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A Humanistic Approach To Politics: AHP's Call For An “Authentic” Politics Of Truth And Accountability



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As human beings on this tiny planet in the cosmos we call Earth, we live as “citizens” in a variety of people-determined land demarcations that we call countries, each with its own unique version of politics. Citizens in the United States and people in the world, therefore, are engaged in a variety of political dramas. It is fair to say that in the United States and globally, the current political climate is very divisive.

In the United States and globally, humanity is at an inflection point in the evolution of its consciousness at individual and collective levels. Out of fear, some

people are looking backward to an illusionary past and call themselves “conservatives” and some people are looking forward to a potentiated probable future and call themselves “progressives.” In terms of what I have previously called “psychic politics,” one underlying theme is how best to wisely deal with issues related to humanity’s perceptions about security, its five senses, and power. This inflection point is mirrored in part via the “gaslighting” tactics used by many politicians to con people into giving away their power to them as they play their divisive political games. If humanity does not wake up to the con and be more mindful about its individual and collective political choices for so-called leaders, Mother Earth is likely to intervene via what some have called “extinction events” for the human species. Likewise, if humanity continues to make unwise political choices, humanity may “unconsciously”, unknowingly, and mindlessly stumble into its own demise.

We, as an educational Association for Humanistic Psychology (AHP), therefore, call for a new, authentic kind of politics—an “authentic politics of Truth and Accountability.” As President of AHP, I suggest that such a framework would help to correct the dehumanizing effects of the current divisive political state of affairs on the planet.

In the game of divisive politics, the phenomenon of “gaslighting”—deliberately repeating misinformation to the extent that the public starts doubting *verifiable facts* and believing the politician’s self-serving talking points—often become the norm when citizens are not vigilant about determining what is the Truth and holding politicians accountable for their intentional or disguised

misrepresentations. Given this phenomenon, many independent fact-checkers are needed, and many have found ample evidence that “gaslighting” is quite common by those given or seizing political power. Gaslighting happens almost daily via a constant bombardment of misinformation in Tweets, social media, and other mass media sources. In the United States, for example, *The Washington Post’s* (2021) fact-checkers documented 30,573 false or misleading claims by Donald Trump during his presidential term, an average of about 21 per day.

Political leaders set a tone for political discourses and political actions and counteractions in a country. Political leaders that use “gaslighting” tend to be autocratic or authoritarian, ego-oriented, and power-driven. Such politicians also use various Truth-distractive tactics like persistent denial, misdirection, contradiction, lying, delegitimizing people’s beliefs, objectification of human beings, name-calling, appeals to people’s underlying fears and insecurities, distorted appeals for an idealized past that never existed, we-they polarized talk, the use of rationalization to justify fear of “the other,” bullying disguised as tough political and national security talk, calling any opposing or challenging position fake news, the use of simple slogans that distort *verifiable facts*, the use of broad categorical thinking and catastrophic characterizations in service to their own alternative political narratives and political dramas, the use of demands for “blind loyalty” above all, the use of pandering by creating divide and conquer games, the use of allusions and illusions about an “external or internal group enemy” against which to rail, and the use of stereotypes for groups of people based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual-orientation, or nationality.

The net effect of such tactics is that Truth (information based on *verifiable facts*) gets distorted, some people may feel confused, question their own memory, perception, and sanity, and many people began to feel mentally and emotionally exhausted. Sometimes people become numb to the political chatter and simply tune out. People sometimes even turn a blind eye to attempts to undo laws on the books designed to preserve the ideals of democracy and their freedoms. The ultimate net effect, however, of such “gaslighting” tactics is that they amount to one big “political con job” to slowly and subtly disempower people. The daily “gaslighting” narratives and discourses, therefore, cry out for a new kind of politics—an “authentic politics of Truth and Accountability.”

Politics, as currently enacted, tends to be a game of illusion, deception, and delusion. However, former California legislator for 38-years and former AHP President, John Vasconcellos (now deceased, 2014) called for and practiced what he called a “politics of Trust,” an approach to governance that he described as “a powerful antidote to the self-defeating and debilitating practices of traditional politics” (Vasconcellos, 2011). Here, I seek to build on his legacy by now calling for an “authentic politics of Truth and Accountability”.

An “authentic politics of Truth and Accountability” is an approach to governance whereby politicians “authentically” practice transparency, based on *verifiable facts*, not so-called “alternative facts,” and tell the Truth as a norm. Politicians that practice an “authentic politics of Truth and Accountability” would authentically and truly view themselves as “servants to people” and the planet, not just with what they say, but more with what they do. They would

“authentically” champion laws, policies, and institutional practices that truly honor and respect the dignity of all human beings and the growth-promotion aspects of all cultures, based on *verifiable facts*; they would truly understand how human beings are globally interdependent on planet Earth and foster this perspective in their politics (i.e., they think globally and act locally with Truth, based on *verifiable facts*, and an openness to Accountability as guides); and they would authentically, eagerly, and openly invite accountability based on *verifiable facts*.

In anticipation of times such as these, for a number of years I have attempted to use the educational platform of AHP to try to plant seeds in my writings and presentations to stimulate a climate for an “authentic politics of Truth and Accountability,” and I now invite each reader to also use your platforms, whatever they may be, to likewise plant and nurture seeds for an “authentic politics of Truth and Accountability.”

Some of my previous “seed writings” and talks include: *Dr. King’s timeless message to psychologists and the world revisited* (Ferguson, 2024); *Shedding the shackles of systemic racism: Conversations with black men* (Ferguson, 2023); *A call to “invest your consciousness” in a healthy planet earth: A humanistic voice* (Ferguson, 2022a); *Humanity’s reckoning with its race-linked wounds: Healing and repair at individual and collective levels* (Ferguson, 2022b); *The subtle consciousness underlying the human drama* (March 2022c); *Undoing racism: Archetypal Energies, race relations, and decolonizing the anti-black racist mind* (Ferguson, 2021); *A “stark reminder” about how we are an interdependent species on the planet: Side-effects of the coronavirus phenomenon* (Ferguson, 2020); *Speaking “truth to power” about*

climate change: The role of Archetypal Energies (Ferguson, 2019a); *“Being mindful” and becoming a “harmony worker” during unsettling times* (Ferguson, 2019b); *Shining a “humanistic light” on racism* (Ferguson, 2019c); *A way to exercise your personal power: Vote* (Ferguson 2018); *The power of gratitude* (Ferguson, 2017a); *AHP’s call to action: Take a stand to consciously deal with racism* (Ferguson, 2017b); *Archetypal Energies as the “creative urges” behind the evolution of humanistic psychology and positive psychology* (Ferguson, 2017c); *Regarding the 2016 U.S. presidential election* (Ferguson, 2016a); *Part III: Clues for knowing if you are being a conscious creator during unsettling times: A call to conscious action NOW* (Ferguson 2016b); *Part II: Clues for knowing if you are being a conscious creator/co-creator during unsettling times* (Ferguson, 2016c); *Part I: Clues for knowing if you are being a conscious creator/co-creator during unsettling times* (Ferguson, 2016d); *Eight perspectives for staying grounded when the world “seems” insane* (Ferguson, 2016e); *Healing our race-linked wounds* (Ferguson 2015); *Path of the bridger: A path for relating authentically and co-creating a “new reality” for human togetherness and the evolution of consciousness* (Ferguson, 2014a); *The power of “yes” and “no”: The relationship to consciousness, probable realities, and “e-motions”* (Ferguson, 2014b); *Mother Earth “speaks”: Change yourself, change the world, use the Archetypal Energy “Harmony” as a guide* (Ferguson, 2010a); *Archetypal Energies, “psychic politics”, and the transformative potential of the health care debate* (Ferguson, 2010b); and *Fear and projection as root causes of war, and the Archetypal Energies “Trust” and “Peace” as antidotes* (Ferguson, 2009).

I also authored an award-winning book for times such as these, titled

Evolving The Human Race Game: A Spiritual and Soul-Centered Perspective (Ferguson 2017). That book calls attention to what I call 25 Archetypal Energies, which I define as Higher Vibrational Energies that operate deep within our psyches at individual and collective levels to help guide us toward our Optimal Selves and Optimal Realities. We tend to experience them as “creative urges.” I use easily recognized terms to evoke a common sense of these creative urges. Truth, for example, is one of these Archetypal Energies. It was and is my hope that this book can be helpful in providing a perspective for how to view and deal with one another more humanely and more harmoniously on the planet, individually and collectively, politically and otherwise. The book also addresses how we can transform fear-based, ego-driven human race games related to security, sensory, and power dynamics into more essence-oriented, more humane higher order human race games. In choosing our so-called political leaders, therefore, it is important to become aware of whether such leaders are in touch with their Archetypal Energies or not, with a focus on how they “authentically act out” their beliefs in accord with Truth and Accountability.

An “authentic politics of Truth and Accountability” is grounded in an age-old, fundamental belief that “The Truth shall set you free”—free from self-generated fears about other human beings, for whatever unfounded reason(s) not grounded in *verifiable facts*. Beliefs “structure” reality, and societal institutions and practices are held in place by what people believe to be true and value. Beliefs can be defined simply as thoughts reinforced by emotion and imagination. Beliefs, however, are not Truths. Yet, they are very powerful in that they influence people’s perceptions

at both conscious and unconscious levels. Beliefs are held in the mind and focus our consciousness individually and collectively. As such, they can be self-limiting or self-empowering about personal and societal Well-Being. I suggest, therefore, that an “authentic politics of Truth and Accountability” nurtures self-empowering beliefs for personal and societal Well-Being, and that divisive political climates only serve to reinforce self-limiting beliefs that erode personal and societal Well-Being. If “what is so” (Truth based on *verifiable facts*) is not determined and acknowledged, no authentic accountability and healing can take place (e.g., denial of verifiable scientific facts about climate change; the well-researched and documented effects of many “isms” like racism, sexism, ageism).

Individually and collectively, for many people, a promising fundamental belief about the United States is that it is a country based on the rule of law, with a fundamental value that *no one is above the law*. On the world stage, therefore, the United States has been framed for many people in their individual and collective imaginations as a “Beacon of Hope” for all human beings. Yet, the “Truth” is that historically and currently some U. S. laws, policies, and institutional/cultural practices have been and are self-limiting, and some have been and are self-empowering. Growing up in the segregated South as an African American, I know all too well the effects of self-limiting laws, policies, and institutional/cultural practices (e.g., having to sit in the back of the bus; not being allowed to go in the front door of theaters; having to use water fountains and bathrooms labeled “Colored”; not being allowed to eat at certain restaurants; living in a very nurturing all-black community a block away from an all-white high school, but having to be bussed all the way

across town to attend an all-black high school). Previously, in a prior U. S. Administration, we witnessed the effects of a U. S. “zero tolerance” immigration policy on immigrant and refugee families (e.g., children being separated from their parents). And, yet, as politicians engage in political posturing, Congress fails to entertain comprehensive, more humane immigration reforms—to change inhumane laws that marginalize human beings. As of this writing, there are other dramas unfolding that challenge the fundamental belief and value that *no one is above the law*.

Currently, for example, as of this writing in 2024 and regardless of the outcome, we are witnessing a challenge to the above fundamental belief and value, as the U. S. Supreme Court agreed to entertain the idea of Presidential immunity, an idea which at its very core undermines this fundamental belief and value. We are also witnessing a twice impeached Presidential candidate with 88 felony charges who is now a convicted felon, leading in some polls in so-called battleground states for the U. S. Presidency. This candidate was found guilty on 34 of those charges on May 31, 2024; two indictments were brought on state charges in New York and Georgia and two indictments on federal charges in Florida and the District of Columbia, as well as one superseding indictment related to classified documents; the New York trial began on April 15, 2024. And, this does not even include a jury finding of liability for sexual abusing advice columnist E. Jean Carroll in 1996 (i.e., she was awarded \$5 million in a judgment in May 2023) and the January 6 insurrection event, inspired by this candidate.

In my view, such a state of affairs as outlined above represents the profound

effect of the “gaslighting” of a country that uses an archaic structure like the Electoral College to determine who will become President of the United States. As an African American, my Truth, based on my lived experiences as a Black male in the United States, is that if I, or any other Black male in the U. S., had the same kind of resume’ as the presumptive GOP candidate, and also had similar economic means, I, or any other Black male in the U. S., would never be considered a legitimate and fit candidate for the U. S. Presidency.

It should be noted that while the U. S. Supreme Court is viewed as the ultimate arbitrator and interpreter of the constitutionality of laws, policies, and institutional/cultural practices, as now a highly “politicized” entity of the judiciary branch of government, unfortunately it is not the ultimate arbitrator and interpreter of “Authentic Truth and Accountability.” With the retirement of Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy and the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, the stage was set for a soul-searching examination of the Truth (information based on *verifiable facts*) about America’s “political and national values” and what the United States truly stands for at its core. Unfortunately, that soul-searching did not take root. The outcome for not engaging in such a soul-searching process has set the tone for a challenging future for generations to come. It is now even more imperative, therefore, that a political climate is fostered for an “authentic politics of Truth and Accountability.”

It is incumbent on all citizens in the United States and across the globe to become and to be “vigilant, verifiable fact checkers” for Truth and to hold so-called political leaders accountable. And, while there have been laudable calls for more

civility, unfortunately civil political discourses, devoid of *verifiable facts* (Truth), will ultimately lead only to a retreat to perceived sides, perhaps agreeing to disagree, with a lack of authentic understanding about “what is so” and a lack of accountability.

Basic obstacles to an “authentic politics of Truth and Accountability” are the mechanistic tendency to reduce people to objects and to engage fear—fear of differences (otherness), of intimacy (closeness), of the unknown (unfamiliar or new things), and of vulnerability (death or annihilation). That is, in the United States and on the global stage, those in political leadership roles at the highest levels are currently using mechanistic thinking to “objectify” human beings, flaming a political climate of divide and conquer, mistrust, and misinformation, fueled by fear, to nurture their illusion of and for power. The Truth, however, is that no one person actually has power over another except that which is given to them out of fear (e.g., fear of loss, retribution, or being unable to fulfill a desire). A person may have institutional authority via a societal role, but not necessarily power. Authority is something that is delegated; power is something that is demonstrated. That is why in the game of politics, a citizen’s right to vote and the exercise of that right by each person is extremely important. There are indeed efforts to undermine that right in the United States and globally. Therefore, the right to vote should never be taken for granted, and it must be vigilantly nurtured and protected. A citizen should never allow fear to erode or undermine that right. To honor and respect those who fought many years and even gave their lives for the right to vote (e.g., African Americans and women and their supporters), apathy (i.e., staying home, thinking that one’s

vote does not matter) should never be considered a political option for any citizen.

Former President Barack Obama (2018) said: “Fear is powerful. Telling people that somebody’s out to get you, or somebody took your job, or somebody has it out for you, or is going to change you, or your community, or your way of life—that’s an old story and it has shown itself to be powerful in societies all around the world. It is a deliberate, systematic effort to tap into that part of our brain that carries fear in it”. I agree. I am suggesting, therefore, that a political antidote for fear is an “authentic politics of Truth and Accountability.” In such a context, no politicians can take you for granted and must earn your vote with *verifiable facts* (Truth) and be accountable to you.

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