

Misinformation, Deceptive Arguments, and The News The War Against Truth, and to Own the Narrative

(This is long, but by no means exhaustive. It could be even longer)

Ted Catranis and Novatropos, ©2023, 2024

Seldom is any issue thoroughly and honestly discussed.
The question might be - do we want to know truth?
Or do we prefer hiding behind a wall of known misinformation?

Our modern lifestyles have drawn a strong resistance for background study, logic, and philosophy. Simply put, we are very easy prey.

Many of us have likely been gradually pulled into ideas and purchasing patterns by marketing and social media. We think we have our own thoughts, but that could be far from the truth.

Listen to the nay-sayers. They are right more often than we like to think. Be willing to admit that they may have been correct.
Do news agencies back track and admit that previous naysays were correct? Do they admit to false stories? That would be quality news, be it rarely occurs.

Don't be deceived. New agencies have never been 100% honest and fact based. There has always been some bias. It is not just 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 is appalling. Obviously, news misinformation today is over the top.

News organizations and outlets exert a tremendous power on society.

They want to maintain that.

People have always lied and always will. Will we cure the news outlets?
Probably not.

Perhaps we need a much better filter.

We need to be smart and not fall for everything.

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 say what they think needs to be said, or what is wanted by their peers.

They also 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. The reporters and anchors do come from a point of view. We assume that they let their views sit aside for the sake of the news, but they are human.

Misleading tactics can skirt the truth and present a narrative. They are not an accident.

Ask - What is being amplified and why?

What is minimized?

And - Are you a willing participant in misinformation?

How do we react when someone questions us?

Thoughts and Descriptions of Misinformation

I have many points to consider and look for when you consume information. Do not assume that people or news personalities have your best interest in mind.

Clearly, identity politics and the chosen mental club are far more important than truth. We are clearly in an era in which destruction to any opposition is more important than truth, justice, and advancement. Tribalism seems to be the rule without apology.

There has always been persuasion, logic, and persuasion by misinformation and deceit. But watch for the persons manners. Are they controlled, listening, and honest. Or do they quickly become enraged.

When people quickly become enraged and malicious during a debate it could simply be that they have little control of their emotions. It could also be that anger and rage were what they were taught.

Generally, children use anger and screaming to gain something, but then they are taught how to handle needs and discussion with order. What if they are no longer taught that? What if parents demonstrate that rage, deceit, and destruction are normal? Hummmm? 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 being fed a careful supply of emotion and information that has already changed our sensitivities. Below I list some (I use that word very loosely) collection of persuasion and misinformation methods and indicators.

*** Compare stories with a wide variety of outlets. But - - be careful. You may never know it is misinformation.** News agencies and marketing professionals are expert at playing the long game of social change. You may have been psychologically marketed into a school of reasoning.

Let's consider a fictitious and alternate history of this nation between 1918 and 1945.

Imagine they're in the year 1918 we have a Free Press but slowly professionals who are willing activist for a point of you begin to enter into the new stream. Activists in small numbers also begin to enter into universities and take up significant positions as professors.

You will have certain news agencies raising an alarm, although there are voices will likely be minimized or mocked due to the very small number of activists who are stating very anti-American ideologies. But during this time those news activists in professors continue and in fact gain disciples. For the first decade it stays relatively quiet since the number of disciples is not extremely large. During the second decade of their

work those disciples also become teachers, university professors, and news commentators. Those news commentators or call themselves reporters and news anchors and do not take the label of commentators.

By the year 1930 a significant number of news commentators and instructors have quietly gained enough significant positions that they begin to openly proclaim their ideologies and begin to create educational policies supporting their anti-American position.

By 1935 the activists have quietly gained control of nearly all university social science positions and have majority numbers in most of the major news outlets in the country. By 1940 they have in fact positioned themselves so that over 90% of all major news outlet agencies belong to their organization and support their viewpoint.

Other news agencies attempt to bring a balance to viewpoint 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 years have passed that most people cannot remember the previous American way of life.

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

Germany establishes a firm control on 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.

Think on these important questions. Do you like misinformation? Do you enjoy living in the echo chamber of your chosen lies?

If we are to succeed, we need to step away and live in truth.

Here is a Partial List of Misinformation Methods

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

2) **Anecdotal Stories.** We love stories; and stories make us who we are. News outlets generate **stories as a news narrative.** 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 personify the beautiful and 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 of the story.

The psychological effect of using anecdotal stories, and emotion to evoke your emotions is to sympathize with a very select person or situation. It is natural to sympathize for the "sad anecdotal story." Once you make the connection, they have you. It is then hard to leave the new club mentality.

3) **Appeal to Pity** 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. **Praying upon Western Emotional insecurities.** There is an obvious emotional affliction among Western Civilization. It is an over-powering 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 guilt massaging 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.

Oppressor/Oppressed world view 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.

4) Some organizations have become **"Fact-Checkers."** Some are **self-proclaimed.** But seldom do you even see a fact-checker that honestly looks at all sides. There always seems to be a slant or agenda.

Deliberate omission is rampant with many fact-checkers.

Watch for sources based as private social organizations. They always have an agenda. Everyone is now their own expert.

5) **Media Activists.** Many modern news and media figures come into the news operation with an agenda in mind. There is a revolving door of political and social organizations and news outlets. Persuasion and opinion are the plan from the start.

6) **Group Think, In-group Favoritism, Band Wagon Effect.** People seem to have a need to follow the latest wave of political thought.

Club Mentality and Tribalism. You must join the new-think or you are out of the club and evil. Non-members are a danger to society.

Herd mentality and super peer pressure. There is no denial that 24-hour news media, social media and constant misinformation have tapped into our psychology and take advantage of our innate social behaviors.

Society and news agencies can Bandwagon. They continue to report a topic or science idea as fact even though no scientific evidence has even

been established. Multiple voices cannot possibly be wrong – right? But they can be if nobody knows that science does not support it. In other words, the fallacy argues that if it appears that everyone thinks a certain way, then you should too.

7) **Continuation Bias** in which you have a plan, but other ideas and obstacles interfere with that plan or judgement, but you accept no further information. You continue as if in a bubble.

8) **Think – to whom is the story aimed?** Follow the money or agenda. Follow the engagement pattern. Who is being engaged in the story?

9) There is some **Intentional Falsehood**. Unfortunately, it sticks after the agency makes a minimal gesture to retract. That falsehood is often used in a list of sources.

10) An **ad Hominem Fallacy** uses personal attacks rather than logic and energize people to **hate or disgrace the source** (or religion, politics, etc.). If I disagree with 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 believe we observe objectively and wisely, but that other people are irrational and not worthy of sympathetic consideration.

11) **Appeal to the stone** (*argumentum ad lapidem*) – dismissing a claim as absurd without demonstrating proof for its absurdity.

12) An **Appeal to Hypocrisy** – also known as the tu quoque fallacy – focuses on the hypocrisy of an opponent.

13) Watch for **hyperbole and emotion**. They are clear indicators of false intent. Emotionally charged articles are meant for your engagement and entrapment. Our modern society seems to live by hyperbole.

14) The famous **Strawman Argument**. A straw man argument attacks a different subject rather than the topic being discussed – often a more extreme version of the counter argument. 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, side argument (not the point), from your opponent and then stretch it and exaggerate it to death. Create a completely different and false, hyperbolic narrative about the topic or person so that you either completely discredit your opponent, or you lead the opponent down endless rabbit trails of winless embarrassment. But the bottom line is that the Strawman is a lie. It is the norm on social media including the Facebook wall of our close friends. It is used when people either fail at their own argument, or they would become emotional charged to the point of discrediting you. Point it out to their face. Remember, if a Strawman is used, the opponent has almost no interest in the truth. Small hints of the Strawman can be used out of habit, and your opponent can be further engaged if they can accept their initial error and move toward truth (somewhat).

15) 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 contain an unimportant fact, idea, or event that has little relevance to the real issue. A Red Herring argument is one that changes the subject, distracting the audience from the real issue to focus on something else where the speaker feels more comfortable and confident. *Also known as: misdirection, smokescreen, clouding the issue, beside the point.*

16) **Watch for Lies of Omission (they are rampant)**. Lies of omission can be one of the strongest methods to change society while appearing to be truthful. 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 using the truth simply by creating the impression that the reporter told the whole or correct truth when in fact they omitted significant details or sources. At times there can be an outright refusal to recognize or disseminate information to the contrary of the preferred politics.

Lies of omission and incomplete revelations are even found in science research. A scientist is acting to prove or disprove their hypothesis, they are not looking at all possible or imagined details. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigators often do a better job of seeking scientifically truth because they do not follow the current scientific method of "prove or disprove" a hypothesis.

Deliberate omissions occur in all areas of science. I have witnessed this even in archaeology. I have seen in the same magazine both ignorance of evidence and acceptance of evidence in various articles.

17) **Generalization without validity**. Making **broad claims without citing specifics**. A good argument is always to ask for specifics or an explanation.

A **hasty generalization** is a claim based on a few examples rather than substantial proof. Arguments based on hasty generalizations often don't hold up due to a lack of supporting evidence: The claim might be true in one case, but that doesn't mean it's always true.

18) **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 truth.

19) **False experts/False authority**. Or so-called experts with an agenda. Officials say, research says, all Americans say...

Appeal to authority is the misuse of an authority's opinion to support an argument. While an authority's opinion can represent evidence and data, it becomes a fallacy if their expertise or authority is overstated, illegitimate, or irrelevant to the topic.

The **Almighty Scientist** pressure. Scientists do great work for humanity. I taught science and am convinced that science has led to the prosperity of mankind. But scientists can and often do have a motivation. The work of a scientist is not overseen as police work. It also follows the Scientific Method, which although helpful, follows a hypothesis (see next). It is important to avoid forming an assumption, but let the evidence lead you – all of the evidence.

Science is a modern buzzword that simply means – my science and my facts not yours.

Consider 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?

Celebrity appeal. Well known people or influencers making statements and gaining followers although the influencer never had to develop their reputation or substantiate their facts. Leads quickly to band wagoning.

20) **Not following facts - impartially.** Does the investigation follow any, and all facts, or does it follow a person's hypothesis? Consider the work of NTSB airplane investigators. They honestly seek facts without following a trend or personal gain.

21) **Confirmation Bias and Group Think** – 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.

Peer Pressure and fear. They are greater than ever. There is a tremendous power in narrative. Media 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.

22) A priori knowledge or reasoning maintains a prior determination of a narrative or conclusion. It is independent from rational discussion, critical and contrary research, or current experience.

23) Story Magnification and Amplification - A news outlet will zero in on a very small segment of a story and draw a larger picture based on that small picture or sample. At times, an agency will highlight only one segment of the population (and dismiss all others), which can quickly make a story appear completely different from reality.

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 appear as the only person to oppose the "experts."
Many news outlets reference one another and then use that number of references as a basis of fact. In reality, there was only one source - and that source was mysterious or questionable. It is possible that the original source was fabricated.

24) 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. This is also Double counting - counting events or occurrences more than once in probabilistic reasoning, which leads to the sum of the probabilities of all cases exceeding unity.

25) Minimizing. Notice how some details are given brief lip service, at best, and other details are stressed with hyperbole.

26) Cherry-picking and misrepresenting parts of a study without ever revealing that a broader scope of evidence exists.

Taking phrases small bites of information out of context and twisting it 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.

27) Bait and switch work with ideas as well as used cars.

28) **Red Herring** arguments in which mind catching arguments are interjected to stray from the point. It is a logic interference used to replace their lack of real argument and truth for a side show. The side show is later often used as a factor of truth in their conclusion.

29) **Wack-a Mole**. Keep throwing new arguments at the person or keep changing the point. Keep adding or diverting to another reason for your disagreement.

30) Beware of **Double Standards**. For instance, follow the science one day - follow self or emotion another day. Analyze how determined the news agency is at providing **both sides** of a story and then letting the reader decide. Do they make a point at providing both sides at risk of adversity?

31) **Framing**. Notice the way that **Stories are Framed**. Adding just a few words at the beginning of a sentence or at the end can quickly create an unchangeable wall of opinion. It can be as simple as starting the paragraph with a negative rather than the positive - or getting right to the point.

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

32) Consider how quickly they change to a "**New Speak**" idea.

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

Examples: Rainbow symbols, Ugly sweaters...

*(2001 film *Bridget Jones's Diary* and shaming, 2002 contest in Vancouver)*

33) **Consider the Source** - the history, associations, and motivations of the person or agency.

34) **False Consensus or False Authority Bias**.: Watch for: officials say, researchers say, all America wants 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 and supporting the falsehood.

35) **Improper use of data and statistics.** We can generate quick, sensational headlines related to research and statistics that are either taken out of context, improperly grouped, used without stating a basis for the data, or forcing an improper correlation/causation relationship. Many correlations can quickly be highlighted that in no way cause an effect, yet the media can sensationalize them as a conclusion. Once cemented by large media many people become hooked and very hard to re-teach. Numbers and data are not cut and dry.

36) 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 designed to polarize the audience, promoting one side and demonizing another. It's common in political discourse as a way of strong-arming the public into supporting controversial legislation or policies.

False analogies and hasty generalizations. **Inconsistent comparison** – where different methods of comparison are used, leaving one with a false impression of the whole comparison.

An either/or situation. Forcing a person to accept a yes/no, completely true false position. Assuming that if/then statements are always reconcilable.

37) 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 that it will lead to unlikely or ridiculous outcomes with no supporting evidence.

38) There are **long-range effects of the opinions**, and it is possible to project those very long-range effects of reporting. It may be suggested that effects are short lived and narrow, but everything has effects.

39) **We tend to rely on the first piece of information we receive for an emotional connection.**

We seek Confirmational Bias. It is the modern way of life - unfortunately.

40) **Cognitive Dissonance** is difficult, so we try to avoid honest rational thinking. Human beings have become specialists at cognitive dissonance. We are expert at lying to ourselves and denying part of a story so that 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 that is why those who spread misinformation or propaganda are so quickly triggered and become engaged when their false statements are exposed. They are also very quickly enraged when anyone else attempts to spread even the slightest misinformation.

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

Conclusion or argument preceding evidence. The method used to discredit Joe Paterno. Watch for **arguing that proceeds news and fact**. In other words, the anchor starts with an argument to establish themselves above their competition. A few facts might enter in by mistake.

42) **Circular Reasoning** when the reasoner begins with what he or she is trying to end up with; sometimes called *assuming the conclusion*.

Assuming the initial point or position is true, chicken and the egg, and circular reasoning. Planting reports into media sources, and then using your own reports to support your misinformation.

43) Some news anchors are clearly opinion commentators but pawn themselves off as news and fact anchors. Some anchors will honestly admit that they are opinion, some will hide it.

44) The Ancient Aliens Effect (my phrasing). There is an appetite for the new, unusual, and strange. We want to believe it. Science can be misquoted; and studies can be asserted even though certain research has been disproven for years. It does not matter.

45) If it is on History Channel it must be true and honest – right? History Channel can and does select officials of their liking and present them as if they are the majority or well-established science. They create their own self-proclaimed truth – and it sticks.

46) Story blending to alter the narrative. Take part of a story that is true and blend it with one of the above falsehood methods. It will stick.

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

48) Repetition. It is often true that if you repeat a lie or story enough times, it become truth. Well, at least it becomes what is believe as truth.

49) The mental battle between ethics, values, integrity, morality, and economic value. The mind can be tricked into stepping outside of the decisions by personal moral integrity, into an economic and material plan. Once an economic basis is applied, we follow a different reasoning. It may be a mentally reasonable bargain to give up certain activities, freedoms, or money in exchange for a bad behavior. From that point, we make a decision based on the bargain and personal benefit not our values of right and wrong.

50) 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 any opposing viewpoint. Control the information, and you control the people. The Internet, Google, Facebook, YouTube, etc. have become the libraries and news outlets of the 21st century. Their ability to quickly “turn off” opposing views is staggering, and most people have no idea what is happening (because they do not know where to look). People have been cancelled for the slightest activity or speech related to opposing views. The power of modern social media and search engines is staggering and surpasses even the power of any government or news agency.

51) **Assigned Blame**. An event or situation occurs that permits us to lay blame on a person or idea. That blame is then held tight because it separates us from personal blame and permits us to focus on the “evil” cause, and therefor reduce its influence. We then label as falsehood or unnecessary material coming from that source. It becomes very hard to break the pattern.

52) **Memory Priorities and Grudges**. Example: A person such a child experiences a negative or is denied some activity by a parent. Possibly, several incidents occur. The child then builds an angry impression of the parent, labeling them as the source of their problems. It sticks. It happens in all of society. We determine that any information coming from the person initiating the mental impression as unnecessary or false. They are mentally nullified.

Fortunately, years later the event causing the initial negative impression may fade and other memories reemerge with importance.

53) **Overwhelming Control of Argument, Information, Communication, and Debate**. I also call this the Information Steam Roller approach. Nations have successfully used this for control and propaganda.

54) The **Two Generation - Slow Steamroller**. Planted “experts” work as activists and slowly change reasoning and even the teachers. Eventually, the society not only believes the new truth, but cannot remember no following. After two generation the knowledge is gone.

55) **Assumption of inferior previous methods or research.** Modern thinking, methods, and sources are always superiority. Or the "**Nouveau Intelligentsia.**"

56) A **truth can be used to support a lie - Missing the point.** An argument may start as true but does not fully address the issue. Hence you get irrelevant conclusions and bad comparisons.

57) **Who owns and controls the news media?** The warnings have been made by many people including Einstein about a vast majority of the news would be controlled by a select few elite and wealthy people, as it is now. With nearly all media being controlled and deliberately spoon fed to the masses, it is indeed difficult for most people to make informed decisions.

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Example from a recent NPR interview: A doctor was commenting on how covid (omicron) 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 about people who say that we need to learn to live with corona virus. He stated that we need to learn to live with corona virus, but we must be careful because the statement, "we have to learn to live with corona virus" is code 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 making an opinion, with great extrapolation, to contain 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.

Then why make a statement insinuating a “code” as if it is 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 a group conflict situation that was unnecessary. It also generated a mental stimulus in the minds of listeners that would amount 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.

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 how a recent meme declaring that no large churches have given anything to help the Ukrainians. In fact, churches have out given to the Ukraine and other international needs by extreme magnitudes. But it spoke to the choir and cemented the negative attitude.

Friends on Facebook often over-reach and spew malicious and 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).

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

The article starts with a headline that is misleading and possibly a complete falsehood. 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 who 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 what the policy says. It might be a couple sentences, but that is it. No mention is made to refute the original description. No equal time is given.

Then the article goes back to the horrific description of the policy and the people behind the policy.

How could the average reader have a chance?

Another example is the purchase of Twitter by Elon Musk. It has been very well documented that Twitter has cancelled and buried news that runs counter to their pre-ordained political viewpoint – even when the viewpoint is extremely well proven. Nevertheless, we see a rage of fear and hyperbole running through the media. That could be an extreme Strawman.

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).
- Anecdotal stories and using small numbers to misrepresent the whole – Hasty Generalization.
- Making bad correlations and labeling them as causation (Non Sequitur).

At times a person simply has no good reason for holding on to their view of truth or data, other than their emotions. 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 leads to 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 then someone else clicks like without even checking to discover that 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 sad ending to this representation is that – none of this makes a difference 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 to be evil. Some actions seem evil at the core. But why? What does it matter? In the end all fighting and arguing resembles just various forms of Newspeak (1984) and Hitler. The goal would only be to use the resources for what is considered favored for selected people. That may sound strong but look at our current society of deliberate misinformation.

Sometimes we do not want truth. We believe an argument that we can deny or hide from truth and establish our own pleasure at will. We hide from truth while still knowing that it exists. In a sense, we create our own “Matrix,” but the nagging truth is always there. What a frustration we all must bear.

Truth holds us responsible. Truth means that we are not the center of the universe. With truth, there is always something more important and beyond us. Truth exists. From that point on, everything changes.

Interacting with opposition and misinformation.

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. Take a deep breath.