

The Question Trump Fans Keep Asking Me

Editor's Note: This is a non-member column (open to all).

If I write a column about Donald Trump, and 95 percent of it bashes his critics in the media for their undisguised hatred of him and their relentless biases, but a measly five percent is about how he brings a lot of the bad press he gets on himself by his behavior, I inevitably will hear from readers who are disgusted with me, who think I'm a hopelessly dense Trump hater, and who want to know: "Would you rather have *Hillary Clinton* in the White House?"

For the record, the answer is no. But the question puzzles me because I don't understand the logic behind it.

Last time I checked there is no such thing as a time machine. There is no way to go back to November 2016. So nothing I say about Donald Trump in 2019 (or 2018 or 2017) can change a simple fact: He won and she lost. Nothing I write about him now – no matter how negative – can alter history and change that.

There was a time when the question made sense. That time was before the last presidential election, but not now. So I have my own question for anyone annoyed with me because from time to time I point out that Donald Trump behaves like a snotty kid in junior high school: Why can't people like me criticize his pettiness, his meanness, his name-calling, and his dishonesty now that he's safely situated in the Oval Office?

It won't make Hillary the president.

And why don't his loyal supporters hold the president accountable for his behavior; nothing they say either will make her president?

I'm certainly not asking Mr. Trump's defenders to criticize him if they don't think he deserves it. But a lot of the people who write to me agree that he doesn't act the way they'd like, that there are times when he just plain embarrasses them. Yet, they still don't want me to point out how un-presidential he can be.

I'm guessing that in our hyper-partisan times they don't want me or anyone else to say anything that might give the president's critics ammunition. They don't want to be even remotely aligned with liberals who detest the president or conservative Never-Trumpers. (Again, for the record, I'm not one of them.) So they say nothing and are offended when I don't fall into line.

Sometimes, they ask a follow up question, sarcastically: What about his policies, you think *Hillary* would nominate conservative judges for seats on the Supreme Court?

No, I don't. I like a lot of what he's accomplished, I just don't like the way he deals with his critics, the dopey names he calls them, the impulsive tweets, the vulgarity at his rallies, a crudeness that doesn't become the president of the United States.

Can't I like his court nominees and his tax cuts but not like the way he brags about how great he is?

The question – Would you rather have (fill in the blank) in the White House than Donald Trump? – will make sense again, in a year or so, when the Democrats pick their nominee.

Ask me then what I think. But here's a preview of my answer: I still won't like any of the Democrats, but I won't like Donald Trump either *if he hasn't changed his ways*.

But wait a year and ask me anyway; you never know!