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## PRESIDENTIAL PROFUNDITIES

(All quotes from BrainyQuote.com, unless otherwise indicated; all comments *mine*)



Please feel free to **offer concise and workable solutions**, and to debate the merits and demerits of all suggestions in this website's open, online 'Town Hall' forum.

A brief word as to your qualifications on a given matter will help others in assessing the credibility of your solution(s). Thank you for caring about your country to get involved!

## INTRODUCTION

If we stand on the shoulders of our predecessors, the wisdom of the ages of past presidents ought to shed light on some interesting insights. Though variations were found on almost every theme, the following quotations are offered as representing either sound thinking, or merely interesting, funny or thought-provoking ideas.

## ISSUES

By his position, [the president] must, within his capacities, give leadership to the development of moral, social, and economic forces outside of government which make for the betterment of our country.<sup>3</sup> **–Herbert Hoover**

### 1. ABORTION

No one is pro-abortion. **–Barack Obama**

Comments: Perhaps technically true, but many prochoice advocates see zero moral problem with the medical procedure which ends an un-birthered human life.

### 2. ABUSE OF POWER

I am sworn to uphold the Constitution as Andy Johnson understands it and interprets it. **–Andrew Johnson**

When the President does it, that means that it's not illegal. **–Richard M. Nixon**

Comments: We don't want this attitude in the White House.

### **3. AFFORDABLE COLLEGE**

When we make college more affordable,  
we make the American dream more achievable. **–William J. Clinton**

### **4. AMERICA & HOPE**

If we look to the history of other nations, ancient or modern,  
we find no example of a growth so rapid, so gigantic, of a people so prosperous and happy.  
**–James Monroe**

My dream is of a place and a time where America will once again  
be seen as the last best hope of earth. **–Abraham Lincoln**

### **5. AMERICA & IDEALS**

America—a great social and economic experiment,  
noble in motive and far-reaching in purpose. **–Herbert Hoover**

America is a Nation with a mission—and that mission comes from our most basic beliefs.  
We have no desire to dominate, no ambitions of empire. Our aim is a democratic peace—  
a peace founded upon the dignity and rights of every man and woman. **–George W. Bush**

America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle.  
We as a people have such a purpose today.  
It is to make kinder the face of the nation and gentler the face of the world. **–George H. W. Bush**

### **6. AMERICAN SOLUTIONS**

There is nothing wrong with America  
that cannot be cured with what is right in America. **–William J. Clinton**

### **7. BANKS**

He who controls the money supply of a nation controls the nation. **–James A. Garfield**  
Banks properly established and conducted are highly useful to the business of the country,  
and will doubtless continue to exist in the States so long as they conform to their laws  
and are found to be safe and beneficial. **–Martin Van Buren**

### **8. BIBLE**

Within the covers of the Bible are the answers for all the problems men face. **–Ronald Reagan**  
A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education. **–Theodore Roosevelt**  
It is impossible to rightly govern a nation without God and the Bible. **–George Washington**  
The Bible is the rock on which this Republic rests. **–Andrew Jackson**  
A studious perusal of the sacred volume will make better citizens,  
better fathers, and better husbands **–Thomas Jefferson**

## **9. BUSINESS**

After all, the chief business of the American people is business. They are profoundly concerned with producing, buying, selling, investing and prospering in the world. **-Calvin Coolidge**

## **10. CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS**

Prosperity is necessarily the first theme of a political campaign. **-Woodrow Wilson**

**Comments:** Many Americans don't much care about politics if the economy is good (except, perhaps, on April 15<sup>th</sup>).

## **11. CAPITALISM**

These capitalists generally act harmoniously and in concert, to fleece the people. **-Abraham Lincoln**

## **12. CHILDREN**

Children are our most valuable natural resource. **-Herbert Hoover**

## **13. CIA & COVERT OPERATIONS**

We cannot play innocents abroad in a world that is not innocent. **-Ronald Reagan**

The right of a nation to kill a tyrant in case of necessity can no more be doubted than to hang a robber, or kill a flea. **-John Adams**

**Comments:** Assassinating heads of state is a questionably immoral decision which renders our own leaders targets, and which has been used by some regimes to eliminate both good and evil personalities. If the CIA ever has any involvement, most of us want to look the other way.

## **14. COMMUNITY SERVICE**

My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country. **-John F. Kennedy**

Let us all take more responsibility, not only for ourselves and our families but for our communities and our country. **-William J. Clinton**

If we love our country, we should also love our countrymen. **-Ronald Reagan**

We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone. **-Ronald Reagan**

## **15. COMMUNITY SERVICE & HUMANITY**

There is no higher religion than human service. To work for the common good is the greatest creed. **-Woodrow Wilson**

**Comments:** Nice secular sentiment—true in public affairs but false in religious ones.

## **16. CONFIDENCE**

Confidence... thrives on honesty, on honor, on the sacredness of obligations,  
on faithful protection and on unselfish performance.  
Without them it cannot live. **–Franklin D. Roosevelt**

## **17. CONSERVATIVES & BUSINESS**

A tree's a tree. How many more do you need to look at? **–Ronald Reagan**

Approximately 80% of our air pollution stems from hydrocarbons released by vegetation,  
so let's not go overboard in setting and enforcing tough emission standards  
from man-made sources. **–Ronald Reagan**

All the waste in a year from a nuclear power plant can be stored under a desk. **–Ronald Reagan**

It's difficult to believe that people are still starving in this country because food isn't available.  
**–Ronald Reagan**

Unemployment insurance is a pre-paid vacation for freeloaders. **–Ronald Reagan**

**Comments:** Why can't conservatives see what so many think about them (even from this hero of mine), that their policies truly can be oppositional to improving anything but business profits? As Dan Fogelberg said, 'are you under, the power of gold?'

## **18. CONSERVATIVES & CAPITALISM**

The unrestricted competition so commonly advocated does not leave us the survival of the fittest.  
The unscrupulous succeed best in accumulating wealth. **–Rutherford B. Hayes**

## **19. CONSERVATIVES & GOVERNMENT**

The new rage is to say that the government is the cause of all our problems,  
and if only we had no government, we'd have no problems.  
I can tell you, that contradicts evidence, history, and common sense. **–William J. Clinton**

## **20. CONSERVATIVES & POVERTY**

He mocks the people who proposes that the government shall protect the rich  
and that they in turn will care for the laboring poor. **–Grover Cleveland**

## **21. CONSERVATIVES & SOCIAL CHANGE**

A conservative is someone who makes no changes  
and consults his grandmother when in doubt. **–Woodrow Wilson**

## **22. CONSTITUTION**

Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people.  
It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other. **–John Adams**

**Comments:** As our country has become less religious, and especially less moral, government can still operate effectively if our laws, and their enforcement, are 'moral.'

### **23. COURAGE & NATIONAL DEFENSE**

History does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid. –**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

### **24. COURAGE & POPULARITY**

A President cannot always be popular. –**Harry S. Truman**

If an individual wants to be a leader and isn't controversial, that means he never stood for anything. –**Richard M. Nixon**

### **25. COURAGE & POWER**

One man with courage makes a majority. –**Andrew Jackson**

### **26. CRIMINAL RIGHTS**

One of the tests of the civilization of people is the treatment of its criminals. –**Rutherford B. Hayes**

### **27. CUBA**

Cuba ought to be free and independent, and the government should be turned over to the Cuban people. –**William McKinley**

### **28. CULTURE WARS**

There's not a liberal America and a conservative America—there's the United States of America. –**Barack Obama**

**Comments:** Nice sentiment, but there are clearly clusters of hard and fast ideologues who show no signs of giving in to the other side one iota.

### **29. DEMOCRACY & GOVERNING**

Democracy is worth dying for, because it's the most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man. –**Ronald Reagan**

Democracy is not so much a form of government as a set of principles. –**Woodrow Wilson**

### **30. DEMOCRACY & THE PEOPLE**

Our great Republic is a government of laws and not of men. Here, the people rule. –**Gerald R. Ford**

The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people. –**Woodrow Wilson**

Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail.

Without it, nothing can succeed. –**Abraham Lincoln**

### **31. DEMOCRACY VS. TYRANNY**

Ballots are the rightful and peaceful successors to bullets. –**Abraham Lincoln**

### **32. DIPLOMACY & MORALS**

Tact is the ability to describe others as they see themselves. –**Abraham Lincoln**

**Comments:** That may be what tact is, but love helps others by telling them the truth (as politely as possible, of course).

### **33. DIPLOMACY & STRENGTH**

Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate. –**John F. Kennedy**

### **34. ECONOMY & CONFIDENCE**

The circulation of confidence is better than the circulation of money. –**James Madison**

### **35. ECONOMY'S ENGINES**

Where are the jobs going to come from? Small business, manufacturing and clean energy. Where's the money to finance them? The banks and the corporations in America today have lots of money that they can invest right now. –**William J. Clinton**

Today, many companies are reporting that their number one constraint on growth is the inability to hire workers with the necessary skills. –**William J. Clinton**

I personally don't believe we ought to be raising taxes or cutting spending, either one, until we get this economy off the ground.

I'll pay more, but it won't solve the problem. –**William J. Clinton**

### **36. EDUCATED ELECTORATE**

A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea lives on. –**John F. Kennedy**

Ideas control the world. –**James A. Garfield**

Liberty cannot be preserved without general knowledge among the people. –**John Adams**

Educate and inform the whole mass of the people...

They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty. –**Thomas Jefferson**

Whenever the people are well-informed,  
they can be trusted with their own government. –**Thomas Jefferson**

The advancement and diffusion of knowledge is the only guardian of true liberty. –**James Madison**

The free man cannot be long an ignorant man. –**William McKinley**

A well-instructed people alone can be permanently a free people. –**James Madison**

**Comments:** See how absolutely essential it is for every citizen to be informed about what their government does, and why? It is no longer sufficient for any of us to keep our heads in the sand, and it is hoped our book aids this process.

### **37. EMPLOYMENT & MOTIVATION**

In the new economy, information, education, and motivation are everything. –**William J. Clinton**

### **38. ENEMIES**

The best way to destroy an enemy is to make him a friend. –**Abraham Lincoln**

### **39. ENTITLEMENT MENTALITY**

A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both. –**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

### **40. FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

(See also: **Globalization**)

So far as it depends on the course of this government, our relations of good will and friendship will be sedulously cultivated with all nations. –**John Tyler**

Observe good faith and justice toward all nations.  
Cultivate peace and harmony with all. –**George Washington**

With Malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right,  
as God gives us to see the right,  
let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds. –**Abraham Lincoln**

Trust, but verify. –**Ronald Reagan**

### **41. FRIENDSHIPS & BUSINESS**

The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people. –**Theodore Roosevelt**

### **42. FRIENDSHIPS & FRIENDLINESS**

I don't like that man. I must get to know him better. –**Abraham Lincoln**

**Comments:** A great sentiment for those who, unlike Will Rogers, have met a man they did not like. Perhaps if we spent more time getting to know our enemies, rather than down-mouthing them—perhaps they do have a Grinch-able heart (i.e., one which can show goodness, when tested).

### **43. FRIENDSHIPS & TIME**

True friendship is a plant of slow growth, and must undergo and withstand the shocks of adversity, before it is entitled to the appellation. –**George Washington**

### **44. FRIENDSHIPS & TRANSPARENCY**

Be courteous to all, but intimate with few,  
and let those few be well tried before you give them your confidence. –**George Washington**

Be polite to all, but intimate with few. –**Thomas Jefferson**

#### **45. FRUGALITY**

About the time we can make the ends meet,  
somebody moves the ends. **–Herbert Hoover**

Wealth can only be accumulated by the earnings of industry  
and the savings of frugality. **–John Tyler**

There is no dignity quite so impressive, and no one independence quite so important,  
as living within your means. **–Calvin Coolidge**

#### **46. GLOBALIZATION & ECONOMICS**

I am in favor of helping the prosperity of all countries because, when we are all prosperous,  
the trade with each becomes more valuable to the other. **–William Howard Taft**

**Comments:** Only to a minimum standard. As we have seen with China, government helping business too much  
(Ex.: over-outsourcing) can over-help another nation at the expense of a portion of our own economy.

#### **47. GLOBALIZATION & PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE**

We live in a world that has narrowed into a neighborhood  
before it has broadened into a brotherhood. **–Lyndon B. Johnson**

#### **48. GLOBALIZATION & ‘PIC NIC DIPLOMACY’**

If civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships–  
the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together, in the same world at peace.  
**–Franklin D. Roosevelt**

#### **49. GLOBAL DEMOCRATIZATION**

The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. **–George W. Bush**

#### **50. GOVERNING**

If you think too much about being re-elected,  
it is very difficult to be worth re-electing. **–Woodrow Wilson**

#### **51. GOVERNMENT & BUREAUCRACY**

We are all imperfect. We can not expect perfect government. **–William Howard Taft**

Governments tend not to solve problems, only to rearrange them. **–Ronald Reagan**

#### **52. Government & Business**

The duty of government is to leave commerce to its own capital and credit  
as well as all other branches of business,  
protecting all in their legal pursuits, granting exclusive privileges to none. **–Andrew Jackson**



### **53. GOVERNMENT & FACTIONS**

The essence of a free government consists in an effectual control of rivalries. –**John Adams**

**Comments:** Examples: Rich vs. poor; Majority vs. minorities; White vs. black; North vs. South; White vs. blue collar; Gay vs. straight; Aborters vs. pro-lifers; Religious vs. secularists, etc.

### **54. GOVERNMENT & JUSTICE**

The administration of justice is the firmest pillar of government. –**George Washington**

### **55. GOVERNMENT & LEGISLATION**

If men were angels, no government would be necessary. –**James Madison**

A law is not a law without coercion behind it. –**James A. Garfield**

**Comments:** As our book has said, many of government's costs are due to the existence of sin.

### **56. GOVERNMENT & PATRIOTISM**

That government is the strongest of which every man feels himself a part. –**Thomas Jefferson**

### **57. GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS & DEMOCRACY**

**(See also: Democracy; Capitalism)**

A pure democracy is a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person. –**James Madison**

### **58. GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS & SOCIALISM**

Socialism proposes no adequate substitute for the motive of enlightened selfishness that today is at the basis of all human labor and effort, enterprise and new activity. –**William Howard Taft**

**Comments:** Better, self-interest. You can't clean up a sinful term by calling on enlightened with its use.

### **59. GREEN/ECOLOGY**

Part of our essential humanity is paying respect to what God gave us and what will be here a long time after we're gone. –**William J. Clinton**

### **60. GRIDLOCK**

Delay is preferable to error. –**Thomas Jefferson**

When you have an efficient government, you have a dictatorship. –**Harry S. Truman**

### **61. IDIOMS**

You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time,

but you cannot fool all the people all the time. –**Abraham Lincoln**

Things may come to those who wait,  
but only the things left by those who hustle. –**Abraham Lincoln**

If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. –**Harry S. Truman**

Comments: Does the reader see how many of our most prominent leaders used idioms to back their convictions?

## **62. INFRASTRUCTURE**

The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining. –**John F. Kennedy**

## **63. INVENTIONS**

Towering genius disdains a beaten path. It seeks regions hitherto unexplored. –**Abraham Lincoln**

## **64. ISRAEL**

We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other's children. –**Jimmy Carter**

Peace is not made at the council table or by treaties, but in the hearts of men. –**Herbert Hoover**

## **65. LAWYERS**

Discourage litigation. Persuade your neighbors to compromise whenever you can.

As a peacemaker the lawyer has superior opportunity of being a good man.

There will still be business enough. –**Abraham Lincoln**

Comments: Is this author the only attorney in America who agrees with this sentiment? I know I am not, but our profession is plagued with money-hungry (i.e., greedy) 'ambulance-chasing' poster children.

## **66. LEADERSHIP & INSPIRATION**

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more,  
you are a leader. –**John Quincy Adams**

## **67. LEADERSHIP & SUCCESS**

Absolute identity with one's cause

is the first and great condition of successful leadership. –**Woodrow Wilson**

## **68. LEADERSHIP & EDUCATION**

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other. –**John F. Kennedy**

## **69. LEADERSHIP & INSPIRATION**

Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done  
because he wants to do it. –**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

Motivation is the art of getting people to do what you want them to do

because they want to do it. –**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

**Comments:** Put these two beliefs together (‘connect the dots’) and some consider leaders to be those who motivate and inspire—not just educate, or walk the talk.

### **70. LEADERSHIP & INSPIRATION**

It takes time to persuade men to do even what is for their own good. –**Thomas Jefferson**

I would rather try to persuade a man to go along, because once I have persuaded him, he will stick.

If I scare him, he will stay just as long as he is scared,

and then he is gone. –**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

### **71. LEGISLATION & WISDOM**

The government should not be guided by temporary excitement,  
but by sober second thought. –**Martin Van Buren**

### **72. LIBERALS**

If you want total security, go to prison. There you're fed, clothed, given medical care and so on.

The only thing lacking... is freedom. –**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

### **73. LIBYA**

For more than four decades, the Libyan people have been ruled by a tyrant—Moammar Gaddafi. He has denied his people freedom, exploited their wealth, murdered opponents at home and abroad, and terrorized innocent people around the world—

including Americans who were killed by Libyan agents. –**Barack Obama**

### **74. LOBBYISTS**

I don't take a dime of their [lobbyist] money,  
and when I am president, they won't find a job in my White House. –**Barack Obama**

### **75. LOGIC & COMMON SENSE**

Too often we... enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought. –**John F. Kennedy**

Right reason is stronger than force. –**James A. Garfield**

Facts are stubborn things. –**Ronald Reagan**

### **76. MEDIA**

No government ought to be without censors;  
and where the press is free no one ever will. –**Thomas Jefferson**

Where the press is free and every man able to read, all is safe. –**Thomas Jefferson**

### **77. MILITARY & NATIONAL DEFENSE**

The world has nothing to fear from military ambition in our government. –**James K. Polk**

### **78. MINORITY RIGHTS**

One great object of the Constitution was to restrain majorities from oppressing minorities or encroaching upon their just rights. –**James K. Polk**

### **79. MODERATION**

I am a radical in thought (and principle)  
and a conservative in method (and conduct). –**Rutherford B. Hayes**

### **80. MODERATION & IDEALS**

Virtue is defined to be mediocrity, of which either extreme is vice. –**Rutherford B. Hayes**

**Comments:** Another definition of ‘moderation’ I reject—mediocrity. We need to be excellent at implementing common sense policies and the common morality behind them.

### **81. MORALS & ANGER**

When angry count to ten before you speak.  
If very angry, count to one hundred. –**Thomas Jefferson**

### **82. MORALS & BRIBERY**

Few men have virtue to withstand the highest bidder. –**George Washington**

### **83. MORALS & COMMITMENT**

I believe the destiny of your generation—and your nation—is a rendezvous with excellence.  
–**Lyndon B. Johnson**

We need to internalize this idea of excellence.  
Not many folks spend a lot of time trying to be excellent. –**Barack Obama**

### **84. MORALS & CHARITY**

I believe that every human mind feels pleasure in doing good to another. –**Thomas Jefferson**

### **85. MORALS & CONSCIENCE**

Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire, called conscience.  
–**George Washington**

### **86. MORALS & CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM**

He has a right to criticize, who has a heart to help. –**Abraham Lincoln**

Comments: Constructive criticism actually helps—if one is inclined to improve a situation (vs. deny, ignore or remain deluded about existing problems).

### **87. MORALS & COURAGE**

If you fear making anyone mad, then you ultimately probe for the lowest common denominator of human achievement. –**Jimmy Carter**

Popularity, I have always thought, may aptly be compared to a coquette [i.e., flirt]—the more you woo her, the more apt is she to elude your embrace. –**John Tyler**

The President is always abused. If he isn't, he isn't doing anything. –**Harry S. Truman**

Comments: Exactly why a leader cannot be a full-fledged poster boy for ‘Political Correctness.’

### **88. MORALS & DEATH**

I have always done my duty. I am ready to die.  
My only regret is for the friends I leave behind me. –**Zachary Taylor**

### **89. MORALS & ENDURANCE**

A man is not finished when he is defeated. He is finished when he quits. –**Richard M. Nixon**  
You've got to learn to survive a defeat. That's when you develop character. –**Richard M. Nixon**

### **90. MORALS & EXPEDIENCY**

What is right and what is practicable are two different things. –**James Buchanan**

Comments: And what is right needs to be the practice we implement, at least most of the time. No one promised doing the right thing would be easy, but, as several presidents have said, character is built through tougher times.

### **91. MORALS & EVIL**

Little progress can be made by merely attempting to repress what is evil.  
Our great hope lies in developing what is good. –**Calvin Coolidge**

### **92. MORALS & FRIENDSHIPS**

It is better to be alone than in bad company. –**George Washington**

Comments: Many presidents mentioned the sentiment that it is ‘lonely at the top.’

### **93. MORALS & GOVERNMENT**

When there is a lack of honor in government,  
the morals of the whole people are poisoned. –**Herbert Hoover**

To educate a man in mind and not in morals  
is to educate a menace to society. –**Theodore Roosevelt**

Every President wants to do right. –**Lyndon B. Johnson**

Tell me what is right and I will fight for it. –**Woodrow Wilson**

The right thing to do never requires any subterfuge,  
it is always simple and direct. –**Calvin Coolidge**

No public man can be just a little crooked. –**Herbert Hoover**

Doing what's right isn't the problem. It is knowing what's right. –**Lyndon B. Johnson**

I have long settled in my own opinion that neither Philosophy, nor Religion, nor Morality,  
nor Wisdom, nor Interest, will ever govern nations or parties,  
against their Vanity, their Pride, their Resentment or Revenge, or their Avarice or Ambition. Nothing but  
Force or Power and Strength can restrain them.<sup>1</sup> –**John Adams**

**Comments:** Don't tell me knowing the subject of morality—even if attempted to be divorced from religion—is not  
a subject many of our profound leaders considered foundational to their office.

#### **94. MORALS & HAPPINESS**

Happiness is not being pained in body or troubled in mind. –**Thomas Jefferson**

It is neither wealth nor splendor;  
but tranquility and occupation which give you happiness. –**Thomas Jefferson**

Happiness and moral duty are inseparably connected. –**George Washington**

#### **95. MORALS & HUMILITY**

It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit. –**Harry S. Truman**

Failure to accord credit to anyone for what he may have done  
is a great weakness in any man. –**William Howard Taft**

#### **96. MORALS & IDEALISM**

There is no force so democratic as the force of an ideal. –**Calvin Coolidge**

I'm an idealist without illusions. –**John F. Kennedy**

#### **97. MORALS & POLITICS**

Power is not alluring to pure minds. –**Thomas Jefferson**

#### **98. MORALS & PROCRASTINATION**

Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today. –**Thomas Jefferson**

You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today. –**Abraham Lincoln**

#### **99. MORALS & PURPOSE**

Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction. –**John F. Kennedy**

In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years. –**Abraham Lincoln**

### **100. MORALS & RULES**

Rules are not necessarily sacred, principles are. –**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

### **101. MORALS & SPEECH**

Must swear off from swearing. Bad habit. –**Rutherford B. Hayes**

### **102. MORALS & TAKING STANDS**

Be sure you put your feet in the right place, then stand firm. –**Abraham Lincoln**

### **103. MORALS & TRIALS**

Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. –**John F. Kennedy**

### **104. MORALS & WISDOM**

I do not think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday. –**Abraham Lincoln**

### **105. MORALS & WORDS > DEEDS**

Words without actions are the assassins of idealism. –**Herbert Hoover**

Comments: Idiom: Talk is cheap.

### **106. MOTIVATION & ACTION**

Do you want to know who you are? Don't ask. Act!  
Action will delineate and define you. –**Thomas Jefferson**

The only man who never makes a mistake  
is the man who never does anything. –**Theodore Roosevelt**

### **107. MOTIVATION & CRISES**

When written in Chinese, the word "crisis" is composed of two characters.  
One represents danger and the other represents opportunity. –**John F. Kennedy**

### **108. MOTIVATION & RISK**

Those who dare to fail miserably can achieve greatly. –**John F. Kennedy**

### **109. MOTIVATION & WILL**

Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed  
is more important than any other. –**Abraham Lincoln**

### **110. NASA**

The moon and other celestial bodies should be free for exploration and use by all countries. No country should be permitted to advance a claim of sovereignty. **–Lyndon B. Johnson**

### **111. NATIONAL DEFENSE**

Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far. **–Theodore Roosevelt**

### **112. NATIONAL PARKS**

The public lands are a public stock, which ought to be disposed of to the best advantage for the nation. **–James Monroe**

### **113. NUCLEAR WARHEADS**

The atom bomb was no "great decision."  
It was merely another powerful weapon in the arsenal of righteousness. **–Harry S. Truman**  
We have the power to make this the best generation of mankind in the history of the world or to make it the last. **–John F. Kennedy**

### **114. OBESITY EPIDEMIC**

Our growing softness, our increasing lack of physical fitness, is a menace to our security. **–John F. Kennedy**

**Comments:** Even Obama has recently used this rhetoric as figurative of America's global competitive lapses.

### **115. PHILOSOPHY & MORALS**

Philosophy is common sense with big words. **–James Madison**

### **116. POLITICAL PARTIES**

Honor is not the exclusive property of any political party. **–Herbert Hoover**

### **117. POLITICIANS**

Whenever a man has cast a longing eye on offices, a rottenness begins in his conduct. **–Thomas Jefferson**

### **118. POLITICS & LOBBYISTS**

Politics I supposed to be the second-oldest profession. I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the first. **–Ronald Reagan**

**Comments:** With politicians over-influenced by lobbyists, then screwing the American tax payer, this statement is often true.



### **119. POLITICS & TRICKS**

I reject the cynical view that politics is a dirty business. –**Richard M. Nixon**

### **120. POLITICS & VICTORY**

Finishing second in the Olympics gets you silver.  
Finishing second in politics gets you oblivion. –**Richard M. Nixon**

### **121. POLITICS & VICTORY**

I don't know anything that builds the will to win better than competitive sports. –**Richard M. Nixon**

**Comments:** Can you say conscientious professional, but also 'work-a-holic'?

### **122. POLITICS IN D.C.**

Washington is a city of Southern efficiency and Northern charm. –**John F. Kennedy**

**Comments:** I.e., slow and rude. The answer—as is usually the case—is proper balance... The efficiency of New Yorkers and the courtesy of Texans.

### **123. POVERTY & BLUE COLLAR WORKERS**

The progress of society is mainly  
the improvement in the condition of the workingmen of the world. –**Rutherford B. Hayes**

**Comments:** That's because the wealthy already have it 'good.' Making their lives significantly better—especially when others are struggling, if not suffering—is an abuse of the balanced function of government (which is to favor neither poor nor rich).

### **124. POVERTY & EDUCATION**

Poverty must not be a bar to learning  
and learning must offer an escape from poverty. –**Lyndon B. Johnson**

### **125. POVERTY & MINORITIES**

There can be no permanent disfranchised peasantry in the United States. –**James A. Garfield**

### **126. PREEMPTIVE STRIKES**

When you see a rattlesnake poised to strike,  
you do not wait until he has struck to crush him. –**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

### **127. PRESIDENTS & CHARACTER**

Richard Nixon is a no good, lying b\_stard. He can lie out of both sides of his mouth at the same time, and if he ever caught himself telling the truth, he'd lie just to keep his hand in. –**Harry S. Truman**

Jerry Ford is so dumb he can't f\_rt and chew gum at the same time. –**Lyndon B. Johnson**

Jack was out kissing babies while I was out passing bills.  
Someone had to tend the store. –**Lyndon B. Johnson**

Comments: Over time, voter preferences in their leaders have changed. I dare say we wouldn't knowingly tolerate such brash or caustic words (or behavior) if only we knew of it at the time of its occurrence (vs. years later, through insiders cashing in with kiss-and-tell/tell-all books), even if true.

### **128. PRESIDENTS & CHARACTER**

Being too good is apt to be uninteresting. –**Harry S. Truman**

Comments: Even Ecclesiastes 7:16-17 agrees with this principle, but likely not because it is boring.

### **129. PRESIDENTS & COUNSEL**

I'm not the smartest fellow in the world,  
but I can sure pick smart colleagues. –**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

### **130. PRESIDENTS & CRISES**

Being president is like being a jack\_ss in a hailstorm.  
There's nothing to do but to stand there and take it. –**Lyndon B. Johnson**

### **131. PRESIDENTS & DECISION-MAKING**

A government is for the benefit of all the people. –**William Howard Taft**

I have one yardstick by which I test every major problem–  
and that yardstick is: Is it good for America? –**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

### **132. PRESIDENTS & DECISION-MAKING**

It is common sense to take a method and try it.  
If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something. –**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

### **133. PRESIDENTS & HONOR**

I tread in the footsteps of illustrious men... in receiving from the people the sacred trust  
confided to my illustrious predecessor. –**Martin Van Buren**

### **134. PRESIDENTS & HUMILITY**

I thought it completely absurd to mention my name  
in the same breath as the presidency. –**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

I not only use all the brains that I have, but all that I can borrow. –**Woodrow Wilson**

I am only an average man but, by George,  
I work harder at it than the average man. –**Theodore Roosevelt**

I am a Ford, not a Lincoln. –**Gerald R. Ford**

I've got big shoes to fill.  
This is my chance to do something.

I have to seize the moment. –**Andrew Jackson**

Don't worry when you are not recognized,  
but strive to be worthy of recognition. –**Abraham Lincoln**

Comments: At least ideally, we want confident, yet humble presidents (i.e., moral balance).

### **135. PRESIDENTS & HUMOR**

Thomas Jefferson once said,  
'We should never judge a president by his age, only by his works.'  
And ever since he told me that, I stopped worrying. –**Ronald Reagan**

I want you to know that also I will not make age an issue of this campaign.  
I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience.  
–**Ronald Reagan** (Wikipedia)

Before I refuse to take your questions, I have an opening statement. –**Ronald Reagan**

'I don't know how anybody can serve in public office without being an actor. –**Ronald Reagan**  
One way to make sure crime doesn't pay would be to let the government run it. –**Ronald Reagan**

Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases:  
If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.  
–**Ronald Reagan**

Comments: We love witty humor in our presidents—it's entertaining relief to often heavy subjects.

### **136. PRESIDENTS & IMPARTIALITY**

He serves his party best who serves his country best. –**Rutherford B. Hayes**

Comments: The best presidential candidates are those who demonstrate commitment to country over party first.  
If they can't do it in the primaries, can the flip a switch once they get elected?

### **137. PRESIDENTS & INSPIRATION**

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself. –**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

The buck stops here! –**Harry S. Truman**

Comments: We like strong, tough, confident leaders.

### **138. PRESIDENTS & MORALS**

Honest conviction is my courage; the Constitution is my guide. –**Andrew Johnson**

'A Democratic thief is as bad as a Republican thief.'" –**Grover Cleveland** ("Ugly Honest")

### **139. PRESIDENTS & PRIVATE CAREERS**

I am heartily rejoiced that my term is so near its close.  
I will soon cease to be a servant and will become a sovereign. –**James K. Polk**

### **140. PRESIDENTS & SPEECH**

You can't know too much, but you can say too much. –**Calvin Coolidge**

It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool  
than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt. –**Abraham Lincoln**

In the television age, the key distinction is between the candidate who can speak poetry  
and the one who can only speak prose. –**Richard M. Nixon**

My failures have been errors in judgment, not of intent. –**Ulysses S. Grant**

**Comments:** Several presidents have echoed this sentiment. Both the media and the public need to give these mere humans a break, in seeking to understand what they said, what they meant, and how they meant for it to come across (i.e., tone), and stop being venomous vultures seething to jump on any verbal miscue (or second-guessing Monday morning quarterbacks and arm chair quarterbacks).

### **141. PRESIDENTS & WORK ETHIC**

No president who performs his duties faithfully and conscientiously  
can have any leisure. –**James K. Polk**

### **142. PROBLEMS**

Status quo, you know, is Latin for 'the mess we're in'. –**Ronald Reagan**

### **143. RACE & DISCRIMINATION**

No one has been barred on account of his race from fighting or dying for America,  
there are no white or colored signs on the foxholes or graveyards of battle. –**John F. Kennedy**

If you want to make beautiful music,  
you must play the black and the white notes together. –**Richard M. Nixon**

### **144. RACE & MULTI-CULTURALISM**

We are a nation of communities... a brilliant diversity spread like stars,  
like a thousand points of light in a broad and peaceful sky. –**George H. W. Bush**

### **145. RELIGION & COUNTRY**

If God is just, I tremble for my country. –**Thomas Jefferson**

Nations, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions. –**Ulysses S. Grant**

### **146. RELIGION & ETHICS**

We should live our lives as though Christ were coming this afternoon. –**Jimmy Carter**

### **147. RELIGION & POLITICS**

Because power corrupts, society's demands for moral authority and character  
increase as the importance of the position increases. –**John Adams**

A government for the people must depend for its success on the intelligence,

the morality, the justice, and the interest of the people themselves. –**Grover Cleveland**

Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side;  
my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right. –**Abraham Lincoln**

It becomes us in humility to make our devout acknowledgments to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for  
the inestimable civil and religious blessings with which we are favored. –**James K. Polk**

If we ever forget that we are One Nation Under God,  
then we will be a nation gone under. –**Ronald Reagan**

**Comments:** Some may decry raising religion or morality in a political book, but even our most prominent  
leaders regularly addressed moral issues as part of their leadership role (sometimes using the ‘bully pulpit’—that  
is, encouraging behavior they cannot or would not legally enforce).

### **148. RELIGION & THE PUBLIC ARENA**

In our home there was always prayer—aloud, proud and unapologetic. –**Lyndon B. Johnson**

You cannot divorce religious belief and public service.  
I've never detected any conflict between God's will and my political duty.  
If you violate one, you violate the other. –**Jimmy Carter**

I am a Christian and a Democrat, that's all. –**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

I am not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President, who  
happens also to be a Catholic. –**John F. Kennedy**

**Comments:** Secularists may try to push God and religion out of the public domain, but its existence in our public  
life is a long-standing tradition. No one wants our leaders using their offices to proselytize, but being themselves  
and telling us what their values are is always helpful to our assessment of them.

### **149. RELIGIOUS COOPERATION**

Union of religious sentiments begets a surprising confidence. –**James Madison**

### **150. RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE**

It was not a religion that attacked us that September day. It was al-Qaeda.  
We will not sacrifice the liberties we cherish or hunker down behind walls of suspicion and mistrust.  
–**Barack Obama**

### **151. RICHES**

Prosperity is only an instrument to be used, not a deity to be worshipped. –**Calvin Coolidge**

### **152. RICH V. POOR**

I believe that all the measures of the Government are directed to the purpose of  
making the rich richer and the poor poorer. –**William Henry Harrison**

### **153. RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS**

A well-regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained in arms,  
is the best most natural defense of a free country. –**James Madison**

Firearms are second only to the Constitution in importance; they are the peoples' liberty's teeth. –**George Washington**

### **154. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

New discoveries in science will continue to create a thousand new frontiers for those who still would adventure. –**Herbert Hoover**

### **155. SEPARATION OF POWERS**

The dangers of a concentration of all power in the general government of a confederacy so vast as ours are too obvious to be disregarded. –**Franklin Pierce**

### **156. SLAVERY**

Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally. –**Abraham Lincoln**

### **157. SOCIAL CHANGE**

If you want to make enemies, try to change something. –**Woodrow Wilson**  
It is not strange... to mistake change for progress. –**Millard Fillmore**

### **158. SOLUTIONS & COMPROMISE**

A good compromise, a good piece of legislation, is like a good sentence; or a good piece of music. Everybody can recognize it. They say, 'Huh. It works. It makes sense.' –**Barack Obama**

### **159. SOLUTIONS & COOPERATION**

Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer.  
Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past.  
Let us accept our own responsibility for the future. –**John F. Kennedy**

### **160. SOLUTIONS & ETHICS**

The most practical kind of politics is the politics of decency. –**Theodore Roosevelt**

### **161. SOLUTIONS & LEGISLATION**

America's present need is not heroics, but healing; not nostrums, but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration; not agitation, but adjustment; not surgery, but serenity; not the dramatic, but the dispassionate; not experiment, but equipoise; not submergence in internationality, but sustainment in triumphal nationality.<sup>2</sup>  
–**Warren G. Harding**

The world is not going to be saved by legislation. –**William Howard Taft**

### **162. SOLUTIONS & MODERATION**

Unless both sides win, no agreement can be permanent. –**Jimmy Carter**

### **163. SOLUTIONS & NEGOTIATION**

Let us move from the era of confrontation to the era of negotiation. –**Richard M. Nixon**

### **164. SOLUTIONS & OPPORTUNITY**

Our problems are man-made, therefore they may be solved by man.

And man can be as big as he wants.

No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings. –**John F. Kennedy**

### **165. SOLUTIONS & RECONCILIATION**

America's present need is not heroics but healing;  
not nostrums [i.e., medicines] but normalcy; not revolution but restoration. –**Warren G. Harding**

### **166. SOLUTIONS & TRICKS**

I am neither bitter nor cynical but I do wish there was less immaturity in political thinking.

–**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

We want everybody to act like adults, quit playing games,  
realize that it's not just my way or the highway. –**Barack Obama**

What Washington needs is adult supervision. –**Barack Obama**

### **167. SOVEREIGNTY**

America will never seek a permission slip to defend the security of our people. –**George W. Bush**

### **168. STIMULUS SPENDING**

What do you think a stimulus is? It's spending—that's the whole point! Seriously. –**Barack Obama**

**Comments:** But it's spending borrowed money we don't have, for projects the market doesn't demand. Therefore, this temporary spending does not sustain a growing economy even medium-term, for the demand for those services was government-contrived.

### **169. SUPREME COURT**

Our chief justices have probably had more profound and lasting influence on their times  
and on the direction of the nation than most presidents. –**Richard M. Nixon**

### **170. TAXES**

To impose taxes when the public exigencies require them is an obligation  
of the most sacred character, especially with a free people. –**James Monroe**

Collecting more taxes than is absolutely necessary is legalized robbery. –**William J. Clinton**

### **171. TERRORISM**

[Terrorists...] We're going to find them. And if they're hiding, we're going to smoke them out.

–**George W. Bush**

We have real enemies in the world. These enemies must be found.

They must be pursued and they must be defeated. –**Barack Obama**

**Comments:** Imagine that. There really can be common ground between the two parties, despite what extremists on the left and right want you to think.

### **172. TERRORISM & PREEMPTIVE STRIKES**

America must not ignore the threat gathering against us.

Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof, the smoking gun that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud. –**George W. Bush**

Any government that supports, protects or harbors terrorists is complicit in the murder of the innocent and equally guilty of terrorist crimes. –**George W. Bush**

### **173. TRICKS & BACK DOOR DEALS**

It is difficult for the common good to prevail against the intense concentration of those who have a special interest, especially if the decisions are made behind locked doors. –**Jimmy Carter**

### **174. TRICKS & LEGISLATION**

We live in a stage of politics, where legislators seem to regard the passage of laws as much more important than the results of their enforcement. –**William Howard Taft**

### **175. TRICKS & MODERATION**

I despise people who go to the gutter on either the right or the left and hurl rocks at those in the center. –**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

If one morning I walked on top of the water across the Potomac River, the headline that afternoon would read: "President Can't Swim." –**Lyndon B. Johnson**

**Comments:** Some political tricks have a long-standing history of use, and we are the ones who need to break the chain. Spinning something positive into a negative is a grievous evil both parties, and even the media can be quite adept at.

### **176. TRICKS & PRIORITIES**

Frequently the more trifling the subject, the more animated and protracted the discussion. –**Franklin Pierce**

### **177. TRICKS & TIMING**



We are in a period when old questions are settled and the new are not yet brought forward.  
Extreme party action, if continued in such a time, would ruin the party.  
Moderation is its only chance.

The party out of power gains by all partisan conduct of those in power. –**Rutherford B. Hayes**

**Comments:** Those were the days—if ever they existed—when biased policy-making by those in charge was seen as a positive by the minority party. Now-a-days, any victory for the other side is feared to trigger a loss on election day. Plus, another ‘trick’ is for few to no old questions to be settled—just re-package them and always seek incremental gains to their fuller achievement.

### **178. TRICKS & TRUTH**

A typical vice of American politics  
is the avoidance of saying anything real on real issues. –**Theodore Roosevelt**

### **179. TRUTH & FACTS**

I never did give anybody hell. I just told the truth and they thought it was hell. –**Harry S. Truman**

**Comments:** **Idiom:** The truth hurts (and I would add, but it’s often the sting of the needle that vaccinates you from true harm).

### **180. TRUTH & HONESTY**

A brave man is a man who dares to look the Devil in the face  
and tell him he is a Devil. –**James A. Garfield**

The bud of victory is always in the truth. –**Benjamin Harrison**

Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom. –**Thomas Jefferson**

### **181. VOTERS & GOVERNMENT**

The government is us; we are the government, you and I. –**Theodore Roosevelt**

The people are the government, administering it by their agents;  
they are the government, the sovereign power. –**Andrew Jackson**

**Comments:** If ever the citizen majority would understand this simple truth, we would start demanding and expecting more from our leaders. Any time we only blame Washington, we must look in the mirror and realize who put those folks there.

### **182. VOTERS & POLITICIANS**

Voters quickly forget what a man says. –**Richard M. Nixon**

**Comments:** If this is ever true, no wonder they lie and over-promise—no one is truly listening (or holding them accountable for the things they commit to).

### **183. VOTERS & REASON**

Fear not, the people may be deluded for a moment, but cannot be corrupted. –**Andrew Jackson**

#### **184. VOTERS & VOTING**

To vote is like the payment of a debt,  
a duty never to be neglected, if its performance is possible. –**Rutherford B. Hayes**

#### **185. WAR & CAUSES**

Experience has shown how deeply the seeds of war are planted  
by economic rivalry and social injustice. –**Harry S. Truman**

#### **186. WAR & CONQUEST**

Conquest is not in our principles. It is inconsistent with our government. –**Thomas Jefferson**

#### **187. WAR & NECESSITY**

Wars will remain while human nature remains.  
I believe in my soul in cooperation, in arbitration;  
but the soldier's occupation we cannot say is gone until human nature is gone.  
–**Rutherford B. Hayes**

#### **188. WAR & PEACE**

The defense policy of the United States is based on a simple premise:  
The United States does not start fights. We will never be an aggressor.  
We maintain our strength in order to deter and defend against aggression–  
to preserve freedom and peace. –**Ronald Reagan** (Wiki)  
The greatest honor history can bestow is that of peacemaker. –**Richard M. Nixon**

#### **189. WAR & PEACE**

I have never advocated war except as a means of peace. –**Ulysses S. Grant**  
It is an unfortunate fact that we can secure peace only by preparing for war. –**John F. Kennedy**  
To be prepared for war is one of the most effective means of preserving peace.  
–**George Washington**

#### **190. WAR & PEACE**

Preparation for war is a constant stimulus to suspicion and ill will. –**James Monroe**

**Comments:** No true and rational American wants war, yet, so long as there are violently aggressive regimes in the world, they are sometimes necessary.

#### **191. WAR & TIMING**

War should never be entered upon until every agency of peace has failed. –**William McKinley**

### **192. WAR & WARRIORS**

Older men declare war. But it is the youth that must fight and die. **–Herbert Hoover**

### **193. WAR & WOES**

Great is the guilt of an unnecessary war. **–John Adams**

### **194. WEALTH REDISTRIBUTION**

This is the moment when we must build on the wealth that open markets have created, and share its benefits more equitably.

Trade has been a cornerstone of our growth and global development.

But we will not be able to sustain this growth if it favors the few, and not the many.

**–Barack Obama**

**Comments:** Sadly, the poor are not much needed to sustain growth, but for our country to maintain its morality, they must be cared for. And, it is not “unfair” or “inequitable” for employers to pay you what you’re worth—even if you are paid minimally.

### **195. WELFARE & GREED**

We need to steer clear of this poverty of ambition, where people want to drive fancy cars and wear nice clothes and live in nice apartments but don't want to work hard to accomplish these things.

Everyone should try to realize their full potential. **–Barack Obama**

**Comments:** An entitlement mentality, even in our youth, is certainly a loathsome soar on the body politic. However, even as we do work hard to pursue ‘nice things,’ without a generous heart and lack of idolizing such things, our pursuit is ultimately in vain.

### **196. WELFARE & INCENTIVES**

If we take the route of the permanent handout, the American character will itself be impoverished. **–Richard M. Nixon**

You cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence. **–Abraham Lincoln**

### **197. WELFARE & WORK**

The first requisite of a good citizen in this republic of ours is that he shall be able and willing to pull his own weight. **–Theodore Roosevelt**

### **198. WELFARE & WORKFARE**

We should measure welfare's success by how many people leave welfare, not by how many are added. **–Ronald Reagan**

Welfare's purpose should be to eliminate, as far as possible, the need for its own existence. **–Ronald Reagan**

## **199. WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

I want to make a policy statement. I am unabashedly in favor of women. **–Lyndon B. Johnson**

## **200. WORLD'S POLICEMAN**

We Americans have no commission from God to police the world. **–Benjamin Harrison**

**Comments:** Technically true, but practically untrue, in that nations rely on our historic willingness to intervene and strength to back it up, usually for the good of mankind. We need merely for more benefitting nations to share the load, in lives and lucre lost.

## **CONCLUSION**

Don't write so that you can be understood,  
write so that you can't be misunderstood. **–William Howard Taft**

### **Reference:**

- 1 The Complete Idiot's Guide to the American Presidency, p. 56, by Alan Axelrod (Alpha Books: New York), 2009
- 2 Ibid., p. 178
- 3 Ibid., p. 190

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## PRESIDENTIAL PERSONALITIES

We hear a lot these days about what Americans want in their president—it's almost too perfect a creature to ever have existed. In the 2012 election, President Obama is said to lack leadership, Gingrich is too academic, Romney too boring, Cain may have been a womanizer, Perry can't debate eloquently and the others on the GOP side were deemed even worse by the voters. We will never get perfection, and if precedent holds any credibility in determining what is reasonable to expect, the following excerpts from The American President, by Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr. [Riverhead Books: New York), 1999], give the voter a brief understanding of just what personality types the White House has witnessed.

“Because the content of the presidency is uncertain, the person of the president takes on added importance. The manner in which the individual brings his (someday her) mind and energies to bear on the events that frame his time is crucial to the way the office is conceived and executed in that time. The incumbent's own experience enthusiasms, ideas, interests, prejudices, working style, and temperament will markedly affect what happens in the office and what comes out of it.” (xiv)

### 1. **George Washington** (Federalist)

“Washington's life is inextricably linked to the Revolution, but over time it has been largely forgotten that his true heroism sprang less from his accomplishments as a military man than from qualities deep inside him: **his character and his vision**. ‘My politics are plain and simple,’ he wrote. ‘I think every nation has a right to establish... [a] government under which it conceives it shall live most happy.’” (p. 6)

### 2. **John Adams** (Federalist)

“John Adams was in many ways the **deepest thinker** of his generation, an idealist whose calling card was his extraordinary independence. ...Though his parents hoped he would enter the ordained ministry, the idea soon came to rankle young Adams. ‘I had some faculty for public speaking,’ he later wrote, ‘and determined that I should make a better lawyer than divine.’” (p. 132)

### 3. **Thomas Jefferson** (Democratic-Republican)

“From his mountaintop estate of Monticello, Thomas Jefferson loomed over his age as its most brilliant and influential figure. **Omnivorously curious**, he was proficient in a dozen subjects, from agriculture, science, history, and languages to religion, political philosophy, architecture and music.” (p. 262)

### 4. **James Madison** (Democratic-Republican)

“He was the towering intellect of the founding fathers, but from James Madison's earliest days he was prone to sickness and exhaustion. ...Madison's four years in Philadelphia not only revealed him as America's most **gifted administrator**, they also convinced him that America's government was deeply flawed.” (p. 401)

### 5. **James Monroe** (Democratic-Republican)

“Throughout our history there have been presidents who possessed an almost religious belief in the principles of the United States and who sought ways to extend America's influence on the world stage. That was certainly the case for our fifth president, a passionate visionary and lifelong diplomat...” (p. 306)

### 6. **John Quincy Adams** (Democratic-Republican)

“A recluse by nature, always more respected than loved, he described himself as a ‘cold’ and ‘silent animal.’ ‘I well know that I shall never be a popular man,’ he wrote. ‘I have none of the honey which is the true flycatcher.’” (p. 168)

**7. Andrew Jackson** (Democrat)

“Like all presidents who have won important power struggles, Andrew Jackson was a fighter. He was in fact the most violent-tempered man ever to rise to the presidency. ...Others recognized different dimensions to the old warrior: his tenacious intelligence, **his belief in the common man**, and what one surprised observer called his ‘mysterious charm wrought upon old and young.’” (p. 350)

**8. Martin Van Buren** (Democrat)

“Friendly and sociable, always impeccably dressed, the savvy, red-haired Dutchman also had a certain coldness. When his wife of eleven years died of tuberculosis in 1819, all he said was that he felt an ‘anxiety.’ And he could be ruthless in his political dealings, switching positions on key issues to further his career.” (p. 91)

**9. William Henry Harrison** (Whig)

“William Henry Harrison enjoyed playing the role of humble, backwoods hero.” (p. 18)

**10. John Tyler** (Whig)

“Tall and gaunt to the point of emaciation, with a prominent Roman nose that he joked about, he had a courtly bearing and a silvery voice, which he frequently utilized for **impassioned oratory**.” (p. 211)

**11. James Knox Polk** (Democrat)

“James Knox Polk, the grandson of a blacksmith, grew up in rural Tennessee, where his father was a successful farmer and landowner. Thin and sickly as a boy, he was allowed to pursue an education instead of farming... Dignified and courteous, though opinionated and secretive...” (p. 409)

**12. Zachary Taylor** (Whig)

“In 1849 there rose to the nation’s highest office a sixty-four-year-old fighting man who was so politically inexperienced he had never even voted. As had been true for John Adams, his presidency offers a cautionary tale about bringing too much independence into the White House, for Zachary Taylor’s crusty independence and complete disdain for the maneuvering of politicians would eventually put him in conflict with almost everyone in government.” (p. 140)

**13. Millard Fillmore** (Whig)

“...the vice president waiting in the wings was as unlike John Tyler as a person could be. He was a self-made New Yorker known for his thoroughgoing commitment to the Union and to the Whig party. ...All his life Millard Fillmore had **driven himself to succeed**. Raised in dire poverty in western New York State, in the most desperate beginnings of any of our presidents...” (p. 218)

**14. Franklin Pierce** (Democrat)

“A heavy social drinker always ready for a rowdy night on the town, he soon became one of the most popular men in Washington. ...Fighting liquor, sadness, ill health and religious doubt, in 1840 Pierce finally renounced alcohol.” (p. 53)

**15. James Buchanan** (Democrat)

“His elegant home came to symbolize a man for whom appearances were all-important. Ever since his college days, when he was expelled for drunkenness and insolence, he determined that his public reputation would from then on be impeccable. From the same generation as Martin van Buren, Buchanan was learned and ambitious and possessed an extraordinary memory.” (p. 97)



**16. Abraham Lincoln** (Republican)

Some people would call him a loser. He ran for state office—was beaten. He started a business—it failed. He ran for congress and lost. He was nominated for vice-president, he lost again. Fortunately, Abraham Lincoln knew what it took to be a winner. Persistence.

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“With a strong distaste for manual labor, he launched out on his own and began attracting attention in Illinois. **He was friendly, he was honest**, and he was a beguiling storyteller.” (p. 105)

**17. Andrew Johnson** (Democratic-Union)

“...a stubborn white supremacist almost entirely lacking in Lincoln’s political skills. ...The son of an illiterate porter and a laundress...” (p. 225)

**18. Ulysses Simpson Grant** (Republican)

“His story contains an important warning: the capacities for presidential leadership do not always reside in military heroism.” (p. 25)

**19. Rutherford Birchard Hayes** (Republican)

“All his life, Hayes was **hardworking, methodical, and impeccably honest**—so pristine, James Garfield once said, ‘no nickname can be pinned on him’ **He saw himself as nothing more than a nonpartisan public servant**, intent on cleansing the taints that had infected his own party during the Grant administration.” (p. 148)

**20. James Abram Garfield** (Republican)

“James Abram Garfield was his own kind of politician. He was **the only preacher ever to become president; all his life he believed that a higher power was leading him onward...**” (p. 59)

**21. Chester Alan Arthur** (Republican)

“If Andrew Johnson represented a nadir for the presidency, at least no one ever charged him with graft or corruption. But with the administration of Ulysses S. Grant, a new era, dominated by spoilsmen, began. And in 1880 the Republicans nominated for vice president a man many considered the epitome of corrupt politics—New York City’s infamous former customs officer, Chester Arthur. Raised as a preacher’s son in northeastern Vermont, Chester Arthur as a young man was **an idealistic lawyer whose chief interest was civil rights.**” (p. 238)

**22. Stephen Grover Cleveland** (Democrat)

“To many he seemed like a new Andrew Jackson: he had the same toughness and incorruptibility, and the same **courage to stand up to any obstacle.**” (p. 360)

**23. Benjamin Harrison** (Republican)

“No politician ever made less use of his family heritage than Benjamin Harrison, grandson of President William Henry Harrison. **All his life he had a desire to be his own man.** ...Harrison was a disciplined, dispassionate, proper individual and one of the finest lawyers in Cincinnati. But the very qualities that made him excel—his methodical approach, his absorption in logic and detail, his unwillingness to delegate—turned him into an overefficient workhorse with little sense of fun.” (p. 174)

**24. Stephen Grover Cleveland** (Democrat)

“Grover Cleveland is the only president to have been elected to two non-consecutive terms.”  
(Greenbrier/Scenex)

**25. William McKinley** (Republican)

“One of the most **self-confident** men ever to rise to the presidency... It was self-confidence that would prove immensely invaluable in what would turn out to be a watershed presidency.” (p. 312)

**26. Theodore Roosevelt** (Republican)

“Theodore Roosevelt saw himself as a twentieth-century gladiator... Infatuated with his own strength and power. ...The secret of Roosevelt’s obsession with power lay in his sickly beginnings and his struggle to live up to the expectations of his demanding father.” (p. 372)

**27. William Howard Taft** (Republican)

“William Howard Taft grew up in a well-to-do Cincinnati family, the son of a highly ambitious mother and a nationally respected father. After excelling at Yale and then at the Cincinnati Law school, he practiced law in his home state and began a swift and easy climb up the republican ladder.” (p. 418)

**28. Thomas Woodrow Wilson** (Democrat)

“Woodrow Wilson presented an austere public personality, and all his life was careful to cover up deep felt passions. ...As a young man he became known as **an intense and hardworking scholar**.” (p. 325)

**29. Warren Gamaliel Harding** (Republican)

“Warren G. Harding was an obliging, **generous-spirited, amiable man** who could not bear to offend anyone. The son of a self-taught veterinarian and doctor who was always in debt, he had grown up insecure.” (p. 68)

**30. John Calvin Coolidge** (Republican)

“John Calvin Coolidge grew up on the family farm in Vermont, working so hard he was left little time for himself. ...Losing his beloved mother at age twelve, he came increasingly under the influence of his taciturn, puritanical father... Calvin, too, saw to it that he wasted nothing. Reading for pleasure, anything musical, dancing, playing a sport, indulging a hobby, having a sweetheart all squandered precious time and energy.” (p. 273)

**31. Herbert Clark Hoover** (Republican)

Herbert Clark Hoover was the son of a small-town Iowa blacksmith and a kindly Quaker mother, whose simple, **humane faith** would become an important influence in his life. ...[After college] One of his most valued qualities was his toughness under inhospitable conditions. ...By his ability to recognize promising mines, Hoover made millions for his company and rose rapidly in its ranks.” (p. 283)

**32. Franklin Delano Roosevelt** (Democrat)

“An only child born to great wealth, Roosevelt grew up revering his aging father. His mother was younger, and over the years she showered her delicate son with adoration. ...When Franklin entered politics after college, he patterned his campaign style after his hero Theodore Roosevelt. It didn’t matter that they belonged to different parties—family ties were far stronger than political ties.” (p. 185)

**33. Harry S. Truman** (Democrat)

“Harry Truman believed in the United States with an intensity that few today can quite understand. He profoundly believed, without ever articulating it, that nothing fundamentally wrong could ever happen to this country, because the United States was God’s country. It was a nineteenth-century belief from a twentieth-century Midwestern optimist.” (p. 249)

**34. Dwight David Eisenhower** (Republican)

“When Eisenhower returned home after the war, the public response to him was overwhelming. He was a hero who seemed to fit his times exactly—a **humble, honest, clean-cut** kind of man the country could feel good about.” (p. 36)

**35. John Fitzgerald Kennedy** (Democrat)

“...all the discussions at our table growing up were about government and political life.’ Joe Kennedy became the architect of his children’s lives. ‘We want winners,’ he told them. ‘We don’t want losers around here.’ Home life was defined by constant verbal testing, competitive athletics, iron discipline, and no sympathy.” (p. 196)

**36. Lyndon Baines Johnson** (Democrat)

[Johnson was] “one of the most ambitious professional politicians in the history of the nation. ...From early on he developed a **deep and genuine compassion for the poor and the oppressed**.”

**37. Richard Milhous Nixon** (Republican)

“...the essence of every great leader I have ever known—and I’m not saying I’m great—he was a lonely man.’ His mother was a well-educated Quaker, whom he called a saint. His father was uneducated, working many jobs, and had a reputation for starting arguments with just about anyone. ...Picked on as a child, Nixon wasn’t comfortable around anyone outside his own family. ...Graduating third in his class at Duke Law School...” (p. 386)

**38. Gerald Rudolph Ford** (Republican)

“**Straightforward, honest, a man of recognized decency**, he traced his personal qualities back to his Midwestern childhood.” (p. 79)

**39. James Earl Carter, Jr.** (Democrat)

Of all the presidents who came after Hayes, the man who most resembled his style was a **Southern governor who hated politics-as-usual**. ...James Earl Carter, Jr., was born into a peanut-farming family in 1924. From his father, he acquired a lifelong belief in discipline and hard work. From his mother, he inherited a **compassion for the poor and a commitment to civil rights**.” (p. 157)

**40. Ronald Wilson Reagan** (Republican)

“He had a difficult childhood. His father was an itinerant show salesman and an alcoholic. And in school his undiagnosed nearsightedness held him back until a writing teacher named B.J. Frazier brought out Reagan’s native talent. ‘I was always called on to read [my papers],’ Reagan remembered.” (p. 292)

**COMMENTS:** He used to be a Democrat—think all ‘flip flopping’ is evil?

**41. George Herbert Walker Bush** (Republican)

“George Herbert Walker bush was raised in privilege in suburban Connecticut, in a family that cared deeply about international issues. ...His father, Prescott Bush, was a successful businessman who went on in later life to become

a Senator. Bush credited him with passing on his core values: “**Tell the truth, be honest, work hard, try to see the other guy’s point of view while sticking to your own principles.**” (p. 337)

**42. William Jefferson Clinton** (Democrat)

“William Jefferson Clinton was born in 1946 as William Blythe III, the son of a salesman who died before his son was born and a professional nurse, Virginia dell, who became the single greatest influence in her son’s life. From an early age his interests drew him into politics. ‘**Civil rights was the defining political issue of my childhood,**’ he said, starting when I was quite young, in the 1950s. ..In 1963, he took the last name of his stepfather, Roger Clinton, an alcoholic whose rough behavior brought out in Clinton new powers of resilience and empathy.” (p. 430)

**43. George Walker Bush** (Republican)

**Comments:** Courageous, principled, religious. [This book ends before W. took office].

**44. Barack Hussein Obama** (Democrat)

**Comments:** Ideologue, **humble**, eloquent. [This book ends before Barak took office].

“Obama prided himself on his self-awareness, his ability to stand a step removed from his circumstances and apply a sense of perspective.” The Center Holds: Obama and His Enemies, p. 121, by Jonathan Alter Simon and Schuster: New York City, N.Y.), 2013

**45. Donald Trump** (Republican)

**SOURCES:**

The Presidents of the United States of America, Greenbrier/Scantex, USA

The American President, by Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr. (Riverhead Books: New York), 1999

**PRESIDENTIAL QUIZ**

1. Which president had owned a shoeshine shop?
2. Who said, ‘I was told that anyone could become President. I’m beginning to believe it?’
3. Who told a boy, ‘I wish for you that you may never be president of the United States?’
4. Which president was a clergyman while in office?
5. Which president quipped, ‘I’m not smart enough to lie?’
6. Which president had been the first full-time politician?
7. Which president had not uttered a single word during four years as a U.S. Representative?
8. Who said he thought this country could run itself domestically without a president?’
9. Which president had served only one two-year term in the House?
10. Whom did an Indian chief tell, ‘Watch your immigration laws—we got careless with ours?’
11. Which president was the first one who had been a college dropout?
12. Which president said, ‘A statesman is a politician who’s been dead ten or fifteen years?’
13. Which president never had attended any school of formal education?
14. Which president said, ‘The first want of a man is his dinner, and the second his girl?’
15. Which president was nicknamed ‘The Grim Presence’ for his dourness?

16. Who described the presidency as ‘the greased pig in the field game of American politics?’
17. Which president said, ‘The ballot is stronger than the bullet?’
18. Which president was the only one who paid off the national debt?

**Answers.**

1. George Bush. 2. Warren Harding. 3. Grover Cleveland. 4. James Garfield. 5. Ronald Reagan.
6. William Henry Harrison. 7. Lyndon Johnson. 8. Richard Nixon. 9. Andrew Jackson. 10. James Buchanan. 11. James Monroe. 12. Harry Truman. 13. Millard Fillmore. 14. John Adams. 15. Andrew Johnson. 16. Franklin Pierce. 17. Abraham Lincoln. 18. Andrew Jackson.

**Source.**

All the Presidents’ Trivia, pp. 31-32, 51-52, 79-80, 93-94, 125-126, 177-178, 193-196, 201-202, 237-238, by Peter Wrench (Smithfield Press: N. Richland Hills, TX), 2004