limited government.

The ideas of reason, morality, and government endorsed by neoconservatives, however, are diametrically the opposite of those affirmed by conservatives.

In proclaiming along with Jefferson that all human beings possessed “self-evident” rights, and in insisting that America is the only country in all of human history to have been grounded in this “proposition” alone, neoconservatives reveal their commitment to the same Enlightenment vision of reason and morality against which Burke and legions of other conservatives have been waging war for centuries. This is also the same vision that has underwritten all manner of destructive utopian schemes, from communism abroad to the Welfare State here at home.

And it is the same abstract, one-size-fits-all models of reason and morality that informs the neoconservative’s foreign policy of “interventionism.”

Next, Republicans must grasp that neoconservatism is wildly unpopular with most Americans, a point that should’ve been driven home in spades with the massive electoral defeats that the neoconservative



Written by [Jack Kerwick, Ph.D.](#) on December 12, 2012

party suffered in 2006 and 2008. That an ever-smaller percentage of self-described Republicans have been showing up at the polls in the last two presidential elections confirms that even its own members have been growing disenchanted with it.

Neoconservatism is but a lighter version of leftism. Hence, Democrats reject it because their own party offers the real deal, and the more conservative and liberty-minded reject it as well because it *is* a version of leftism.

Third, it is time for those of us who really want to clean house within the party to start naming names.

For example, Rush Limbaugh is both entertaining and sharp, and there is no doubt that he has done no small measure of good in combating Democrats. Yet Rush seldom identifies by name those Republicans with whom he disagrees. He prefers instead to refer to them by way of the generic, “the Republican Party establishment,” or maybe “RINOs.” And what is true for Rush is triply true in the case of Sean Hannity, who, it seems, is more concerned with not burning bridges with the cast of GOP characters whom he regularly has as guests on his television and radio programs.

But this unwillingness on the part of Rush and Sean to name names is a big problem. This is why *their names* must be named.

Recall, along with such captains of neoconservative talk radio (doesn’t have quite the same feel as “conservative talk radio,” does it?) like Michael Medved, Laura Ingraham, Mike Gallagher, and a whole lot of others, Rush and Sean were particularly close to George W. Bush. Yet until the election of Barack Obama, Bush II had the distinction of presiding over an expansion of the federal government the likes of which eclipsed even that on display during Lyndon B. Johnson’s “Great Society.”

No president in our history, until Obama, presided over as much spending as did Bush the junior.

Still, Rush, Sean, and their colleagues said scarcely a word (regardless of what they now say they said). Instead, they used their resources to defend Bush against his critics on the Left.

A final point: Self-proclaimed “conservatives” need to muster the will to sniff out the carnival barkers in their midst. There is no shortage of such showmen in every medium of the so-called “alternative media” — from Fox News and talk radio to websites and blogs — mercenaries who have hitched their stars to “the conservative movement” for no other reasons than fame, money, and power, the sources of motivation that have driven men from all walks of life from time immemorial.

That November 6, 2012 was able to occur may be all of the proof we need that there are more such people in the “conservative media” than we care to realize.



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