

# Editorial: Trump might make me a better person

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Former President Donald Trump might make me a better person. I just shocked at least two groups of my readers. It's true, though, but not in the way you might suspect, or in the way I would have expected.

I'll explain by way of a story.

## Location, location, location

My daughter and I were in the car recently when we passed a new business.

"Huh, a liquor store. I thought that was going to be a CVS or Walgreens," I said.

"Well, that's unfortunate placement, right next to a hospital," she responded incredulously.

She did what I hadn't done—put two and two together. She knows alcohol isn't good for the body, too much alcohol really isn't good for the body, and many people who will shop in that liquor store will consume too much alcohol. Ironically, they'll buy their supply right across the street from a hospital. My daughter didn't need that spelled out.

"We want to do whatever we want and expect other people to fix it," I said.

She and I have these kinds of conversations—obvious jumps in logic, but she knows me well enough to know the unspoken steps. I doubt I need to spell those steps out for you on this one.

I asked my daughter if I could quote her for this editorial. She said, “Yeah,” and with some excitement asked, “What are you going to say I said?” You can read my answer above.

Elsewhere in the Dallas area, I regularly drive by a billboard advertising the [Preston Hollow Emergency Room](#). Just under the billboard is the [Casket Store](#). No joke, even though I laugh every time I pass it. I wonder who paid who to juxtapose the two.

They—whoever “they” are—say, “Timing is everything.” Location has to be a close second.

One of the locations we don’t give enough attention is our words. For that matter, we might not consider our words to be a location. But our words can be a location of cursing or blessing, hurting or healing, destruction or construction.

This is where I turn back to my opening statement: Former President Donald Trump might make me a better person.

## **Trump said *what*?**

Anyone who follows politics and political rhetoric already knows about the firestorm Trump unleashed Sept. 30. Posting on his Truth Social network, [he declared](#) Sen. Mitch McConnell (R.-Ky.) “has a DEATH WISH” and followed that with a racial slur against McConnell’s wife.

You may be wondering, “And how, exactly, might Trump make you a better person?”

I’m getting to that.

My first response to Trump’s post was similar to so many others who have condemned and are condemning Trump’s comments. His words simply are

unacceptable. They are demeaning, dehumanizing and beneath a purported leader.

But then I asked myself: “Why? Why are they unacceptable?”

After all, despite what some believe, Trump is not a religious leader. He’s not a pastor. He’s what Pastor Robert Jeffress wanted—“[the meanest, toughest son-of-a-you-know-what](#)” he could find. So, what’s the big deal with Trump using mean language? It’s what he’s supposed to do, right?

Beyond that, we all know Trump’s penchant for hyperbole, cussing and all-around shock value. For someone like that, “death wish” isn’t unusual. It could be Trump fishing for a reaction or expressing concern for McConnell’s state of mind. I might believe that, except for four years of well-documented remarks and tweets from Trump establishing a pattern, a reputation, a character that tears down.

Why do I think his words about McConnell and Elaine Chao are unacceptable? And why discuss them here?

## Who says it matters

Trump’s words about McConnell and Chao are unacceptable for several reasons. Among them, as a person of significant influence, he doesn’t have much freedom to be careless with words, regardless of free speech provisions. He has a duty and responsibility to be careful—very careful—with his words.

But Trump regularly demonstrates his disregard for such responsibility. One famous example is when he said his voters are so loyal, he could “stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and [shoot somebody](#)” and not lose any voters. A better—or worse—example is his “locker room” remarks to Access Hollywood’s Billy Bush about sexually assaulting women, to which I won’t

link.

These are not responsible things to say—a colossal understatement—and Trump’s failure to apologize for or retract them leave it to others to fix what his words do.

These words and others like them located in Trump’s mouth or on his social platform carry a particularly concerning range of meaning because of where they are located. But what about when those words are located in someone else’s mouth or social posts? Is that a problem, too?

Yes. Trump isn’t the only person worth critique. Hillary Clinton calling Trump’s supporters a “[basket of deplorables](#)” was just as troublesome.

But these are easy examples. What about us? And by us, I mean the people visiting the liquor store across the street from the hospital.

## **How I might get better**

We take a little nip now and then—a snide comment here, a crude statement there, a slip of the tongue up close. Taken individually, we think our comments won’t do much harm. But each one does, and accumulated over time, they can be detrimental.

Demeaning other people, done often enough, develops a pattern, a reputation, a character of tearing down. When we think it’s no big deal or that it’s deserved, we take the poisonous liquid down like fresh margaritas on a hot day. One day, when our liver’s pickled, we’ll expect a doctor to fix us.

All of this ran through my head right after I told my daughter, “We want to do whatever we want and expect other people to fix it.” And it stopped me cold. My thoughts, anyway. I was driving, after all. It stopped me cold, because who am I to judge?

Trump provides an example of what I don't want to be like. This isn't a political statement. It's a character statement built on who Jesus calls me and every other Christian to be.

As I've already said, Trump isn't the only one who uses careless language. All of us do, at least once in our lives. If we're honest—if I'm honest—it's been more than once. As much as I'd like to say Jesus has cured me of it, that would be saying too much.

Jesus may be trying to cure me now in a place I didn't expect. He may be using the negative example of Trump, for the moment, to make me a better person. If that's what it takes, then I'll have to go there, because I want my words to be a location of blessing, not cursing; healing, not hurting; construction, not destruction.

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