

Very Rarely do we get a chance to DO OVERS!!!!

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CHIT CHAT 2020 MORAL LEADERSHIP

Empathy: Identification with and Understanding another's feelings and motives. The attribution of one's own feeling to an object.

Moral: Teaching or exhibiting goodness or correctness of character and behavior. Conforming to standards of what is right or just in behavior: virtuous or moral life.

Leadership: Guidance or direction. Capacity or ability to lead. One who has influence or power.

My time in the box was originally set for the March Chit Chat meeting and had completed my essay on moral leadership well upfront of our normal Tuesday night presentation. Of course, I was saved by the bell with our cancellation giving me a month to review what I had written and allowed me to CRITIQUE and edit my own essay. For instance, my coverage Of President Polk's leadership qualities with regards to our entrance into the Mexican American war, pales in importance to what has occurred in our own lives over the past 30 days. The hiatus has also given me the chance to spend time catching up on readings from authors who have addressed the issue of leadership or lack of it either in terms of what has occurred in the first few months of 2020. Have also had the chance to read up on past history and the issue of moral leadership and or the issue of empathy. A must-read Erik Larson's recent book "The Splendid and the Vile, a day by day history of London and England during Churchill's first full year as Prime minister. Larsen's book describes London under the Blitz and Churchills leadership qualities in holding the Londoners and the country together under very trying circumstances. As Larson's introductory piece says "He taught the British people the art of being fearless- a story of political brinkmanship." An example of Churchills leadership, In April 1941, over Good Friday weekend, the German air force attacked the city of Bristol; heavy incendiary bombing in an attack lasting six hours. The physical devastation to the city was immense: killing 180 civilians and wounding close to 400 and destroying much of the urban area. This had not been the first bombing that the city had experienced. Churchill had planned to visit the city and as he toured the worst hit area on foot was engulfed by the crowd, took his bowler hat and placed it a top his walking stick and said "stand back my men let the others see." Averill Harriman in attendance made the comment: The prime minister seems popular with the middle-aged women. Churchill heard the comment and responded, "not only with the middle age women, but with the young ones too." Everywhere he went, and we must remember the city had just been through a horrendous bombing the crowds surfaced and just wanted to touch him. On the return to London aboard a train Churchill waved to the crowds, raising papers to hide his tears and said "It is a grave responsibility." To me a man of empathy but also leadership.

The gravity of the relentless bombing and the loss of 45,000 citizens of London was really not understood by me until I had read Larson's day by day account. Like other books of his he weaves together more than one story in his narrative. Besides his ability in holding the country together during this horrendous period as well preparing the country for a probable invasion by

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Germany, a second story of wooing and enticing Roosevelt into the war was instrumental in the manuscript. Churchill used every manner under his control to entice FDR to lead the US in entering the conflict. Empathy and Morality in evidence during this wooing as well as encouraging a recalcitrance US population to enter a European conflict.

The second advantage I had with the delay of my essay was the day by day drama of the pandemic we are experiencing led by the utter folly and disorganization exhibited within the executive branch of our government. This allowed me to insert the Churchill piece on moral leadership-and the present pandemic as an example of lack of leadership. The disadvantage for me in tonight's presentation is all of you have had a week to parse my paper and prepare yourself for taking the essay apart. One other advantage was the chance for me to reread what I had written and second guess my own writing. I had left out any discussion on EMPATHY and upon reviewing my essay, I determined the character of empathy went hand in hand with positive leadership. The lack of empathy comes to the forefront when highlighting lack of moral leadership. The best example of the lack of morality and empathy: think about our present leadership in Washington as well as the weakness across all political parties and leadership prior to the Civil War.

So,

now let us go back to the original presentation and be somewhat kind to me during the give and take sure to take place.

"It was the best of times – it was the worst of times," familiar opening lines of the 1859 masterful historical novel written by Charles Dickens, prefacing his coverage of the French Revolution occurring some 60 years prior to the publication of Tale of Two Cities. I first read the opening lines as a sophomore in a Chicago Public high school and without question they remind me of the present political atmosphere we are faced with today. Just as interesting, if not more so, are the follow up lines -lines not as well-known as the opening. " **“it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.”**

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In March of 2020 much of our everyday conversation and thoughts revolve around Dickens follow up prose. Tonight, I will try to lead you away from despair and desperation and shed some light on how we as a nation have witnessed the foolishness and political gyrations that have rocked our country's history and how as a nation, we have weathered the storms. Several storms!! Recent media, both print and visual, cry out "the country is experiencing a friction, a separation of the populace- constantly hearing we are split into two tribes. It is separating families! We hear this upcoming election is THE MOST important election in our history." Well it IS important but we have faced deeper divisions in the past and we have been able to navigate them. And like the present schisms that may seem impossible to repair, we have not followed the route of complete disaster. Let me remind you of the following events. The lead up to the final adoption of our constitution in 1787, small colonies vs large, slave colonies vs free and the ultimate structure of the constitution without question was an antecedent to the climactic Civil War some 70 years later; the impeachment of Andrew Johnson generated, and driven by the manner in which reconstruction would be implemented post-civil war; the floating of impeachment threats against several of our Presidents by their political opposition; -Presidents getting us into unnecessary wars for getting us into the unnecessary wars: the threat of impeachment directed at one time or another at multiple Presidents; the 60's, Viet Nam and Nixon, and William Jefferson Clinton in our own time. The country has been able to overcome these deep fissures with some scars left on the idea of democracy, but we have for the most part raised our selves above the fray. I say for the most part. Rancor seems to be imbedded in our DNA, and what seem to have been unsolvable problems when reviewed by Historians, the DNA in our Democracy has led us back on to a settled country. I would hope you remember two things from this essay. One, Democracy depends upon the virtue of the citizen-And two: MORAL LEADERSHIP is necessary to bring out the best in our citizenry. Some of our problems have been solved by events forced upon us from the outside: England's unacceptance of the colonial breakaway and the luck of having George III as the leader of what was then our mother country; our depression in the 1930's and the arrival of World War II which was the vehicle that finally led us out of the economic malaise and ultimately brought the two disparate political divisions

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together as one. Think Dec 7th, 1941, negating the strength of the America Firsters, who up until that time, had been in favor of non-intervention and advocating an allegiance to Fascism and Isolationism as FDR was pushing for involvement in the world crisis. Charles Lindbergh, at raucous rallies, attacked American journalists as “dishonest parasites under the control of dangerous elements”, He urged the country to close its borders to alien blood while loyal America firsters shouted, “throw them out- throw them out.” That was in 1940-41! Do they not seem familiar today? IS History correct in pitting the creators of the first two political parties, Adams and Jefferson, as bitter divisive enemies creating a two-party system in which several historians lay blame on the continuing animosity.

DURING TURBULENT TIMES, THE MORAL CREAM IMBEDDED IN DEMOCRACY RISES TO THE TOP THROUGH A STRONG INVOLVED CITIZENRY AND THROUGH MORAL LEADERSHIP. In 1787, in Philadelphia rancor was the temperature of the day. The rhetorical heat inside Constitution Hall was only rivaled by the ambient temperature outside. Just twelve years before, in 1776, the thirteen colonies had come together with close to full agreement in the crafting of the Declaration of Independence and, after a bitterly fought Revolutionary war, our country was now at an impasse as to how to form some sort of central government. The key word is central and the fight was over the following issues. In order to form a government acceptable to the diverse geography and population demographics, the authors of the constitution, after much compromise, had agreed that eight of the thirteen colonies had to sign on to what had been fine-tuned in Philadelphia. Key decisions: the strength of the executive branch and ability to hold it in check: the issue of slavery and the fight by the smaller states for some sort of equal representation had caused a constitutional crisis before we even had a constitution!!! Bitterly fought out in that sweltering summer, the representatives from the colonies finally agreed upon a document that would ultimately become our constitution. However, it took close to another year and a half to finally get the necessary eight colonies to agree to the document and form our government but not before addendums forced onto the final agreed upon constitution: We know these addendums as The Bill of Rights. The split in the

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thinking by our population was in full force as early as the implementation and acceptance of the final document. In order to get the minimum number of colonies to agree to form “a more perfect union” James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay authored the Federalist Papers under the pseudonym Pro Publius publishing arguments for the ratification of the Constitution and written with the aim of satisfying the disparate sections of the then Un-united country.!

Ron Chernow's 2004 biography of Alexander Hamilton, gives a superb account of Senate impeachment powers authored by Hamilton in federalist #65. Hamilton visualized with exceptional foresight the problems that would occur when passions inflamed the country and partisanship split over an accused federal official. Interesting tidbit, according to Federalist #65 the accused official WOULD remain liable for prosecution even after removal from office. This of course was a major fear of President Trump. Hamilton envisioned the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court as the sole arbitrator during the proceedings acknowledging this agreement was a compromise, but insisted that this was the best he could accomplish. “If mankind were to resolve to agree to no institution of government until EVERY part of it had been adjusted to the most exact standard of perfection, society would soon become a general scene of anarchy, the world a desert.” Madison, in turn, authored Federalist #10, among the most highly regarded of all-American political writings, and addressed the question of how to reconcile citizens with interest's contrary to the rights of others or inimical to the interests of the community as a whole. Madison saw factions as inevitable due to the nature of man: that is, as long as men hold differing opinions, have differing amounts of wealth and own differing amount of property, they will continue to form alliances with people who are most similar to them and they will sometimes work against the public interest and infringe upon the rights of others. He questioned how to guard against those dangers. Interesting to see how Hamilton and Madison were able to work together in the late 1780's, when over the next 15 years each man would become a leader in what would

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become our two political parties. Hamilton, Washington's first Sec of the treasury and an avowed Federalist a proponent of a strong central government; and Madison, an ally of Jefferson, the father of what was to become a states right party- and an anti-federalist worked together for almost two years to get the constitution implemented. This was moral leadership at the expense of compromising the goals of their own political agenda. Without question the formation of our two-party system has led to factitious practices.

Within the last 60 days both houses of congress have passed a bill defining the War Powers Act enumerated in the constitution. The power to declare war falls in the powers of congress and the executive branch, according to the constitution, must ask Congress for authority to initiate the state of war. Except the executive branch has ignored that power. And not just recently towards Iran! The war of 1812 against Great Britain and in 1848 again Mexico were both caused by internal strife amongst our own populations. The war of 1812, for the most part, was initiated over an international conflict that we were a third party to. Great Britain and France were involved in war with each other but that conflict traversed the Atlantic Ocean. In 1809, the British were boarding our trading ships insisting some of the crew were English citizens and the ships were engaged in commercial activity with France, England's adversary. For the next two years our country waged its own internal conflict- arguments on the floor of Congress whether we should go to war with Britain over these incidents. By the spring of 1810, Henry Clay a young congressman from Kentucky, and already a leader in the Whig party, adversarial to Madison's Republicans, stepped to the senate floor and in an impassioned speech gave an early argument for an American war against England. "Britain stands preeminent in her outrage by her violation of the sacred and personal rights of American freeman, in the arbitrary and lawlessness impressment of our seaman and murder sir." The Federalist party predominantly

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represented the North East, and in the early 1800's, what we might call the most developed commercial section of the country, adamantly opposed the looming conflict with Great Britain. After two years of bumbling President Madison was finally forced to ask Congress for a war declaration against Britain passing without a single Federalist voting for the act. The senate secretly debating and casual about the necessity of entering into a conflict, took two weeks to vote in favor. President Madison, who had been one of the original signers of the Constitution, had never gone to war, had never travelled outside the country, and as Michael Beshloss said in his 'History of Presidents of War', "with gusto adopted the identify of Commander and chief." Madison, a signer of the Constitution and one of the authors of the Federalist papers, who had exhibited great leadership qualities in his lead up to the Presidency, failed in his role as our chief executive and brought our country into an unnecessary conflict. The cost- the sacking and burning of Washington DC and by most historians' account, a lack of strong leadership and a less than successful eight-year term as President.

Some thirty years later, President Polk didn't even think it necessary to ask Congress for the declaration of war; he decided to declare it himself. Historians have given us several reasons for our ultimate entry into the 1847-48 conflict but, suffice it to say, Polk envisioned himself as the successor to Jefferson's Louisiana purchase and during his one term was the preeminent advocate of Manifest destiny. In the end, the addition of what we now know as Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and our own state of California became a geographical part of the US. But the war itself and the absorption of the territories did not come without rancor and heated rhetoric- and with a reversal of political stances. The Whig party, in 1847 led by Daniel Webster and a little-known congressman from Illinois A. Lincoln, the same Whig party that had cajoled Madison into entering the fray with Great Britain in 1812, now wanted nothing to do with

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Democratic President Polk's war with Mexico. Daniel Webster looking to embellish his credentials for a Presidential run in 1848, in an address in Boston, told the crowd that "this war is a presidential war and that only congress has the power to declare war and that if President Polk is resolved to involve the country in a war it is a clear violation of his duty and in Webster's view – was "an impeachable offense." Webster went on to say "I am for taking the constitution as our fathers left it to us and standing by it and dying by it. Along with the idea of manifest destiny there was the undercurrent of racial tension within the decision to annex some or all of what was then Mexico or parts of Mexico. John C Calhoun, an early advocate of separating his state of South Carolina from the union over the issue of slavery, in 1848 was concerned that, if we, as a country annexed all of Mexico, Mexicans might be placed on an equal basis with white Americans. Quoting Calhoun "We have never dreamt of incorporating into our Union any but the Caucasian race-the free white race- ours sir, is the government of the white man The House of representatives demanded that Polk supply any documents that he had in his possession with regards to our negotiations with the Mexican government prior to the declaration of war. Polk refused, fearing that releasing any of the papers "would exhibit me in a ridiculous manner." Polk's secretary of state, James Buchanan warned him against handing over the information to congress, saying "no foreign power would ever trust us again." Polk had crushed the founders hope that the gleaming new country would not indulge in the Old-World monarch's habit of manufacturing false pretext for war." Hiding facts from the public has not been limited to the 1800's. I think we can fast forward and juxtapose Polk's 1848 decision to another president's 2019 decision not to release Presidential papers! Some might say the same with regards to our entrance into the Iraq conflict of 2002-3

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I think it fair to say our government had been wrestling with the issue of slavery since 1789 when in order to form a more perfect union there had to be a compromise by the Northern Colonies agreeing to allot the Southern slave holding entities a population addition of 3/5 for every owned slave. Moral leadership existed in 1787 but in this case, discretion may have outweighed valor. I wonder if the founding fathers could have foreseen the ultimate outcome of the compromises, they were forced to make in order to finally bring the constitution to fruition.

As early as 1820 South Carolina had threatened to leave the union over the issue of slavery and its expansion within additional statehood. These issues were the prime movers, as well as Lincolns election in 1860, that ultimately led to eleven states departing the union in 1861.

Four years prior to the start of the Civil War- in 1856, the newly formed Republican party met in Philadelphia and chose as its initial candidate for the Presidency John C. Fremont. Formation of the new party had as its genesis opposition to the expansion slavery. Fremont was accused of being born out of wedlock- the son of an immigrant- therefore not eligible for the Presidency and worst of all Catholic. However, immigration and the growing numbers of immigrants expanding into the west was the key issue and it was used as a rallying point with regards to slavery. Advocates of slavery were concerned that If immigrants were allowed to settle the western territories then slavery's expansion would be inhibited. The demographic problems we read about today- contraction of small-town America and growth on the coasts – immigrants changing the color – the word color used in more than one way – was a key to the 1856 election. Fear prevailed over demographics. White southerners FEARED they would be outnumbered if they were permanently barred from creating new states in the west. James Buchanan, nominated by the Democratic party, won the 1856 election against Fremont and produced one of the worst four years in our country's history. In the 1850's, the lack of moral leadership was not exclusive to the executive branch; it existed in all three branches of our government- the supreme court's decision in the Dred Scott case, with Buchanan's backing, found that a slave entering a free state could be returned to his or her rightful owner even though

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now abiding in a free state; congress lacking moral leadership in its own way by passing the 1850 compromise allowing slavery to expand in states entering the union regardless geography if the populace voted for it, thus negating the 1820 compromise, and three weak executives, Fillmore, Pierce and Buchanan, not only not inhibiting our move towards our civil war but with lack of moral leadership enhanced the move towards the breakup.

In a JAN 10TH article by Steve Inskeep from NPR, likened the period just prior to the Civil War to the present. "It was the same fear we see today; the fear of permanency. Not just a one-time election but the country with its unwieldy immigration system will be lost forever paralleling the 1856 election to the white working and middle class we are familiar with today. Not one election but of losing for all time. What we are now faced with in 2020 are the fears of immigration- job loss incurred because of the immigration: Trump is the last chance to save the country.

"In a lonely grave, forgotten and unknown, lies the man who saved the President", the man who performed in 1868 what one historian has called, the most heroic act in American history, incomparably more difficult than any deed of valor on the field of battle" That deed; voting against President Andrew Johnsons impeachment in the senate. That heroic man was Sen Edmund GH Ross United States Sen. from Kansas. Who spoke those words of praise for Andrew Johnson, one of only three sitting presidents impeached by congress- Johnson, a president who in at the turn of the 21st century ranked in the bottom five of our 45 presidents? A young senator from Massachusetts by the name of John F Kennedy in his scholarly 1955 book "Profiles in Courage." In the aftermath of our civil war President Andrew Johnson began to overturn -undo-Lincoln's legislation passed during the War years. Johnson vetoed bill after bill introduced and passed by the radical Republican in congress aimed at reconstruction in the south. For the first time in our country's history, congress was able to overturn many of the President's veto's and it was becoming apparent that congress was heading towards a battle of supremacy with our executive branch. Edwin Stanton, secretary of war and an inherited cabinet member from Lincoln, was directly involved in implementing draconian controls on the southern states and Johnson asked for his resignation.

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Stanton refused, barricading himself in his office, and with public opinion running heavily against the President, suspended Stanton replacing him with Gen Grant and leading congress voting to impeach Johnson. Prior to the Stanton event several bills of impeachment had been brought to the floor but all had been defeated. Not this time. Swiftly adopted with every republican voting to impeach and Thaddeus Stevens, leader of the radical Republicans in the house mastered the movement with rhetoric that makes recent impeachment proceedings look like child's play, Stevens warned both houses of congress coldly: "Let me see the recreant who would vote to let such a criminal escape. Point me to one who will dare to do it and I will show you one who will adore the infamy of posterity." Kennedy's book weighs in on the side of Johnson as writes, "it became increasingly apparent the impatient republicans did not intend to give the President a fair trial: it intended to depose him from the White House Grounds": "Prejudgment on the part of most senators was brazenly pre-announced. Attempted bribery and other forms of pressure were rampant." I must remind you these comments were made by Sen Kennedy in 1955 not by today's press. The two thirds rule enumerated in the constitution was what was necessary for a guilt outcome and removal. Thirty-seven votes need to remove. Thirty-six voted yea and Ross would be the deciding vote. Ross, normally a loyal radical Republican voted no and as history says saved the president removal from office. Ross's defense, writing later in Scribner's and Forum magazines: "In a large sense, the independence of the executive office as a coordinated branch of the government was on trial, If the President must step down, a disgraced man and a political outcast, upon insufficient proofs and from partisan considerations, the office of the President would be degraded and ever after subordinated to the legislative will."

The open grave which Edmund Ross had foreseen was no exaggeration. A justice of the Kansas Supreme Court telegraphed him after his vote. "The rope with which Judas Iscariot hanged himself is lost, but Jim Lane's pistol is at your service.": Not one of the seven Republicans who voted against finding the President guilty was ever elected to any office. The once solid south, counted on by the Democratic party since the 1866 impeachment trial, reversed course with President Lyndon Johnson

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civil right act of 1964 and is now solid Republican and the issue that separated the parties in 1866-67 still exists, albeit a reversal of each party's philosophy.

The election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912, only the second democrat elected to the presidency since 1856, and elected primarily because the sitting President Taft had the misfortune of having another republican, Teddy Roosevelt, run as an insurgent independent Bull Moose party nominee, splitting the vote and allowing Wilson to win the electoral college. Four years later Wilson running for reelection primarily on the issue of Keeping America out of war narrowly won, with our state of California giving him a slim margin of victory. The election of 1916 was the first in which women were allowed to vote and Wilson carried eight of the ten that cast votes and without question his election theme: 'He kept us out of war' resonated with the newly enfranchised feminine voters. In spring of 1917, miscalculations by the Germans choosing open warfare on the seas, forced Wilson to go to congress and ask for a declaration of war. Sen Henry Cabot Lodge, the leading republican on the foreign affairs committee and who four years later would be the leading voice in keeping the US from joining the league of Nations, advocated our entrance into WWI warning that "National cowardice would be worse than joining the struggle against barbarism." Another cautioned that unless the United States pulled its weight "OLD Glory will be sunk to new depths of shame and humiliation." But the President did not go into the war with unlimited support. George Norris, Nebraska's isolationist senator claimed that behind the war fever were munitions makers, stock brokers and bond dealers. A sitting democratic senator said that Norris's insinuation "grazes the very edge of treason." Sen Robert La Follete responded in the senate chambers shouting that poor Americans lacking an original mouth piece would now be called to rot in the trenches. From the other side, a senator accused LaFollite of being pro German and pretty near pro Goth as well as anti-American, Anti-Congress and anti-President. Our present-day senate verbal shots look weak compared to the 1917 rhetoric. Wilsons war resolution passed and the US participated in a European war for the first time in over 100 years. And with that war the executive branch began to increase and maximize its power; a power still in existence today. Wilson demanded a national draft:

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he pressured congress into giving him wide influence over the wartime domestic economy. In early 1918 congress, overwhelmingly passed a sedition act which prohibited disloyal, profane, scurrilous and abusive language about the US institutions including the flag. Legal scholars wrote. in the history of our country, not since the Alien and Sedition acts of 1798 has the meaning of free speech been the subject of such sharp controversy .”The attorney general serving Wilson used these new laws to peruse a national war on the Industrial workers union and the post master general managed to raise rates on magazines that questioned the conduct of the war or conduct of the President. As the war wound down, hoping to stall the peace treaty the republicans who had put obstacles in front of Wilson during the war, wanted to punish the central powers and advocated harsher terms hoping to stall the peace treaty until after the November election. They felt the electorate would punish the President both for the war and the appearance of Czar like powers. And they were right. Wilson’s “over reach’ solidified the Republican party’s grasp of Congress and led to the vote that kept us out of the League of Nations. This is one of the times in our history where strong moral leadership failed to accomplish the goal of the better angels.

By the beginning of the 21st century some Americans and historian think of the wartime Franklin Roosevelt primarily in terms of the mistakes that led to the Pearl harbor disaster, the removal of Japanese Americans from their homes and other infringement of civil liberties: the failure to significantly improve the lot of African Americans and failure to do more to thwart the Holocaust. But on the morning of his death, the New York Times rendered the verdict that “men will thank God on their knees one hundred years from now that Franklin Roosevelt was in the White House. A President not so sure of his own abilities would not have been able to overcome the economic problems that he inherited in 1932-33 lasting through the end of the decade of the thirties and then take on a world war for close to four years and persuade the American Public to elect him to the office four times. His commanding performance during the war and our success in that conflict probably offset some of his draconian economic policies during his first two terms, many of which were ultimately overturned by the Supreme Court. Some historians find fault with Roosevelt’s

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performance at the Yalta conference in spring of 1945 with the meeting occurring during the last couple of months of his life. There is the feeling he may have given away too much to Stalin and what then led to Russia's control of countries that fell behind the iron curtain. But leadership means seeing the future -not making decisions for just the next election. On his way back from Yalta he was asked by a reporter whether Yalta would provide peace for the next generation. His answer "I can answer that question if you can tell me who your descendants will be in 2057.He predicted that the "United Nations will evolve into the best method ever devised for stopping the war."

Within our life time, Truman's decision NOT to drop more nuclear bombs on Japan in 1945 or not to use the bomb in Korea – over riding General MacArthur's plans and the ultimate firing of the General might be as good an example of moral leadership. I am sure this last comment will elicit consternation on both sides of the issue.

I understand Trumps presidency has led to what many may think as a new era of partisanship. The vocal vernacular is really nothing new. Actually, the rhetoric has softened although we may not think so. Allow me to quote some of the rhetoric that occurred during Truman's historical battle with McArthur leading to the Generals dismissal. Joe McCarthy, Sen from Wisconsin claimed the "Son of a Bitch has fired the Great General after imbibing Bourbon and Benedictine." The Chicago Tribune: - said "Truman should be expelled from office because he was unfit morally and mentally." Republican congressional leader Joe Martin said we should look at impeachment and Sen Jenner said that the U.S. was now in the hands of secret inner coterie who are direct agents of the Soviet Union. And we are concerned about the present administration's usage of harsh words. In my research for this essay I came across "He should be impeached" for at least 11 Presidents. I may have missed some!

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In our lifetime, the Viet Nam War and the Watergate issue, leading up to President Nixon's resignation were the primary issues that led to major splits in our society. And I am sorry to say both were predicated on a President's proclivity to lie and obfuscation. President Lyndon Johnson in advocating the need to expand the war went to Congress and lied about the Gulf of Tonkin incident claiming the Vietnamese had attacked one of our war ships and he used this falsehood to ask congress to allocate funds to expand the war and call up more Americans to serve. Some 50,000 lost their lives during this war. The impending impeachment of Nixon and his resignation prior to the impeachment vote were first generated by Nixon's lying to congress as well as the American people with regards to his involvement in Watergate. The social unrest created by both the Viet Nam War and Nixon's actions are well remembered by those of us tonight. Thousands in the streets and tremendous loss of citizens lives. In this case lack of moral leadership. However, think we must give credit to Johnson and his decision to push for the adoption of the Civil Rights acts of 1964-65. It was a moral decision with implemented throughout with empathy. He understood the passage of the acts would be the death knell of the Democratic party in the south and his political acumen proved to be correct although it took close to 20 years for the south to become straight Republican.

When speaking of Moral leadership, I would be remiss if I did not think about Barack Obama and his approach to politics and our country. Early in his presidency I was able to put in my two cents" sometimes his staff listened and not every decision he made I view with a positive outcome Think Syria and Red Line: think The affordable health care act and its stumbling roll out- think his hesitancy in "pushing the envelope fearful of his being viewed as an over

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powering black man and understanding part of the electorate viewed his election as the end of the world. But I knew where his moral map led him. During the lead up to the final negotiations of the Iran Nuclear agreement, ultimately signed in 2015 between the US and Iran as well as other countries, the Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu vigorously opposed the agreement and put pressure on several leading US Jewish organizations who were strong funders of Obama's Presidential runs. In 2015 an event was held in the Russian Hill area and approximately 70 plus people came to listen to him speak and were instructed to sit in carefully arranged rows of chairs. I chose to stand in the back. He spoke for 30 minutes on the issues of the day including the Iran negotiations. I knew he would take questions from the sitting crowd and knew that every time he looked up from the sitters, he would see me standing in the back. Finally, he said "one more question" and he said "OK John I see you standing back there you get the last one." "Mr. President, I understand the pressure you are under from outside forces," I did not mention Netanyahu's name but he knew what I was referring to. "Whatever decision you make on the Iran agreement, I hope you make for the betterment of this country and not for political reasons." With a stern face he answered "you can rest assured that will be how I make my final decision." As we walked out, he asked me, and in not so friendly a manner, why I waited to the end to ask the question. My answer, "Mr. President, you remember my last question but bet can't remember the third." He gave me a wry smile a fist bump think the only one I ever got from him and as we know ultimately signed off on an agreement many of his original backers had scorned. Moral leadership over electoral politics. With hind sight as a guide I have thought in some ways his election may have been a setback for our democracy. I am convinced that the white middle class today feels it is losing its position in our democracy and saw Obamas election as a prime mover for what they perceive as the demise of the white middle class-

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small town loss of jobs – erosion of what they feel was a good way of life for let's say 1945 until recent times. I had my disagreements with the president but one of them was NOT the color of his skin.

As Greg Weiner wrote in a New York Times Op ED prudence is a capacity for judgment that enables leaders to adjust politics to circumstances. The gateway to prudence is accurately gauging the leadership character of one's moment in history. ---Three come to mind: First Abraham Lincoln, warning "that the greatest danger to American liberty would arise from leaders seeking greatness in times that did not require it." Yet he attained that greatness through aggressive legislation: The Emancipation Proclamation -legislation that many thought would insure his loss of the presidency in 1864. At the same time, he soothed the conscious of our country with skepticism of the rhetoric of catastrophe. Second, FDR in 1932, an East Coast Brahmin grabbing hold of a tottering economic system that affected much of this country's populace as well as throughout the developed world and with forcefulness a bit of good luck resurrected the country's place in history. And third, in 2008, when our country had just gone through a calamitous fall in our economy elected Barack Obama- an American born African American when just 150 years ago this same country had split over the issue of allowing a black man to attain citizenship.

I am an optimist. The glass is always half full. This country has always risen from weak leadership and found ways to resurrect itself- much of the time from an unexpected cadre of citizenship. Prudence has always been a political asset. Prudence is a capacity for judgement-

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boldness but also modesty. Over time prudence wins out over extremism. Extremism always over reaches and sooner or later level heads are able to bring us back to our senses. Moral leadership without question is a tenet in our country's success. And you cannot have moral leadership without a moral compass!

I enjoy intellectual combat- suspect that was one of my main reasons for membership in the Chit Chat Club and I especially enjoy the combat when it pertains to our country's history and the threat to what I believe are our most important tenets to the two hundred and fifty-hundred-year-old success of our democracy. I want to be in the arena- I want to fight the fight. I have been involved with candidates from both parties- the candidate and his or her ideas the primary function for my support. Have I had losses – several times- but the key was and continues to be the culture of morality, regardless of party, and the participation in the arena. Why get involved when at our age – what advantage do we gain? I want to defend the ideas set in writing in Philadelphia some 250 years ago. Do I understand the disillusionment of segments of our society- absolutely! I try as hard as I can to understand the beliefs of the people who infuriate me the most. I understand their frustrations. However, there is the importance of stability in a democracy. History tells us that extremism usually over reaches and it will take an engaged citizenship to put a halt to the excesses. At least that is what Edmund Burke said. Many of their concerns are an anathema to me but might be acceptable to many others. However, some things must be defended even if unpopular and seemingly impossible to win. We need to act on principle We need to inculcate the cult of decency. Democracy depends upon the virtue of the citizens. I plan to be in the arena through November.

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