



On Biden, aging, candor, and public responsibility

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It's taken about five years for a large majority of Americans to recognize and admit it, but it's agreed Joe Biden was in a downward dementia trajectory during his term as President of the United States. His loved ones and family members selfishly concealed this reality.

Many of his supporters ignored the situation because of their hatred for his main opponent. Those closest to the political power inner circle worked around it. Large parts of what we call the "mainstream media" lacked the candor and courage to call out what they observed through their senses of sight and sound, *i.e.*, a man in significant cognitive decline.

Those who had access to Biden tried to deflect criticism while evading discussions about his mentally vacant appearance, his embarrassing stumbles, and mumbling speech pattern. However, to objective observers, even in TV Land, his decline was obvious and troubling. Now that he's out of office, many of those "on the inside" are verbalizing statements of surprise and anger. Yet, it's not unreasonable to view the new critics as insincere, hypocritical, opportunistic, or deceitful.

It appears Joe Biden remained in the 2024 Presidential race, until after the June debate debacle because of pride — one of the "deadly sins." Because he was lying about his physical and mental condition, he shares much of the blame for the decisions he made, the actions delegated to others, as well as those who covertly acted as a person who earned political power from the public.

Admittedly, the pomp and circumstance of working in and around the White House is intoxicating. The political advisors, no doubt, enjoyed the trappings, benefits,

and practical application of influence. However, these human failings don't remove the human stain of acting in a disingenuous and dishonest manner.

Some may choose to sit back and excuse these acts of omission with a "But for the grace of God go I" rationale. On the other hand, a true act of contrition or punishment seems appropriate for enabling, pushing, or encouraging an elderly statesman into a role he's unable to perform; that's abuse. There, we said it! And as Joe often uttered, "This is no joke."

In time, the political world, new media, and the Ultimate Judge may eventually handle those who attempted to deceive American citizens. However, there's another category of organizations and executives who should be required to own up for their silence, while the charade of the Joe Biden decline was occurring; specifically, the leaders, experts, and advocates of agencies who self-define as "friends and protectors of the aged". They were disturbingly mute during this six-year period. Their behavior was the opposite of core values their organizations extol. They didn't act responsibly or professionally. Surely, their avoidance of engaging during the visible cognitive decline of an elderly and deteriorating person warrants some type of reckoning.

Perhaps every bit as sad as the decline of Biden was the wrathful treatment of the few public officials, alternative media sources, and party loyalists because of their willingness to question the President's condition. They were chastised as engaging in ageism. The protectors of the palace responded with non-credible statements such as "the best Biden ever" or charged their critics with the canard of "elder abuse." In reflection, an appropriate metaphor seems something like a take-off on an old Groucho Marx movie who, when caught flirting with a woman, not his wife, spews out to her "who are you going to believe, me or your lying eyes?"

The [National Center of Elder Abuse](#) defines the act as "any intentional or negligent act by a caregiver or a trusted person that causes or creates a serious risk of harm to an older adult." Given that Joe Biden, without question, wanted to be President, even beyond his promise as a one-termer, it shouldn't be rationalized to excuse lack of capability, negligence, malpractice, or ignoring the 25th Amendment.

Anyone who has taken care of a person who is cognitively impaired has experienced the conflict of taking on a paternalistic role and diminishing a trusted person's autonomy. A sad example is removing the car keys from a loved one's possession. For that elderly person, beyond the practical loss of personal freedom is the reality of significant dependence on others as well as confronting their mortality in a very clear fashion. We should expect a trusted family friend, loved one, or expert to demonstrate empathy and respect for the elderly.

In the case of President Joe Biden and the American people, the politicians, public servants, and geriatric experts let us down. We, as citizens, deserved better.