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OPINION

Derogatory Labels Shut Down the Conversation

The political right and victim status

BY LAURA FINLEY

In all honesty, there is a lot I do not understand about the Right. Although the Left is far from flawless, it strikes me that the Right is full of hypocrisy. They don't want big government to tell me what to do and not do with my vagina—until they do want exactly that. They want the free market to be uninhibited yet take all manner of funding from interest groups and allot record levels of corporate welfare—and impose ant-free trade tariffs. They don't want undocumented immigrants until they do want them as laborers. And on, and on...

These hypocrisies are pernicious, but one that really boils my blood is the calling out of the Left as “snowflakes” who simply want to maintain victim status while at the same time fulling embracing victimhood. While this is true of many on the Right, no one embodies that hypocrisy better than Donald Trump.

Calling out the Left is part of the broader attack waged by the Right, and by Trump himself, against so-called political cor-

rectness. Labeling the Left as politically correct or as snowflakes merely serves to shut down conversation and dismiss important ideas. As Dana Schwartz wrote in a February 2017 article for GQ, however, “There is not a single political point a liberal can make on the Internet for which ‘You triggered, snowflake?’ cannot be the comeback. Its purpose is dismissing liberalism as something effeminate, and also infan-

luniak novel of the same name. In it, the narrator joins an underground men's fighting club, where members repeat the mantra, “You are not a beautiful and unique snowflake.” Men's rights activists, bodybuilding forums, and the political Right have picked up on this mantra, which many have called the “manosphere.” In reality, the roots are far deeper, emanating from the Right's need to reject the threat of communism by labeling it “red” or “pink,” hence “wussi-

ing a healthy appetite for feeling oppressed.” What makes one a snowflake, supposedly? An inflated sense of self-importance, an inability to handle criticism, demand for respect, and a sense of victimhood supposedly disproportionate to reality. Sound familiar? That is Donald Trump embodied.

When he's insulted, he melts down on Twitter, berating people in a fashion not dissimilar to a middle schooler. He is, supposedly, a victim of various attacks by

owning and encouraging victim status. His squad was all too quick to buy the rhetoric that their jobs have been lost or are at risk to immigrants, that people from certain countries threaten our safety, that women levy false accusations to destroy men, and that rights for LGBT individuals threatens the sanctity of the “American family,” among other things. Even “Make America Great Again” presumes some great travesty befell the poor nation. Victims must be returned to a state of prominence!

Likewise, the notion that the Left is too soft to handle certain conversations and the minimizing of people feeling “triggered” is also in the Right's playbook, albeit using different language and tactics. The continued efforts to criminalize nonviolent protest, for example, show that the Right is all too happy to shut down dialogue.

I believe that there is something to be said about overdoing victim status. That is a worthwhile conversation. But when the very real picture of the U.S. is one that is still tremendously racist, sexist, militaristic and unequal, it is deeply infuriating that negative labels prohibit real discussion and actual action.

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tile, an outgrowth of the lessons you were taught in kindergarten. ‘Sharing is caring’? Communism. ‘Feelings are good’? Facts over feelings. ‘Everyone is special and unique’? ‘Shut up, snowflake.’”

The derogatory use of the term snowflake comes, in large part, from the film *Fight Club*, an adaptation of the 1996 Chuck Pah-

fied” or feminine. Republicans, then, use the rhetoric of “men” while Democrats are “women.”

But, in reality, those slinging the snowflake allegations, as Amanda Hess wrote in June 2017 in the *New York Times* magazine, “tend to seem pretty aggrieved themselves — hypersensitive to dissent or complication and nurs-

individuals and institutions, most often the press, of course, but also Hollywood celebrities, Broadway stars, even a Gold Star mother. He is the victim of a “witch hunt” regarding collusion with the Russians in the 2016 election. Could any words better describe victim status than “witch hunt?”

Trump won the election by

Children Want Adults to Protect Them, Not Guns

A prayer to stand up and say ‘no more’

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

Twelve people were killed and at least 60 others were injured by guns during one weekend in Chicago this month. Fourteen of these shooting victims were children and teenagers, the youngest an 11-year-old boy who was shot in the leg.

Kenny Ivory, 17, was shot and killed while riding his bike a block from his home. Jahnae Patterson, 17, died after being shot in the face while standing outside during a nighttime block party. Two more 17-year-olds and a 14-year-old were shot and injured at the same party. Four teenage girls were among the mourners shot after a funeral.

The same weekend, students and families from the Parkland, Fla., high school where 14 students and three adults were shot and killed on Valentine's Day led a march at the National Rifle Association's Northern Virginia headquarters pleading for common sense gun control. It happened on what should have been Parkland victim Joaquin Oliver's 18th birthday.

Last year his family celebrated with a surprise party as he started his senior year. This year his parents sang happy



birthday in a crowd carrying signs reading “One Child is Worth More Than All the Guns on Earth” and “Children Over Guns!”

Our children are crying out for adults to protect them, not guns — and our children are dying while powerful lobbies and political leaders refuse to act. I wrote just recently about 10-year-old Makiyah Wilson, shot and killed last month on the doorstep of her Washington, D.C. home on her way to the ice cream truck across the courtyard.

When will we do something? When will adults across our nation join every single parent who refuses to bury another child and stand up and say no more?

I offer this prayer for all children, especially those who are victims of war and violence everywhere — including their own homes, front porches and neighborhoods, streets and schools, and their own countries and at the border.

*O God of all time
Yesterday, today, tomorrow, and eternity
Give us courage in our lifetimes
To make war on war
Which leaves behind waifs and widows
Rubble of spirit, home, and community.
Mothers, grandmothers, and all with a mothering spirit
Let us declare and demand:
No more war
No more violence and abuse*

*No more killing of our young
O God of yesterday, today, tomorrow, and eternity
Our dwelling place in all generations
Give us courage to sow seeds of life and hope for the future
And to fight with all our moral might for justice for every child
Help us to pluck the thorns of despair from our children's lives.
Mothers, grandmothers, and all with a mothering spirit
Let us declare and demand:
No more hunger
No more homelessness
No more poverty
O God of yesterday, every child's history
O God of today, every living child's birthright
O God of tomorrow, every child's inheritance
O God of eternity, every child's hope
Lift our voices against the spiritual and cultural pollution which leave dreamless and purposeless the fruit of our wombs.
Mothers, grandmothers, and all with a mothering spirit
Let us stand together and build a world fit for children
Calling all to serve, to care, and to act to leave no child behind.*

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund.