

Keep It Simple, Stewards

Written by Alex Baer

Wednesday, 14 November 2012 23:03 - Last Updated Thursday, 15 November 2012 00:03

Sometimes we make it a lot harder on ourselves than we have to. This is where the acronym *KISS*

comes in handy --

Keep It Sane and Simple

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There are other variations on that acronymic theme, of course. Many of them even contain no rough language whatever, surprisingly, when referring to our stalwart national stewards, aka members of Congress.

The point, although it seems especially prone to idly wandering away today, is easy enough to re-grasp: Sometimes the answers for our most difficult challenges and problems are right in front of us, jumping up and down, waving like mad, trying to be seen and heard.

(Of course, not everyone looks at the world as I do. □ To actually look at the world as I do, first, twist your facial expression into a combination wince and grimace, with a baleful half-smile. Then, pop open your eyes wide as they'll go, with wrinkled eyebrows, as if in comedic horror. Finally, place your hands theatrically staggered in front of your face, as if trying you were trying to stop a volley of catapulted pillows, or an oncoming train.)

Whoops. Digressing again. My apologies. I will endeavor to... Sorry -- I'll keep it simple, from here on out.

Perhaps it will be helpful to start from the beginning: We have this looming madness of Budgetary Battles, this Bold Brinksmanship of Bucks yet to come, as I'm sure some networks will pitch it, trying to prop up sagging ratings and ad rates after the election.

The crisis was triggered by Republicans. Here's what they put on Uncle Sam's credit card: Two wars, a handful of military skirmishes, deep tax gouges for the wealthy, bankster bailouts, and all sorts of other, equally insane shopping trips with friends and extended family.

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Then, Republicans stood back, howling in horror at the credit card statement when it was finally presented, outraged and fuming at the financial deficit that had been so mysteriously created -- *and why wasn't anyone else angry and concerned about this monster spiraling out of control?!*

Finally, Republicans demanded all social services go on the national chopping block in order to pay for their overheated, 8-year-long party in which all their favorite friends and corporations had been plied every second of the day with the finest food and drink available -- jammed to the gills, they were, with carloads and boxcar-loads of doggie bags headed back home with them all, too.

So much for history. Well, except for that \$50 million thrown away, voting 33 separate times to repeal the Affordable Care Act. *Times were tough, after all -- otherwise we probably would have gone for a couple hundred votes,* House Republicans said, whining that they never get any credit for the good things they do.

Then, there was the raising of the debt ceiling in summer, legislation that has always stirred up about as much mayhem and dust as a sleepy butterfly's wings. But, that was before the Teabagger madness rolled into town, towing wagonloads of *very special feelings* about that black man in the White House.

Now, the only rules for this new Republican game were to kick up all the dust and confusion they possibly could -- tornados and dust storms on an unprecedented scale, as a sort of new national sport Republicans turned into a championship most now call The Dust Bowl. *(It's like a regular Bowl game, except there are no tailgate parties, just all The Tea Party you could ever want, need, or tolerate without massive injections of antidote and anti-rejection drugs for the body politic.)*

So, \$1.3 billion dollars of argument, bickering, and bluster later, that's pretty much where we all are, with even more negotiations ahead. We've blown millions, and now billions, of taxpayer dollars in Republican grandstanding and bipartisan bumbling, Dems clueless how to break through Republicans' linked-arms lockstep. Maybe, in the next round, we'll blow a trillion dollars in disagreeing loudly.

This terrible outcome seems entirely possible, as Republicans have made it perfectly clear

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they'll continue their obstructionist ways, saying *NO!* at the tops of their lungs, until the bitter end, trying to run out the clock.

Horrible, horrifying, and completely childish as this all seems -- and actually is -- there is finally a simple answer in sight. Two answers, really. Both solutions are offered in good faith to a weary and worried nation, free of charge, on the house. (*Buy me a drink sometime and we'll call it even.*)

First: Consult the nation's laws on terrorism. Those anti-terrorism laws have been toughened repeatedly in the last dozen years. However, in that same time period, the single strongest, unchecked source of domestic terrorism has been from Republican politicians.

They have taken the nation, its people hostage, along with much of the world, over and over again, under the guise of *continuing negotiations*.

As the United States has long had a clear policy of never negotiating with terrorists, all budget talks should be immediately halted, and the full force of law be brought to bear on every Republican, on every GOP domestic terrorist.

I am not a professional negotiator, but it seems fairly obvious, even to laypersons, that blind obstructionism can be thwarted by the simple act of placing all Republican buttocks in a sling, and hoisting them quite far up -- say, a few hundred feet off the deck. Hoist on their own petards, so to say.

This'll get the attention, even of Republicans, and shake up some of that poised, practiced posing in negotiations, I'll bet.

The other solution is one that can be used in combo, or solo, with the first. The idea of it comes from the story of a 32-year-old woman from Cleveland who has been failing to stop for school buses for some time -- using the expedient method of driving on the sidewalk.

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If you'd not heard this weird, sad tale, it's nonetheless true. Among the woman's punishments for sidewalk driving, was to go outside, holding a poster-board sign that a judge specified contain the following language, and in all caps:

Only an idiot would drive on the sidewalk to avoid a school bus.

Such sentences attempting to shame people into alternative behaviors have been handed down by judges in Utah, Texas, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Ohio, and other states.

Hold onto that thought: *sentences attempting to shame people into alternative behaviors...*

Having had their asses in a sling during the crucial attention-getting phase, Republicans could then be convinced to put away their insane, costly, obstructionist ways. Once they've had to appear for a set amount of time on the floor of Congress, and outside on the sidewalk with the news trucks, and back in their home districts with such signs, I suspect they'll all be ready to negotiate again in good faith.

And, in record time, too: Such is the power of the public stocks -- the ones in which hands, legs, and/or heads were placed in the public square stocks in humiliation. Although, one supposes, stubborn Republicans could be made to go along by calling it a *free stock offering*, and making sure they know such stocks were 100% supported, and to the letter, by our forebears.

That might help do the trick. Frankly, we could all do with Republicans packing away their spoiled-brat demeanors and threats to take the ball, game, and stadium and just go on home -- *so there, nyaaaaah*.

Although the concept of getting a Republican to feel shame and remorse is somewhat like trying to imagine growing hair on a rock, I think it's still worth a try. Despite appearances to the contrary, I hold as an act of faith that there is a human being inside every Republican, no matter how well suffocated and trapped by its own fears.

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Here are a few of the poster-board signs I think might be helpful for GOP offenders to hold in The Great Republican Reset:

Only a traitor would kill a nation and its people because he was not in charge.

Only a spoiled brat would hold a nation and its people hostage in a temper tantrum.

Only a treasonous snake would keep a nation and its people from succeeding until the snake could call all the shots.

Only an ungodly hypocrite would demand a nation and its people fail unless everyone did what the hypocrite said.

We can ask human psychological and behavioral specialists for more ideas on the wording that will best work. Most of all, we can ask Republicans' *opponents* what *they* would like to see on those signs.

You know, there's just nothing like a return to doing the People's business again, and doing so in a good faith way -- one best for the country and the people.

Even Republicans can be reminded of this fact, I think, with the right amount of butt-sling time, shaming in public, and insistent reminding they are not there to build personal empires that glorify themselves and corporations to the full exclusion of the People.

It may take some rigorous cult-style deprogramming and reprogramming, but I think Republicans can be rehabilitated into productive, patriotic citizens again.

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Creative catharsis is a wonderful thing.

KISS: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KISS_principle

History: <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0712/78863.html>

More history: <http://newsbusters.org/blogs/brent-baker/2012/07/12/cbs-s-pelley-upset-house-s-obamacare-repeal-votes-have-cost-taxpayers-5>

Petards: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petard>

Initial "idiot" report: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-20252212>

Follow-up and "idiot" details:

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2012/11/13/165027763/convicted-idiot-driver-who-passed-school-bus-holds-her-sign-of-shame>

And, an "idiot" recap of multi-state, hall-of-shame sentences:

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2012/11/13/idiot-sign-cleveland-woman-passed-school-bus-sidewalk.html>

Village stocks: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Village_stocks