

Politics and The Fog of Recovery

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It's amazing all the things that can affect our daily lives, and yet how little control we have over most of them. Sure, we decide things like what we wear each day and what we eat at mealtime. But of all the people, places and things we come into contact every day, most of them we simply experience without having a whole of lot say in what they are, what they do, and how they affect us. In essence, our lives are like small rows boats circling a very large ocean. Beyond our tiny vessels, very little is under our control. On calm days, it can be quite enjoyable to be lightly pushed along by gentle winds and calm waves. But on tumultuous occasions, these outside influences bring hurricane forces which can capsize our very lives, making us vulnerable to the fog of recovery. Politics - local, national an global - can be one of these uncontrollable forces.

Recently, a new President took office in the White House after winning an election highlighted by division, racism, and anti-globalization. Paradoxically, of the nearly 139 million votes that were cast, approximately 3 million more (about 2%) voted for the un-elected candidate than those who voted for elected candidate. And, yet, in a country defined by the principle of "the majority rules," the loser won. Now, America will embark on a path to remake itself great again, based on a "great" past when segregation was the norm, mass poverty was a given, and one's opinion of how great things really were largely depended upon how wealthy you were. How's that for stressful?

Most of us are not politicians. But every so often - at least once every four years - most of us get swept up in one political tsunami or another, into which we throw our principles, our values, and our very lives. It is an act of casting our personal fortunes into the mighty tides of a giant ocean, in the hopes of reaping a great reward. Therefore, in essence, it is not unlike gambling. So, it should not be surprising that politics has the potential to become addictive, all consuming, and a downward-spiraling destructive force in our lives. Whenever we align and invest ourselves so closely and deeply with anything that has much more control over us than we do over it, we are merely rolling the roulette wheel after having placed everything on red. If we win and are smart enough to walk way from the table, then we might be one of the lucky ones who gets away unscathed. However, if we let it ride, sooner or later we'll hit black -

the darkness - and we'll lose it all: friends, family, everything.

Politics can be like that. Sometimes we can participate while keeping perspective and a safe distance, but other times we take that lemming-leap of faith, waiting to see if we just jumped over a small obstacle or off a big cliff. For those of use in stable recovery, the seduction to go all-in is even greater, as we already have addictive personalities that are always on the lookout for that next high. And I have seen many people during this past presidential election cycle go so far in that they could not find their way out of the fog of politics: a short stepping stone to the fog of recovery.

You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you just might find, you get out alive. I, for one, was on the losing side of this most recent four year cycle. But even though I had one foot firmly in my little "engaged-voter" dingy as it was battered and blown around by hurricane force political winds and waves, I also kept one foot firmly planted on solid ground. To lose is one thing. To lose perspective, all hope, and ourselves is entirely another. By enticing us to go all in, politics can trick us into losing sight of stable land - our stable recovery - as it misguidedly leads us into the fog of recovery.

As for tomorrow, if you won, it's your turn to lead. And if you lost, like me, do not lose perspective, do not lose hope, and do not give into the fog and lose yourself. We can overcome. Yes, we can.

Robert offers anonymous and confidential substance abuse recovery telephone coaching to help those who wish to stabilize and maintain their recovery from substance abuse. Recovery coaching with Robert is available worldwide to anyone fluent in English who can reach him at **786-262-5750** (USA). For more information, please visit **<http://trafn.com/coach.html>**