

The Problem With Palin

✘ By Peter Wehner, Commentary

“He is ... endowed with a happy nature,” Edmund Morris wrote of Ronald Reagan, “his optimism unquenchable, his smile enchantingly crooked, his laughter impossible to resist. If these attributes, together with [others], do not constitute grace, in the old sense of favors granted by God, then the word has no meaning.”

While a fierce advocate for the causes he believed in, Reagan demonstrated passion without rancor and “aggression without anger,” in Morris’ words. This is particularly impressive given that Reagan was the object of repeated *ad hominem* attacks. He was derided as a dunce and accused of being a war-monger, a racist, a religious extremist, and indifferent to the suffering of the poor. Yet Reagan possessed a remarkable ability to rise above it, to resist returning insult for insult. Clearly at peace with himself and the world around him, Reagan helped conservatism shed its attitude of distrust and defensiveness.

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