

Don't Fight for Me

✘ For years politicians have been trying all kinds of ways to get your vote. There is a particular method of solicitation that has always bothered me. I am sure you have seen more than an ad or two where the carefully staged candidate says to the camera "Send me to Washington where I will fight for you!" They typically try to look as tough or earnest as possible. These are usually democrats, but republicans will use this tactic as well. There must be some marketing research that shows this works on people, or else we wouldn't be subjected to it every election season. If I actually wanted someone to fight for me, the last person I would think of is some politician. This has always come across as sort of creepy, and not fitting of their job description. Who are you fighting with? Why are you fighting in the first place?

Maybe this line is supposed to brunt some of the criticism of politicians as being sort of slippery and not sticking to principles. It's bad enough that you have to declare allegiance to any of these politicians. It is also a shame that they have enough power over our lives to actually be important. It really would be ideal if they were inconsequential to your life. The best government would be one we barely notice. I thought they were supposed to go to D.C. to solve problems, reach across the aisle, and be bipartisan to get things done. Isn't that the opposite of fighting?

Perhaps this "Fight for you", conjures up some sort of gladiator picture in the viewer's mind. Even if it does initially, when you look up and you don't see anyone who resembles Russell Crowe, you have to be disappointed. Maybe the whole advertising angle needs to be rethought. Use this type of statement only in radio ads. This way the voter wouldn't have to see the wimpy guy who is supposed to be

fighting for us.

Another issue with this line of campaigning is our cynicism of politicians. They often are trusted slightly less than car salesman. They are also very ineffective in their work, and rarely get things done to our liking. It would be more to your advantage to find out whoever your particular politician is fighting against, and try to get that person or group on your side. This way when your politician predictably fails, you will win.

If we can get past this sound of fingernails on the chalkboard as we hear this “fight for you” pitch my advice to politicians would be the following...Set out a series of principles, convey them to the voters, keep those principles when you go to Washington, and work with people to get things done while not abandoning those principles. Put your swords down and get to work on making yourselves insignificant.

“New and Improved” Baby Boomers



I don't mind getting old and don't hide the fact that I'll be 60 this year. I don't buy into the “50 is the new 30” BS – I'm sure it was coined by a fifty-something and not a thirty-something. Being a 25-year cancer survivor makes every birthday a wonderful event for me. Having had over a dozen surgeries and the scars to prove it, I marveled recently at a beautiful line in the novel, “Little Bee” by Chris Cleve. “We must see all scars as beauty...Because take it from me, a scar does not form on the dying. A scar means, I survived.”

That's absolutely true.

I go to the gym regularly so I don't necessarily "feel old" although crossing off "doing a cartwheel" from my bucket list hasn't happened yet. But, I have to say I'm very much aware of my age particularly when I see the enormous generation gap that exists today with younger people. Yeah, it was always there, but I see it widening as each decade goes by.

You'll also never hear me say I'd love to be twenty again especially if I knew then what I know now. That kind of hypothetical thinking doesn't work for me. I seldom find young people with "old souls" because so many see themselves as invincible with no eye towards the future. Everything is me, me, me, now, now, now.

I say all this because I read an article in the WSJ entitled, "How to Market to an Aging Boomer: Flattery, Subterfuge and Euphemism." Apparently, corporations have had to redesign packaging and change marketing strategies to accommodate aging baby boomers.

For example, shower grab bars are now called "Belay shower handrail" named for the rock-climbing technique! Even Kleenex has redesigned its floral patterned boxes to reflect contemporary designs. Operators at ADT who answer questions about medical-alert alarms (now called "companion services") are trained not to remind boomers that they've aged.

According to Ocean Spray Cranberries Inc.'s CEO, "We don't do anything to remind boomers that they are getting older." Well, whether cranberry guy reminds me or not, I'm still getting older. "Boomers are much more concerned with a product's appearance, not just its utility." Amazing.

Stores are redesigning aisles so that boomers won't consider themselves shopping in the "old person's" section of the store. Companies have changed the printing on their products to accommodate diminishing eyesight and others have changed

their packaging to avoid using yellows and blues – two colors that apparently don't appear as sharply distinct to aging eyes.

Whoopi Goldberg is now advertising "Poise," a product for older women. I found the whole thing ludicrous but I won't get into any specifics in deference to any male readers because what I'd have to say would be TMI.

The whole thing is remarkable. I know hundreds of millions of dollars are spent on advertising and marketing – dollars surely wasted on me. I've no doubt that marketing has caused severe financial problems for many people. Marketing is designed to convince people they "deserve" something now, without saving for it.

I must admit, though, that I have bought two things because of advertising. One, "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter" because Fabio was its spokesman, and, two, "Old Spice Body Wash" for my husband because of the commercials starring Isaiah Mustaffa. When I asked my husband what it says about me when I've bought only two items because of two ads starring gorgeous men, he quickly replied, "because you're shallow?" That may be, but I wouldn't continue to buy the products if they weren't any good.

I just don't ever remember older generations worrying about packaging, colors or what a product was called. I have to think that the boomers are vain, self-absorbed, somewhat narcissistic people who simply refuse to acknowledge their own mortality, which is now causing the corporations to change their way of doing business.

"Depends" are now packaged differently and touted as "looking and feeling like underwear." Whether you want to call Depends "diapers" or "well-fitting underwear," and whether they're stacked like diapers or are now in smaller packs hanging on hooks, the fact remains they're for people who are

incontinent. Period. End of story.

Like I said, there's hundreds of millions of dollars spent on marketing and boomers are the ones with buying power so companies have to do whatever it takes to get their piece of the pie. We start dying the day we're born. The use of flattery, subterfuge and euphemism isn't going to change that fact.

Boomers just don't get it.