Misinformation, Deceptive Arguments, and The News
The War Against Truth. Who Will Own the Narrative?

Ted Catranis and Novatropos, ©2023, 2024, 2025, 2026

Unidentified quotes and material are from the author.
This is long, but by no means exhaustive. It could be longer.

Truth holds us responsible. Truth means that we are not the center of the universe. Truth exists, and it does not start from our personal desires. Truth teaches us that something more important always exists beyond us. Truth exists. From that point on, everything changes.

"Are We Cultivating An Atmosphere Of Ignorance and Defiance?"

"Never underestimate the difficulty of changing false beliefs by facts."
Henry Rosovsky

"If you are not allowed to question an idea, it is not science but ideology."
Thomas Sowell

"If you were presented with the truth, would you believe?"

"As a reporter, if you were presented with truths that opposed your narrative, would you print it honestly, alter it, or hide and disregard it?"

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To avoid this lengthy introduction and get right to the Methods of Misinformation, skip down several pages to: **Here is a Partial List of Misinformation Methods.**
However, this is a very useful Introduction, especially for those less informed about misinformation.
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Introduction - Why Do We Need This Article?

What do we want to hear? Do we want truth? Do we want only what will advance our agenda? Are we willing to listen to truth? Will we always close our ears to anything that does not advance our agenda? Will we join in civilized dialogue? Will we rage irrationally and destroy anything or any voice that speaks against our agenda?

We discuss news and information, but few issues are discussed thoroughly and honestly. The question might be, do we want to know the truth? Or do we prefer hiding behind a wall of known misinformation?

Our modern lifestyles have drawn a strong resistance to background study, logic, and philosophy. Put simply, we are highly susceptible to group pressure and misinformation.

Marketing and social media have gradually molded us and shaped many of our purchasing patterns. Media professionals have also shaped us to adopt narratives that carry ideas and political opinions. We claim we have our own thoughts, but that could be far from the truth.

Listen to the naysayers. They are right more often than we like to think. Be willing to admit that they may have been correct.

Do news agencies backtrack and admit that prior criticisms were correct? Do they admit to false stories? That would be quality news, but it rarely occurs.

Don't be deceived. News agencies have never been 100% honest and fact-based. There has always been some bias. Misinformation is not just a problem of our present generation. But I think we can agree that what is happening today is a new level of deception. The pervasiveness and boldness of the dishonesty are appalling. Obviously, misinformation in the news today is over the top.

News organizations and outlets exert tremendous power over society. They want to maintain that. Deception has always been part of human nature. Will we cure the news outlets? Probably not.

Perhaps we need a much better mental filter. We need to be smart and not fall for everything. Pause and think. Sometimes it seems we want to follow lies.

People standing in front of a microphone need something to say. Intense pressure or not, they say something. They often report what they believe their peers want. They want to maintain their audience. All news outlets have followers. Some are honest listeners, and others are staunch allies of a movement or idea.

News outlets are also political organizations. Reporters and anchors do come from a particular point of view. We assume that they set aside their views for the sake of the news, but they are human. Increasingly, news agencies appear to view themselves as a fourth branch of government.

Misleading tactics can skirt the truth and present a narrative. That is not an accident.
Ask yourself: What is being amplified and why? And what is minimized?
Are you a willing participant in misinformation?
How we react when someone questions us can reveal a great deal about our willingness to follow falsehood.

Thoughts and Descriptions of Misinformation

Do not assume that news personalities have your best interests in mind. Clearly, identity politics and the chosen mental club are far more important than truth. Tribalism seems to be the rule without apology. We are clearly in an era where destroying any opposition matters more than truth, justice, or advancement.

When you discuss ideas, watch for the person's manners. Are they controlled, listen to others, and honest, or do they quickly become enraged? When people quickly become enraged and malicious during a debate, they were likely taught to use anger and rage rather than open discussion. They have no answers to your questions and cannot tolerate being asked them. Rather than engage in debate, people who use misinformation often resort to rage and ad hominem attacks.

Avoiding open debate and discussion is a clear example of the intolerance of people who live with deception and misinformation. It is a work of domination, not truth.

Children use anger and screaming to gain something, but later they are taught to manage their needs and to discuss them appropriately. What if they are no longer taught that? What if parents demonstrate that rage, deceit, and destruction are normal? What if children are taught that questions, debate, logic, and truth are hateful and should be destroyed? Hummmm? What does that sound like? It does make you ponder our current society.

Is society being changed into another, less truthful image? I say yes – absolutely. It is not an accident. Every day, we are all fed a carefully curated supply of emotional narratives and information intended to alter our core ideas and traditions. Western Civilization itself is clearly under attack.

*** Compare stories with a wide variety of outlets. But be careful. News agencies and marketing professionals are experts at playing the long game of social change. You may already have been psychologically marketed into a new line of reasoning.**

Let's consider a fictitious and alternate history of this nation between 1918 and 1945.
This is Fiction.
Imagine living in the year 1918. We have a Free Press, but some outlets are willing activists for a specific, destructive point of view. Slowly,

those professional activists begin to enter the new stream. Activists, in small numbers, begin to enter universities and assume significant positions as professors.

Occasionally, certain news agencies will raise an alarm, though their voices are likely to be minimized or mocked. A very small number of activists with broad influence turn public opinion, even though they are stating very anti-American ideologies. But during this time, those news activists and professors continue to grow and, in fact, gain disciples. For the first decade, it remains relatively quiet because the number of disciples is small. During the second decade, the work of their disciples becomes strong and pervasive. Teachers, university professors, and news commentators overwhelmingly assert and identify themselves as disciples and activists. Opinionated news commentators call themselves reporters and news anchors, and deceptively avoid the label of commentators. But they clearly have an agenda.

By 1930, a significant number of news commentators and university instructors had quietly gained enough positions to openly proclaim their ideologies as truth. Educational policies supporting their anti-American positions became standard.

By 1935, the world had changed. Activists quietly gained control of nearly all university social science positions and held majorities in most major news outlets in the country. By 1940, they had, in fact, positioned themselves so that over 90% of major news agencies belonged to their organization and supported their viewpoint.

Other news agencies attempt to bring a balance to viewpoints and show opposition to the anti-American viewpoint, but since the activists have gained control of the universities, the schools, and nearly all news agencies, opposition is routinely mocked. Very little opposition reaches the American population.

The anti-American activists work to establish completely new majority viewpoints and discredit all traditional American viewpoints. Generally,

the nation follows the new ideology.

By 1940, enough time had passed that most people could not remember the previous American way of life.

War breaks out in Europe, but Americans have no interest at all. In fact, Americans now overwhelmingly support the German invasion. When German warships arrive at the shores, we do nothing to stop them.

Germany establishes firm control over the nation. All rights are suspended. Everyone must work to support the German Empire.

As a few years pass, people wonder what happened. They try to remember the original national values, but many of the books and stories have been lost.

Do you like misinformation? Do you enjoy living in the echo chamber?

We have all been factory-grown in a soup of marketing and misinformation. That is why we eat cereal and other processed foods that are very bad for us.

It is time to wake up! If we are to succeed, we need to step away from deceit and live in truth.

Stories and Language Instruct Our Lives

We tend to live our lives and learn about life generally through stories and language.

Both stories and language can easily be twisted to spark emotion. That emotion can push us into a different line of reasoning without our realizing it.

Expect it. There are sociological or political reasons for hiding details and slanting a story.

People follow stories much more than truth. People can easily twist stories and language to build a political following or support a behavior or attitude. Media outlets frequently use distorted stories and

language to create narratives that avoid truthful, complete reporting.

For the media, the narrative counts far more than the truth.

A dedication to honesty is highly valuable. Honest humility will motivate you to learn and avoid destructive thought patterns.

Without truth, twisting stories simply becomes an open season on the unsuspecting listener with no shame.

There is not your truth and my truth. There is truth.

One of the most cowardly things ordinary people can do is to shut their eyes to facts.
C.S. Lewis

At times like these - *Prove you can think.*

It is a sad commentary on modern education and social media that people are so unable to engage in a coherent argument or open the door to free exchange of ideas. We are trained to lash out emotionally, attack the person, repeat catchphrases and slogans, and shout bold, ridiculous opinions, but have no interest in thoughtful reasoning or listening to ideas.
Paraphrased and expanded - from Thomas Sowell

Imagine the Results of Misinformation

Imagine taking your children to Washington, D.C., walking through a history museum, and finding that all of the major figures of American history, including our founding fathers, are absent from any display, and that in their place you find room after room of personalities who are antagonistic toward American heritage. Then you go to the bookstore in the museum and find that the only biographies available are of those people who hold one political opinion. Imagine going back to your hotel or visiting local tourist stores and finding displays and books that represent only one political opinion, and noticing that all highlighted material opposes the foundation of our nation.

Now imagine visiting your children's school and finding that all the textbooks were written by authors who studied under professors from one political party that opposes our nation. Imagine that every teacher views themselves as an advocate or activist for an opinion rather than a teacher of historical facts.

Let's continue. Imagine reading local and national newspapers and

learning that nearly everyone openly supports one political party and acts as an activist for one political and economic viewpoint.

Are any of those speculations false, or are they currently occurring?

Years ago, we had a House Un-American Activities Committee that was ridiculed for pressuring and questioning people about supporting communism and anti-American activities. It is not so funny anymore, is it?

Misinformation and forced societal change can be either very blatant or subtle. Here is how the subtle approach can become mainstream. Let me use number one to indicate factual information with no attempt at misinformation. I'll also use ten to indicate the most ridiculous or blatant misinformation. A newspaper or speaker can publish an article full of obvious misinformation, trying to change the political landscape. Let's say the article is at a level of eight for misinformation.

The article is seriously questioned, and the author is pressed to reword their statements and downplay the effects. They might rewrite the article to place it at only level three on the misinformation scale. People then accept the rewritten article.

Then, six months later, another article is published on the subject. It might be by a different author or the same one. This time, the author writes an article filled with misinformation and propaganda, rated six. It is accepted because the reading population has been desensitized.

Here is a Partial List of Misinformation Methods

1) Crisis, Rage, and the Polls - The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy. This is easy to spot. Newspapers will flood readers with crisis reporting, with few or no supporting facts. You will see words such as maybe, possibly, could be, in the future, etc., to generate panic and opinion. The reader will "feel" much more than think. Unfortunately for the reader, it is a house of sand with no foundation.
Once the stories reach saturation, political polls will be conducted to gauge public sentiment. It is obvious what the results of those polls will be. You will even see polls to gauge the feelings depicted by previous polls.
Next stories will be created to discuss the polls and the crisis emotions.

The press completely generates that crisis cycle to move societal opinion. That is the key. It is a continual crisis cycle created by the media, with an end in mind. Ultimately, our minds are steered to generate fear and frustration toward the media's target. After a plethora of sensational attacks, the masses will believe and act as if the crisis is real. Acting as if the crisis is real then leads to crisis symptoms, which can in turn trigger further hysterical news reporting.

I like to call this:
Explosio Horribilis Possibilites (My Latin Invention)
An overabundance of negative and irrationally dreadful possibilities. The news media loves to take the ideas of opposing parties and public interest groups, and throw a multitude of the following: maybe, could be, possibly, people will die if, etc. You will not see the complete story. You will also never get a story a year or two later to reveal whether any of the hysterical tirade came close to happening. I will leave it to readers to determine whether one political viewpoint is commonly favored.

Usually, the rage-filled attack will prove to be misinformation and malicious nonsense. But never expect a retraction or admission of a

false attack. The goal is a cumulative emotional memory that locks the reader into a negative view of the person being attacked. Facts and truth are unnecessary. When one attack is uncovered, another will simply replace it with a new, false attack. Unfortunately, most readers are helpless.

2) Anecdotal Stories and Story Magnification. We love stories. Stories make us who we are. News outlets generate stories as narratives. Think about the stories we love. They contain heroes and villains. The more clearly evil the villain, the easier it will be to follow the story. At all costs, we vilify the opposing party or idea and elevate ourselves to the role of the beautiful, generous prince or princess. The story never exists in reality, but it lives as a tool to maintain our club mentality.

Watch for anecdotal stories as a basis for the story.
The psychological effect of using anecdotal stories and emotion is to make you sympathize with a very specific person or situation. It is natural to sympathize with the "sad anecdotal story." Once you make the connection, they have you. It is then hard to let go of the new club mentality.

A news outlet will focus on a small segment of a story and draw a larger picture from that segment or sample of opinions. At times, an agency will highlight only a small sample of the population and dismiss the rest, which can quickly make a story appear completely different from reality. NPR loves this tactic in its anecdotal stories.

When truth becomes painful, we replace it with narratives and emotion.

3) Appeal to Pity, or Guilt Mongering, relies on provoking your emotions to win an argument rather than factual evidence. Appealing to pity attempts to pull on an audience's heartstrings, distract them, and support their point of view.

Emotion is often used to mask, cloud, or erase truth and create a narrative useful to only one party, or to forward a false movement.

Preying upon Western Sensitivities, Emotional Insecurities, and False Guilt. There is an obvious emotional affliction among the nations of Western Civilization. It is an overpowering guilt complex. Media outlets can over-motivate our Western false guilt so that we will do almost anything to make ourselves feel that we have righted the wrong. We engage in virtue signaling to the public and ourselves. Consider how we treat crippled or blind dogs. Perhaps we should remove our false guilt messaging from the decision equation.

Emotion is an industry. Anger and fear are what they want. It does not matter which side you choose. Anger keeps the story going.
When truth becomes painful, we replace it with narratives and emotion.

The Oppressor/Oppressed worldview is now being pushed at universities. Create a sadness or victim mentality. Once we empathize with a victim (real or not), or become a victim (real or not), we become locked and focus only on our discomfort and entitlement.

An offshoot of this is when words such as Homophobia or Islamophobia are used. Clearly, they are inventions designed to prey upon the complex Western/Christian ethic involving guilt, conviction, sympathy, love, and repentance. Without pausing, unprepared people fall prey to the onslaught of pressure to admit to any sin, real or imagined, and submit to the invading force. After 911 it was used, and since that time, radical Islamic forces have grown and even taken control of many Western cities. They are lies used to strengthen destructive groups.

At the time of this publication, the same Islamic groups that instigated anti-American sentiment and empowered the attack on September 11, 2001, have now won the mayoral seat in New York City. The city also regularly broadcasts Islamic prayer chants from prominent buildings. Just think of the power of false guilt.

4) Self-proclaimed Fact-Checkers. Some organizations have become "Fact-Checkers." Everyone is now their own expert. Seldom do you see a fact-checker who honestly looks at all sides. There always seems to be

a slant or agenda.
Deliberate omission is rampant among many fact-checkers.
Watch for sources based on private social organizations. They always have an agenda.

5) Attack of the Week (similar to 1).
The strategy is to plan a long list of attacks against primarily one person or idea. Each attack lasts one to three weeks, using the full force of the media and all the tools of noise and misinformation. Improvement and policy are not the target. The target is chaotic destruction. After that attack runs its course or loses media popularity, a new cycle of attacks will ensue. If the attacks are proven wrong, there will be silence, and then a quick shift to the next attack. I see those launching attacks as nothing more than infiltrators seeking our destruction.

6) Hysterical Theatrics and Performative Outrage
Moral posturing and virtue signaling.
Fake moral exhibitionism.
Hypocrisy masquerading as virtue.
Tantrums inspired by the sold-out news media.
NGO groups and paid protesters are hysterically masquerading as nonprofit community groups, working counter to America and our way of life.

Watch for performative theatrics.
It is hypocrisy masquerading as virtue. Fake exhibitionism is usually organized and supported by anti-American billionaires.
Self-appointed leaders assume superiority as rage becomes violent. The attacks and tantrums of children become normalized.
Hate works very strongly as a motivating and unifying factor. The Islamic world uses it very enthusiastically. The strategy is to plan a long list of attacks against primarily one person or idea. When extremely malicious comments are repeatedly directed toward certain politicians, young people can grow to believe that violence is the only proper solution. If they were taught from youth that someone is

extremely evil, some people will follow through with the suggested violence.

7) Ad Hominem Fallacy uses personal attacks rather than logic and encourages people to hate or disgrace the source (or religion, politics, etc.). If I disgrace you or your source, everything you say is false, and everything you do is useless.
This fallacy occurs when someone rejects or criticizes another point of view based on the personal characteristics, ethnic background, physical appearance, or other non-relevant traits of the person who holds it.

Sometimes we De-Humanize: Naïve Realism is when we alone observe reality wisely and objectively. But conversely, other people are irrational and not worthy of sympathetic consideration.
All of this feeds into our natural desire to react. We are being trained to react with sudden rage prior to any thought.

This is heavily used today by repeatedly opposing people by using the vilest names imaginable. At times, some leaders and media influencers have even said some people should not be allowed to live. When a person continually witnesses this, or is educated in a constant soup of malicious attacks, eventually they will believe that the only recourse is to cancel or support the murder of a person.

Take a look at social media posts. You will notice a pattern. If a person cannot be positive on Thanksgiving, Memorial Day, Independence Day, etc., but instead resorts to malicious ad hominem attacks, even on those days, they have revealed their true character.

8) Media Activists. Many modern news and media figures enter the news operation with an agenda. A revolving door connects political and social organizations with news outlets. Activism, persuasion, and opinion are the plan from the start.

9) Lies of Omission and Partial Answers (they are rampant). Lies of omission and partial answers can be among the strongest methods for

changing society while appearing truthful. When they occur, many people never know what happened.

Look at what is stressed and what is omitted. Listen for the frivolous content that clouds our minds and then forces the commentator to neglect other material because "they ran out of time."

A lie can be told by using small parts of the truth to create the impression that the reporter told the whole or correct truth when, in fact, they omitted significant details or sources. There can be an outright refusal to recognize or disseminate information contrary to the preferred politics.

Media Silence, Politician Silence, and Soft-Ball Questions are common examples of Lies of Omission. A politician will simply refuse to answer without being pressed. Some news reporters will be very generous and support the non-answer, or will ask only "softball" questions to support the politician. In time, the stories seem to vanish without details or repercussions. Another example is when a new agency will avoid the topic that interferes with its story narrative.

Check multiple sources. If you engage with only one newspaper or one television news channel, you will not get the whole story. Granted, some news channels will make a greater effort to cover the full story and gather information from all sides of an issue, but many will not. Some news channels are quite blatant in their use of omission. Someone living in the "echo chamber" may not even know what questions to ask.

Lies of omission and incomplete revelations also appear in scientific research. While scientists seek to prove or disprove their hypothesis, they should also consider all possible or imagined details. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigators often do a better job of seeking scientific truth than university scientists. They do not follow the current scientific method of "prove or disprove" their own selected hypothesis or preconceived conclusion. They follow the facts wherever they may lead.

Deliberate omissions occur in all areas of science. I have witnessed this even in archaeology. Predetermined historical narratives and ideologies hold researchers in a terrible grip. I have seen archaeology magazines print striking ignorance of evidence, even after researchers have clearly discovered it.

10) Consider the Source. Carefully consider the history, associations, and motivations of the person or agency. This is especially important when authors include "recent research" or "studies" in their articles. It does not take much effort to notice the one-sided opinion.

Important Source Red Flags:
Is the original source apparent, or is there a loop of false sources?
Does the source have a history of dishonesty or deceptive gain?
Does the source use misinformation and deny obvious facts (especially while maintaining science superiority)?
Does the source elevate itself above facts?
Does the source seek personal gain?
Is the source an activist organization?
Is there a benefit in one view being amplified?
Is the source group a falsely identified group, or NGO, which actually supports the opposite of its namesake?
Is the source person an ignoramus or living in self-amplification?
Does the source seek praise from other misinformation groups?
Is the source basing its information on "a priori" reasoning?
Does the source always support one political group?
Does the source frequently use baseless ad hominem attacks?
Is there a denial of basic rights while the source dramatically attacks dissenters?
Does the source seek conflict, or seek to renew an old and likely completed conflict for their own benefit?
Are they drama addicts, drama creators, or just plain nuts?
Does the source regularly live within the misinformation tactics listed in this article?

Follow the money.

11) Groupthink, In-group Favoritism, Bandwagon Effect, Peer Pressure, The Echo Chamber. People seem to have a need to follow the latest wave of political thought.
We must support open and free debate.
All of the tactics in this category oppose debate, free speech, and Western civilized discourse. For any society to succeed, it must encourage educated debate and avoid tribalism. But that is exactly what modern influencers desire. Reason must be welcomed, or we will perish.

Club Mentality, Tribalism, and Herd Mentality. You must join the new think, or you are out of the club and labeled as evil. Non-members are a danger to society. This tactic clearly opposes open and free debate.

There is no denying that 24-hour news media, social media, and constant misinformation have tapped into our psychology and exploited our innate social behaviors. The echo chamber of constant news and opinion suited to favor your chosen ideas does nothing but encourage division and rage. But people like the echo chamber. Unfortunately, it is a lie.

Peer Pressure and fear are more powerful than ever. There is tremendous power in narrative. The new media loves peer pressure. You can never deny the ability of modern media, and especially social media, to amplify a topic. Imagine the removal of social media. The narratives change dramatically.

Society and news agencies can Bandwagon. A newspaper will publish an article with unknown sources. Then other newspapers will use the first article as a source. Finally, multiple newspapers will report that multiple sources have reported on the issue, although no study or source ever existed. They continue reporting a topic or scientific idea as fact, even though no scientific evidence has been established. Multiple voices cannot possibly be wrong – right? But they can be if nobody knows that science does not support it. Hence, the narrative has been established because we said it has been established.

In other words, the fallacy argues that if it appears that everyone thinks a certain way, then you should too.

The Dictatorship of the More Intelligent and the Masses. News media, Scientists, Doctors, Influencers, Comedians, TikTok, Loudmouths at Work, Politicians. We see condescension, arrogance, superiority, and outright dictatorial domination (COVID, transgender dominance, and our political campaigns).

"Some ideas are so stupid that only intellectuals believe them."
George Orwell

University Pressures. College professors love to corner students with uncomfortable questions. Suddenly, the student faces pressure and discomfort when confronted by a seemingly wiser adult. It is no different than a minister or teacher taking advantage of a student. But when a college professor does this, it may feel as if the student has no recourse but to turn from old, discredited ideas and follow the wise professor.
Remember this: the professor is older and lives for one reason – to turn the minds of young people. They will use all available tools of misinformation.

A college student might quickly change their reasoning when confronted by friends or groups of friends. A friend might begin a behavior that challenges a student. Now they must make a decision. Often, they give up their beliefs and follow the socially acceptable behavior to please their friends.

Uncomfortableness does not mean you are in error. It simply means you are temporarily unable to answer. But that can change. Hold on and do your own research. Answers are available if you ask.

12) Repetition and Amplification. It is often true that if you repeat a lie or a story enough times, it becomes the truth. Well, at least it becomes what we choose to believe.

Media Magnification - As a story is repeated all day, for weeks, whether correct or not, people find it hard not to believe it. People find it very difficult to be the only person to oppose the "experts." Many news outlets reference one another and then use that number of references as proof. In reality, there was only one source - and that source was mysterious or questionable. It is possible that the original source was fabricated.

13) Continuation Bias (Similar to Confirmation Bias – see next) occurs when you have a plan, but other ideas and obstacles interfere with that plan or judgment, clouding your decisions. Ultimately, you become fixed on one piece of data or idea, and accept no further information. You continue as if in a bubble.

14) Confirmation Bias. Modern society tends to seek support for predetermined ideas and facts. Modern thinking chooses facts based on behavior and personal values. The news media also does that. Put them together, and you get whatever facts we believe or impose on other people.

With Confirmation Bias, we get locked into a pattern of behavior or ideology. It can be innocent and unconscious. But it can also be generated slowly, as a tool for building a dogmatic pattern of reasoning. In time, it will feel normal.

15) Cognitive Dissonance. Truth, error, and lies sometimes appear at the same time. We also have preferred opinions, expectations, or habits that conflict with reality. How do we resolve the mental conflict?

Cognitive Dissonance could be an innocent mental reaction to confirmation bias or confirmation bias. A person, whether consciously or not, is attempting to sort reality but is confused by previously held reasoning and decisions.

We have truth and conflicting opinions, but we often try to avoid

honest, rational thinking in favor of a predetermined opinion. That can be a challenge. We must choose an opinion. Do we follow truth, or force ourselves to follow a chosen worldview regardless of facts? If we force ourselves to hold a bad habit or a lie, we experience conflict, or cognitive dissonance, as we continue with false reasoning.

We are experts at lying to ourselves and denying parts of the story so we can accept what we know is a lie. We often accept only the science that permits us to continue our desired lifestyles. Sometimes we invent science that does not even exist to support a point of view.

Perhaps continued cognitive dissonance is why those who spread misinformation or propaganda are so quickly triggered and become angered when their false statements are exposed. They are enraged when anyone else attempts to enlighten them with the truth. People experiencing cognitive dissonance may become frustrated by the slightest misinformation in others while holding and spreading large amounts of falsehoods themselves.

16) Selective Story Aiming. Think – to whom is the story aimed? Follow the money or the agenda. Follow the engagement pattern. Who is being engaged in the story?

17) Intentional Falsehood. Yes, news agencies are deliberately lying and creating false narratives. Later, they may produce a minimal gesture that appears to be a retraction. But the damage has been done, and the false story sticks in the minds of many readers. That falsehood is often used in a list of sources.

18) Appeal to the Stone (*argumentum ad lapidem*) – dismissing a claim as absurd without demonstrating proof for its absurdity. This is widely used on daytime television programs.

19) Appeal to Hypocrisy — also known as the tu quoque fallacy — focuses on the hypocrisy of an opponent, which may or may not be real.

20) Hyperbole and Emotion. These are clear indicators of false intent. Emotionally charged articles are meant to engage and entrap you. Our modern society seems to live by hyperbole.

The sudden rage to destroy and speak with outrageous profanity is not wisdom. It is a childish, narcissistic rage to attack anything that a person does not understand. Irrational rage is often used by the media as a tool to shape the future.

What is your best vision of society? Do you want to be among those who can only live in irrational anger? What will be the end of the anger? Will there be a nation?

Watch for self-worship and narcissism mixed with hyperbole.

21) The Strawman Argument. A straw man argument attacks a different subject rather than the topic being discussed, often a more extreme version of the counterargument. The purpose of this misdirection is to make one's position look stronger than it is.

The Strawman Argument has probably been used as much as any during the last ten years. Take any idea and create a side argument (not the main point). Then stretch it and exaggerate it ad nauseam. You create a completely false and hyperbolic narrative about the topic or person so that you either completely discredit your opponent or lead the opponent down endless rabbit trails of winless embarrassment.

The bottom line is that the Strawman is a lie, even though it is presented as normal on social media, including the Facebook wall of many close friends. It is used when people fail at their own argument. Emotionally charged arguments may even continue to personal, ad hominem attacks.

Point it out to their face.

Remember, if a Strawman is used, the opponent has almost no interest

in the truth. But small hints of the Strawman can be used out of habit. Your opponent can be further engaged if they can accept their initial error and move toward truth.

22) Red Herring. *Also known as: misdirection, smokescreen, and clouding the issue.*
A red herring is an argument that uses confusion or distraction to shift attention away from a topic and toward a false conclusion. Red herrings usually include an unimportant fact, idea, or event that is largely irrelevant to the real issue. A Red Herring argument changes the subject, distracting the audience from the real issue and shifting focus to something else where the speaker feels more comfortable and confident. Usually, it is also quite hyperbolic and distracting. It is bait often taken by the weak debater.

It is an interference technique used to replace their lack of a real argument or truth with a sideshow. The sideshow is later often used as a factor of truth in their conclusion.

23) Generalization Without Validity. Making broad claims without citing specifics. A good argument is always to ask for specifics or an explanation. The claim might be true in one case, but that doesn't mean it's always true.
A *hasty generalization* is a claim based on very few examples rather than substantial proof. Arguments based on hasty generalizations often don't hold up due to a lack of supporting evidence

24) Imaginary Science or Studies. Assuming common scientific study and knowledge that simply does not exist, and then repeating the preferred results as if fact. Repeat a lie enough times, and it seems to become the truth.

25) Appeal to Authority, False Experts or False Authority. These are false, or so-called experts, with an agenda. "Officials say," "research says," and "all Americans say" are examples. Phrases such as "all reasonable people believe" are used to create a false consensus.

False Consensus or False Authority Bias. Watch for: officials say, researchers say, or all Americans want to know. It may all be just made up.
So-called authorities will often state, as fact, an opinion without being questioned. They should have been asked, "Where did you get those facts?" Or asked to specify and explain.

If the news anchor does not ask the difficult questions and require the authority to prove or explain their statements, then the anchor is complicit in supporting the falsehood.

Appeal to authority is the misuse of an author or authority's opinion to support an argument. An authority can support evidence and data, but it becomes a fallacy when the expert or authority is treated as the final source of truth. Often, the authority suggested lacks legitimate research or evidence to support their claim. The value of the person's authority is usually overstated, illegitimate, or irrelevant to the topic. They are used as a badge to end the conversation.

Appeal to Authority uses the authority figure as an absolute to disqualify all other opinions. By dropping a name or organization, they assume they have ended the debate. Unfortunately, it often works because people do not question it.

The Almighty Scientist pressure is common in this generation. Scientists do great work for humanity. I taught science for many years and am convinced that science has contributed to mankind's prosperity. But scientists can and often do have a motivation. The work of a scientist is not overseen like police work. It should strictly follow the Scientific Method, but opinions often cloud or change conclusions. Scientists can follow a hypothesis devised to generate a specific result. Avoid forming assumptions; let the evidence lead you, all of it.

Science is a modern buzzword that simply means – my science and my facts, not yours. When you read an article, notice the number of

paragraphs based on opinion and guesses rather than "just the facts." Science articles are famous for that. Is the imaginary picture they are drawing more important than the facts and/or results?

It is easy to see that people who say "follow the science" rarely do so. They usually deny science that interferes with their predetermined social worldview. Personal selfishness forces people to select only the science that supports their behavior. Usually, the science they suggest is either complete misinformation, never existed, or, at best, a very poor interpretation.

When university faculties in history, social sciences, and politics contain over 90% of one worldview, every statement should be questioned.

Celebrity appeal. Well-known influencers make statements and gain followers, even though they may never have developed their own research reputation or substantiated their claims. It can quickly lead to Bandwagoning.

Conversely, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.
And then again, abundance of correlation is not causation.

26) Not Following Facts – Lack of Impartiality. Does the investigation follow any and all facts, or does it follow a person's hypothesis? Consider the work of NTSB investigators reconstructing airplane accidents. They honestly seek facts without following a trend or personal gain.

27) A priori Knowledge or Reasoning maintains a prior determination, narrative, or conclusion. It is independent of rational discussion, critical and contrary research, or current experience. Hence, knowledge is by definition. While this can be useful in mathematics or basic conversation, it is completely bogus for arguments that require evidence.

28) False Sources or Double Counting. A news agency will list multiple

sources as a basis for their report, knowing full well that some of the reports were false or duplicate reports of the same source. Double counting events or occurrences makes a weak source appear to be multiple very strong sources. The original source may have been fabricated.

Double counting also blurs mathematical probabilities, which leads to the sum of the probabilities of all cases exceeding reality.

This is common when media outlets publish reports without a factual basis. Other reporters then use these fabricated reports to support the misinformation and add further reports to the cycle, as if there were a wealth of supporting research or reporting. Unfortunately, this is very common in modern reporting.

29) Minimizing. Notice how some details receive brief lip service at best, while others are stressed with hyperbole.

30) Cherry-picking and misrepresenting parts of a study without ever revealing that a broader scope of evidence exists.
Taking small bites of information out of context and twisting them to a clearly opposite meaning has become a way of life for many news outlets. Unfortunately, much of our society has become too lazy to care or find the truth.

31) Bait and Switch can work with ideas as well as used cars.

32) Wack-a-Mole. This is currently a favorite tactic. Keep throwing new arguments at the person or keep changing the point. Keep adding or diverting to another reason for your disagreement.

33) Double Standards. A reporter may "follow the science one day," and then follow nonsense or emotion another day.
Analyze how determined the news agency is to provide both sides of a story and then let the reader decide. Do they make a point of providing both sides at the risk of adversity?

34) Framing. Notice the way that Stories are Framed. Adding just a few words at the beginning of a sentence, or at the end of a paragraph, can quickly create an unchangeable wall of opinion. It can be as simple as starting the paragraph with a negative comment rather than the truth or a positive comment. It quickly establishes an opinion in the reader's mind before any facts are presented.

Ask: why was it framed? There must be a reason, or the author would just write the facts. What don't they want you to know or think about?

Why use Framing? Because it works. It is one of the most frequently used forms of misinformation. It is very powerful because readers are often unaware of its effects. We cannot deny that emotionally charged language used to frame a news article can easily sway large numbers of people. You will notice lengthy news articles that begin with at least two paragraphs framing a person in a negative light prior to the assertion of any facts. The AP does it very often. Repeated framing creates a set, or locked-in, idea that is hard to change, even with large amounts of facts.

Framing words are unnecessary childish jabs used to move a crowd.

I noticed a recent, blatant example of framing in their coverage of my local Congressional Election. After a debate, the newspaper, which is no longer owned by anyone from our state, ran a lengthy article. It used obvious framing to slant the story. The vast majority of paragraphs began with the name of a candidate from one particular party. The newspaper also included an extra, smiling picture of that same candidate. Coincidence? I don't think so. The other candidate's name was usually not listed in the paragraphs or was buried toward the end of paragraphs.

35) Language and New Speak. Consider how quickly words change into a "New Speak" idea to support mass moral change and even dictatorial control. Words can and have been stolen from their meaning and twisted

for unclear, deceptive, and completely opposite purposes.

Newspeak can be used as fact when, just a couple of decades earlier, it would have been considered completely false and destructive. Just consider how ideas of socialism have moved into the mainstream.

In other words, "Beware of the 'Nouveau Intelligentsia."

36) Improper Use of Data and Statistics. We can generate quick, sensational headlines related to research and statistics that are taken out of context, improperly grouped, used without stating a basis for the data, or forced into an improper correlation/causation relationship. Many correlations can be correctly highlighted that are not represented as causation. Yet the media loves to sensationalize vague, unrelated correlations and present them as conclusions. Once cemented in the mind, many people become hooked and very hard to re-teach. Numbers and data are not cut-and-dried.

Consider the famous Colgate toothpaste story. Supposedly, 80% of all dentists preferred Colgate. In reality, 80% of dentists preferred several brands of toothpaste.

37) A False Dilemma or False Dichotomy presents limited options — typically by focusing on two extremes — when in fact more possibilities exist. The phrase "America: Love it or leave it" is an example of a false dilemma.
The false dilemma fallacy is a manipulative tool that polarizes the audience, promoting one side and demonizing the other. It's common in political discourse as a way of strong-arming the public into supporting controversial legislation or policies.
False Analogies, Hasty Generalizations, and Inconsistent Comparisons are false methods of comparison that can leave someone with a false impression of the whole or a correct comparison.
An Either/Or Situation. Forcing a person to accept a yes/no, completely true/false position. It forces you to assume that if/then statements are always reconcilable. They are not.

Opposing views: When considering opposing statements, it is possible for two opinions, or statements, to be at least partially correct – that is, if you fully consider the context. At times, two opposing views cannot both be correct because their very definition denies the other. Sometimes, only one side can be true because the facts will nullify one opinion. But that is not always the case.

It is possible, and often likely, that both sides of a story, or opinions, may share a measure of truth. Portions of both sides may be truthful and accurate, though in different ways.

38) A Slippery Slope Argument assumes that a certain course of action will necessarily lead to a chain of future events. The slippery slope fallacy takes a benign premise or starting point and suggests it will lead to unlikely or ridiculous outcomes without supporting evidence.

On the other hand, the "slippery slope" is often true. Politicians can slip in changes that, over time, can easily blossom into major errors.

39) Long-Range Effects of the Opinions. It is possible to project those very long-range effects of reporting that are not immediately noticed. It may be suggested that effects are short-lived and narrow, but everything has effects.

40) Impulse or First Story Deciding. We tend to rely on the first piece of information we receive for an emotional connection.
We seek Confirmational Bias. It is, unfortunately, the modern way of life.

41) Begging the Question. In an argument, the conclusion is assumed in one of the argument's premises, even if that premise is not supported by independent evidence. Often called circular reasoning, it begins and ends at the same place by providing what is essentially the conclusion of the argument as a premise.
It is a suggested or insisted conclusion preceding evidence. This is the

method used to discredit Joe Paterno. Watch for arguing that precedes news and facts. In other words, the anchor starts with an argument that establishes themselves and their reasoning above their competition. Facts would not be welcomed, although a few facts might be entered by mistake.

Circular Reasoning is when a speaker starts with the conclusion they are trying to reach; it is sometimes called *assuming the conclusion*. By assuming the initial point or position is true, they suggest that all other opinions are, by their definition, false and to be immediately discredited.

42) Opinion Disguised as Factual Reporting. Some news anchors are clearly opinion commentators but pose as news and fact anchors. Some anchors honestly admit they are opinion-oriented commentators, while others hide it. Watch for obvious narcissism in the reporter as they assert their superior reasoning.

43) The Ancient Aliens Effect (my phrasing). There is an appetite for the new, unusual, and strange. We want to believe it. People can misquote science and assert studies even though certain research has been disproven for years. It does not matter. People want to believe grandiose reports.

44) History Channel. If it is on the History Channel, it must be true and honest – right? The History Channel can and does select officials it likes and present them as if they represent the majority or well-established science. They create their own self-proclaimed truth – and it sticks. The History Channel loves to revise history with its new, much wiser historians. Most people never realize they use carefully selected, opinionated people to represent the chosen truth. Remember, they push Ancient Aliens and amplify some scientists who are little more than mouthpieces.

I am not suggesting that the History Channel should never be trusted. I have found many very useful and interesting shows on the channel. But please educate yourself and be careful.

45) Story Blending to alter the narrative. Take a small part of fact or truth and blend it with a large false story. You will only need a minimum of truth for this to work. People will take the whole story and run with it as if it were true. It will stick. Sometimes people will be deceived by those very small, partial truths, and other times they choose to hold the apparent misinformation because it enables their behavior. People tend to want their behaviors enabled regardless of inaccuracy.

46) Interest and Influence. Just watch any TV commercial. You tend to trust them, but you do not know why.

47) False Economies. There is a mental battle between ethics, values, integrity, morality, and economic value. The mind can be tricked into sidestepping decisions that affect personal morality and integrity by focusing on economic and material aspects. Once an economic basis is applied, we follow a different reasoning. It may be a rational bargain to give up certain activities, freedoms, or money in exchange for bad behavior. From that point, we make decisions based on the bargain and personal benefit, not our values of right and wrong. Consider state-supported gambling as an easy example.

48) Modern Cancel Culture. The Dictatorship of New Think. It is real. There is no difference between modern Cancel Culture and what Communist Party leaders do in Russia. The greatest way to spread misinformation is to nullify or cancel any opposing viewpoint. Control the information, and you control the people. Internet social media giants such as Google, Facebook, YouTube, etc. have become the libraries to the world and news outlets of the 21st century. Their ability to quickly cancel or suppress opposing views is staggering. Most people have no idea what is happening. They do not know where to look.

People have been canceled for the slightest activity or speech that opposes chosen or trending views. Simply asking a question has led to people being canceled. The power of modern social media and search

engines can surpass that of any government or news agency.

49) Assigned Blame. An event or situation arises that allows us to assign blame to a person or an idea. It is much easier to blame or label someone as evil rather than solve a problem.

That blame is then remembered for years. It separates us from personal responsibility and permits us to focus on the "evil" person and reduce their influence.

50) Memory Priorities and Grudges. Example: A child violates a rule, experiences a problem, or is denied some activity due to their behavior. Possibly, several incidents occur. The child then builds an angry impression of the parent, labeling them as the source of their problems. It sticks and grows. Rather than resolve their issue with the parent, they choose bitterness. A person can live their life focusing on that growing hatred.

It happens throughout society. A child could turn and recognize that the parent loves them and wants the best for them. But in that intense moment, they choose to direct their anger at the wrong person. Opening the door to their parents could solve the problem, but they must take that step.
Years later, the event that initially created the negative impression may fade, and other memories reemerge as more important. They could also turn and accept their parents.
Or bitterness, envy, strife, and malice could dominate their thinking.

51) Controlling the Argument, Information, Communication, and Debate. I also call this the Information Steam Roller approach. Nations have successfully used this for control and propaganda.

52) Assumption of Inferior Previous Methods or Research. Modern thinking, methods, and sources are always superior. Or the *"Nouveau Intelligentsia."*
Everything new must be better and correct. Elite snobbery is the

reaction to anything that is not from the new superior reasoning.

Clearly, this works in connection with number 53.

53) Using a Truth to Support A Lie or Missing the Point. An argument may start on track and be partially true, but it does not fully address the issue. Hence, you get irrelevant conclusions and bad comparisons. A portion of truth will almost always be blended with falsehood. It is a trap. Call it out, and return to the point.

54) Partial Truth. Every good deception includes a portion of truth. It grants the appearance of credibility. You listen to a little truth and are trapped, believing everything is true.

All great deceivers use just enough truth to gain your acceptance. Remember the Bible stories of the Serpent in the Garden and Satan attempting to tempt Christ. Think of every time a teenager tries to twist a parent to gain a benefit.

Watch for it and call it out. Label it for what it is. Look at the big picture.

Partial truth is a full lie.

55) Who owns and controls the news media? Many people, including Einstein, have warned that a few elite and wealthy organizations or people have gained control of most news outlets. With nearly all media being controlled by the wealthy/elite, we should never assume that information is innocently delivered with our nation's best interests in mind. The masses are being deliberately spoon-fed to follow an opinion or identity. It is indeed difficult for most people to make informed decisions.

56) Identity Politics. Notice how many news outlets will always turn a story toward identity, race, or oppressor/oppressed political reasoning. That is a lie. It should not be accepted. Often, words will be created,

such as Islamophobia, to shame people or generate false guilt. The end result always supports societal change toward the so-called identity group. In the end, no one will have more rights than the identity group.

A good example is what has occurred in Europe over the last two decades. Western Civilization has taken a back seat as the continent has been flooded with people who clearly seek the destruction of Western values. Another example is the history of New York City since the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. We now welcome and elect the very enemies who hate our culture.

57) Sarcastic Laugh or The Superiority of Comedians.

Listen for this. You will hear the short, sarcastic chuckle during a statement or following a comment. The suggestion is clear. "I am so wise, and my opinion is so perfect, that anyone opposing my idea, in any way, is lacking intelligence."

Laughter can replace legitimate debate and facts. The tool is slanderous and used to create the impression that their reason is incredibly obvious and superior. Only a fool would disagree.

People using the sarcastic laugh should be called out for it immediately.

It is obvious that modern comedians often think their comedy is a tool for societal change. And it works. When sarcasm is used by a comedian, truthfully or not, people often laugh and follow the comedian's opinion. It is a natural human feature to follow the strong tribal leader. And that is exactly what the comedian becomes with their "know-it-all" performance. It is very powerful and deceptive.

58) Assumption of the Rule (My definition).

The attack occurs when a speaker or group of speakers boldly starts from the premise that they are correct and that all further discussion must derive from or follow their reasoning. It needs no facts. It boldly asserts a false premise and declares it fact or truth. No debate is acceptable.

59) Flood the Border (My definition).
Groups and speakers can overwhelm people with massive amounts of misinformation using all and any techniques. It will be relentless and constant regardless of opposition and comment. This method is bold and cares nothing for truth.

A great example of this is Wikipedia. The online encyclopedia began in good faith as a public-editing tool to make factual information available. But it is well known that massive numbers of editors constantly work to re-edit topics and turn them toward their own viewpoints. Sadly, I can no longer trust Wikipedia for topics related to history, politics, biography, social science, or any currently debated topic.

60) Denial of Truth.
I will end my list with this very basic attack. Denial of Truth is simply as stated. Someone denies that truth exists. Without a foundation for truth, any idea would be considered equal, regardless of its impact on society or individuals.

Obviously, the owner of this viewpoint does not completely deny truth. They tend to deny only truths that do not benefit themselves. They use their personal truth as a tool to support their ideology or behavior.

All cultures and ideas are not equal. That is clearly not a politically correct statement for this age. Nevertheless, when you examine cultures and beliefs carefully, you will find that some support freedom, personal advancement, personal property, growth, travel, safety, truth, freedom of worship, freedom of speech, dignity, and other Western ideals, while others clearly teach the complete opposite.

61) The Rapid Fire Shotgun.
Very rapid statements and questions have become the vogue in debates, even in national debate teams. The debater continuously fires questions and statements regardless of their truth or validity. It seems like an overwhelming success. But it is a falsehood and an illusion.

62) Repeating Questions.
This is currently a popular and childish method. A sarcastic or lazy debater will repeat the same questions that have been answered many times without acknowledging any progress made through the answers. They may even ask the same questions that were answered on that very day. These debaters have no interest in truth. They merely want to repeat many questions - as if the ability to question a topic is the answer. They use childish sarcasm, hoping to win over the unlearned.

63) Superiority of Philosophy and Intellectual Position.
We tend to call people who oppose our viewpoint "ideologues" and applaud ourselves as superior. Unfortunately, we might be the very ideologues who started the issue. We take the view that if we are intelligent in one area, then everything we say in all areas should be accepted as fact. This method tends to impose reason in a condescending manner, as if listeners have no understanding of human behavior.

We often lack the ability to view our own fallacies. And because of arrogance, we fail to recognize our inability to communicate. Therefore, we conclude that public rebuke and arrogance are acceptable. It is interesting how this happened before our eyes during the 2020 -2024 pandemic. You simply cannot persuade people if you appear untrustworthy, and then heap condescension on top of that.

We claim people who question us are ideologues who make caricatures and cartoons out of our decisions, while we are doing that exact thing, and likely started it.

64) Emotional Awareness. One of the great cultural shifts that misleads young people and confuses everyone is to become in touch with our emotions. Counselors will use cognitive therapies to help us understand and name our emotions and work through them. Does this help?

Has there ever been a great leader who spoke about their success being

tied to emotional awareness? Over-describing and over-analyzing your emotions can lead to a lack of success and tremendous ambivalence when making decisions. It leads us into the trap of victimhood. We then tend to see the world through the lens of victim or victimizer. That is a lie. Imagine a great leader becoming trapped in an emotional quagmire while attempting to make major changes.

Having a degree of emotional understanding is good. It can help us to move forward. But living in a world of constant and extreme emotional awareness will enslave us with frustration. Emotions can and often do lie to us. Learn to think. Learn to move forward and make decisions.

65) The Two-Generation - Slow Steamroller. It only takes two generations for a society to forget its basic principles and fall into chaotic thinking. Young people are very susceptible to this. If we remove traditions or long-held beliefs, the basic foundation of reasoning disappears. Once that foundation is removed, people become open to a multitude of false or useless instructions.

This can result from the normal ebb and flow of society, or from deliberate institutional factors intended to topple a society. Modern devices and social media have clearly caused us to forget history and long-standing, foundational morals, leaving us open to rewriting our habits with mundane, purposeless activities. The comforts of wealth have done the same, accelerating this societal downfall.

There is a very sinister side to this societal amnesia. Planted "experts" and self-proclaimed social activists have flooded universities, high schools, and media houses, slowly changing how students think. The vast majority of university instructors in the humanities, such as the social sciences, history, politics, religion, and languages, are openly far left-leaning. Teachers often act as social engineers. Eventually, society may reach a point where it not only accepts new ideas but also forgets the truths and traditions that originally granted its freedoms. After two generations, the knowledge is gone.

Traditions, Societies, and Individuals

Societies, cultures, and churches are built and maintained by the language, traditions, stories, beliefs, and daily habits of established citizens and members. They function like the foundation of a building.

When we are young or rebellious, we might think that many of the traditions of churches and local communities are worthless and rigid. But on closer examination, we learn that those traditions keep us who we are. Lose those structures and traditions, and you will lose culture. Then, you will begin to lose the truths that uphold your freedoms.

Struggle and service are vital for life. But when stable wealth and comfort arrive, selfishness can dominate our thoughts. We can forget the benefits of service. A comfortable and wealthy society can also forget its founding principles and the original reasons for its existence. It can lose sight of the basis for its laws. It can even forget that it has freedom and where that freedom originated.

Successful civilizations can become so comfortable and wealthy that they lose their foundation of character and resolve for goodness. Complacency and malaise will then lead to civil strife, as if that nation had no knowledge of its own freedoms. Open rebellion without reason may follow. People will eventually seek new directions of rebellion when old reasoning is lost. As rage increases, people will have no further place to rebel, so they turn against themselves, their families, and their own identities.

Put differently, whenever a nation becomes so safe and wealthy that service, structure, and struggle are no longer essential parts of life, people will drift from liberty, to complacency, to reckless confusion, and then into nihilistic rebellion. Lacking any common ethos, people will rebel against their own nature and against the hands that provided their wealth. Blinded by their headlong race toward destruction, they will pursue only rebellion. Any nation that fails to maintain structure, tradition, and a love for truth will follow the same path.

Small amounts of truth will be blended with larger falsehoods, self-destruction, impropriety, and malicious intent, creating a narrative that appears honest on the surface but is fundamentally corrupt. In time, nations may welcome their enemies as friends and as the new founders of truth and law, regardless of the bondage they impose. One day, it may be too late. Perhaps the cycle will start again.

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From Isaiah 5, ESV (Crossway Books)

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil,
who put darkness for light, and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,
and shrewd in their own sight!

Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine,
and valiant men in mixing strong drink,
who acquit the guilty for a bribe,
and deprive the innocent of his right!

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Do not submit to the misinformation tyrants and pirates trying to control thought and culture. When you submit, they win. They only grow stronger when you give them more power.

You must be willing to pay a price for freedom. We must stand up for truthful thought and speech.

Truth needed. Truth is the loving thing to do.

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It is important that all people live as honest seekers of truth. Truth is our foundation.

Do not accept false news or shaming. Use truth and boldly stand firm.

Always stand firm. Do not accept lies as truth. Always boldly use and live in truth.
Do not be afraid to "call out" the person spreading lies.

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Western Civilization has brought more prosperity and freedom to the world than any culture in history. Yet it appears that a modern and destructive psychology has overtaken the West. The nations that brought freedom and prosperity are now being denounced as harbingers of suffering. It is the complete opposite of the truth.

Clearly, none of the people protesting against the West are protesting against nations that absolutely do have poverty, domination, and women in servitude.

A nation that hates itself will never survive, just as a person who hates themself will not grow. Those in the West who hate themselves and Western culture hate freedom.

Have we imported a cancerous ideology to our shores and then adopted a spirit and method to destroy ourselves? Imagine what the results would be if they succeed. Have we become useful idiots for a foreign takeover by dictators who have always hated our freedoms and way of life?
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Misinformation Examples

Example from a recent NPR interview: A doctor commented that COVID (Omicron variant) rates were clearly trending down, that we might be nearing the end of needing to wear masks, and that mask mandates should probably end. Then the so-called expert/doctor went on to comment on people who say that we need to learn to live with the coronavirus. He stated that although we should learn to live with coronavirus, we must be careful because the statement, "we have to learn to live with coronavirus," is code language for learning to live as if the virus does not exist.

Obviously, he stepped too far and had no basis for that last statement. He was clearly expressing an opinion, with considerable extrapolation, to dismiss the imagined science deniers who appear to oppose what NPR says on the topic. He created an impression. But who did he talk to, and where did he get his research?

It has been made clear by many well-respected doctors that in the years to come, we will need to live with some form of COVID. COVID will be around, but it may be containable like the annual flu. It will likely become weaker, and the population will gain greater resistance.

Why make a statement that insinuates "coded language," as if it were a political dog whistle? He used one sentence blended into some otherwise very useful medical information. He just could not help himself.

That one sentence created an unnecessary group conflict. It also generated a mental stimulus in the minds of listeners that amounted to a political lie.

He used good information to cloud the minds of listeners. He also exalted himself over every possible disagreement – a self-proclaimed higher morality.

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Internet Memes. A standard for modern falsehood and societal change

is the Internet meme. Social media memes blast a statement to a wide audience. They can be very clear and comical – yet very false. A good example is a recent meme declaring that no large churches have given anything to help the Ukrainians. In fact, churches have given more to Ukraine and other international needs than any other group, by a huge margin. But it spoke to the choir and cemented the negative attitude.

Friends on Facebook often overreach and spew malicious, far-fetched nonsense. We see it on both sides of the political spectrum. Usually, real friends do not take them to task for the lies (certainly not over the web).

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Another example is how newspapers run misinformation as fact. It could be a science article or a political topic run in a newspaper. It might not have been immediately controversial, but it was twisted to evoke emotion because a political group would benefit.

The article starts with a misleading headline that may be entirely false. It could be a headline copied from a third-party social or political organization and used by the news organization or author. The stage is set and cemented because many people never read past the headline.

The first four to six paragraphs of the article appear to be taken directly from social or political organizations that are describing the so-called effects of the policy. Hyperbole and often outright lies are used to describe the policy.

Then only one paragraph might be used to describe the policy. It might be a couple of sentences, but that is it. No mention is made to refute the original description. No equal time is given.

Then the article returns to the horrific description of the policy and the people behind it.

How could the average reader have a chance?

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Another example is Elon Musk's purchase of Twitter, now known as X. It has been very well documented that Twitter had previously canceled and buried news that ran counter to its pre-ordained political viewpoint – even when the viewpoint is extremely well proven. Nevertheless, we see rage, fear, and hyperbole running through the media. That could be an extreme Strawman.

Since his purchase, X has simply opened the platform and exposed cover-ups, deception, cancellation of opposing viewpoints, and discussion. Isn't open discussion what this country needs?

Also consider the murder of Charlie Kirk. Charlie was a minister who spoke at colleges and churches, encouraging young people to return to a belief in Christ. He urged young people to live with character and responsibility. Then he would set up a table and welcome anyone to speak. Yes, anyone.

Charlie opened the floor to questions and let anyone who opposed him speak. No one was maligned. It was an open, peaceful conversation. He was killed for that.

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Examples of Connections to Cognitive Dissonance and Debate Fallacies

- Stunning new information that does not adjust a person's perspective.
- Inaccurately summarizing a person's viewpoint – Straw Man.
- Misreading nefarious intent.
- Regularly moving goalposts and shifting criteria.
- Yelling or getting angry.
- Attacking someone's character (often a last resort) – Ad hominem.

- Retreating from a point without a concession (moving on quickly to avoid).
- Using anecdotal stories and small numbers to misrepresent the whole – Hasty Generalization.
- Making bad correlations and labeling them as causation (Non Sequitur).

Interacting with opposition and misinformation.

Learn to pause. Pressure is an illusion.
Crack a joke. You are not a threat.
Use a prop, joke, or a ten-second segue.
Engage with provocative questions.
Be consistent.
Acknowledge and reframe.
Take time to unpack. Do not accept a forced line of deceit.
Find the point. Stay on the point, not their emotion.
Connect with your body. Pause. Take a deep breath.

We get locked into groupthink and falsehood. Sometimes, a person has no good reason to hold on to their view of the truth or data other than emotion. We hold on regardless of evidence and refuse to seek further evidence once we are set. That could be a reason why we are so easily triggered.

As one man stated, "I did come to realize that the objections that I had to Christianity — including the arguments of the new atheists — they really weren't strong enough. I didn't have any intellectual objections, any strong enough ones left. So, all that I had remaining were actually just my very personal, emotional reasons for not wanting to come to faith," Byrom said. That opinion could be true of any science, political, or social opinion.

All of this raises an interesting question about American people. Do we want truth? It is not hard to find truth and do your own research. Again – do we want truth?

The lies we spread.

Isn't it interesting how someone can post a meme that is clearly misinformation, and someone else clicks like without checking, only to discover an intentional lie has been spread?
But it makes us feel better about our political clubs.

Be ready to stand apart. Be honest with yourself. That is often very hard. Seek truth and honesty. Seek a basis for truth.

The conclusion of this argument is that none of this matters unless truth exists in the first place.
If there is no basis for truth – I mean a common truth – then there is no argument that is winnable. We are all made of dust and molecules. But if that is all, and there is nothing governing our ideas, or beyond us that holds truth, then we are reduced to endless fighting. We would live by the rule that might makes right, in a world of only the material person.

Still, while we hear arguments against truth and anything eternal, the same people will proclaim certain actions evil. Some actions seem evil at the core. But why? What does it matter? In the end, all fighting and arguing resemble various forms of Newspeak (1984) and Hitler. The goal would only be to use the resources for what is considered favored by selected people. That may sound strong, but look at our current society, rife with deliberate misinformation.

Sometimes we do not want truth. Sometimes we choose to believe an argument as a wall to deny or hide from the truth and establish our own pleasure at will. We hide from the truth even though we know it exists. In a sense, we create our own "Matrix," but the nagging truth is always there. What a frustrating weight we all must bear.

Truth holds us responsible. Truth means that we are not the center of the universe. Truth exists, and it does not start from our personal desires. Truth teaches us that something more important always exists beyond us.
Truth exists. From that point on, everything changes.