

# Opinion

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## Question: what would JFK do?

By Toby Tate  
Editor-in-Chief

I used to work in a little bookstore in Virginia Beach which had very large plate glass windows on two sides. Every year at about the same time of day, we would catch the sun directly in our faces and squint at the outlines of customers talking to us as they stood under a blinding ball of radiation shining over the K-Mart across the street. Luckily, the torture would eventually end after a few minutes. As always, in my usual sarcastic way, I would say to one of the other employees or maybe a familiar customer, "I wish the government would do something about that sun." That usually garnered a good laugh, because there is truth in those words: we want the government to do something about practically everything.

I recently read a book by someone who was once a hero of the common man, John Stossel. Stossel was the first of the modern day investigative reporters, or what Teddy Roosevelt called "muckrakers." He would go after corporations and individuals who had been accused of shamming the public, confronting the perpetrators with a camera, a microphone and a barrage of questions. In one interview, Stossel suffered

hearing loss when he was punched in the ear by a wrestler after accusing the WWF of staging fake fights. But when the reporter turned from chasing corporations to dogging government officials, he was accused of being a "corporate shill." Was he accused of being a "government shill" when he uncovered the shady dealings of big business? Nope. What he found was that many of the laws government made in order to "protect" us from the likes of Dow Corning actually made things worse, not better, and that was not well received by many in the public domain. We like our handouts.

Every administration since Reagan has promised to shrink the size of government. Instead, we now have a government that is larger than any in history, and growing larger by the minute. Every day there is another new department, and another new program. Social security, once meant to help the elderly to supplement a meager income, is now expected by everyone over 65 whether they need it or not. People are having more children in order to qualify for more welfare, creating an even bigger dependency class, and corporate welfare is becoming a bigger problem with each administration. Do giant corporations really need government handouts? Do we

really want to give so much of our lives over to an institution like the government? Has it proven to be so trustworthy and virtuous that we are willing to let it run everything from cradle to grave? Do we really want someone like George Bush or John Kerry and their cronies telling us which doctor we can go to, how much money we can earn at our job, what kind of show we can watch on T.V. or what we are allowed to eat?

The stifling of Howard Stern is just the beginning. The public outcry over Janet Jackson's half-time mishap caused a furor which ended in a fine for CBS, and more recently the FCC fined Fox \$1.2 million for indecent programming stemming from an April 2003 broadcast of "Married by America," a T.V. reality show. Documentaries such as "Fahrenheit 911" and "Stolen Honor" have raised hackles on the right and left, bringing threats of retribution from political candidates. Soon, anyone who disagrees with anything said in the media will be able to shut down and shut up any dissenting opinion. Is that

really what we want?

A good example is the "Fairness Doctrine." Created by the FCC as a policy to balance controversial issues on a broadcast station by giving equal time to both sides, it instead had the opposite effect. It was considered by many journalists to be a violation of the first amendment and their freedom to make their own decisions about balancing stories. They felt that balance should not be regulated by the FCC. As a result, many journalists simply decided not to cover controversial issues, which is not what the FCC intended. Oops. There is also the matter of profit: stations must play what people want to hear, otherwise, advertisers do not advertise, and there is no more station. Common sense.

According to the preamble to the constitution, the government is "We the people of the United States." We are supposed to be empowered. Maybe a good policy for government officials who want to add another department or program in order to increase his

or her own power would be "just say no." But that will never happen. Little by little, the government convinces us that we need them, that we absolutely can not do anything without their assistance, that if they let go, we will die, and they, not we, are becoming empowered.

To be honest, we do need government to protect us from terrorist threats and from those who want to do us harm, but how much is enough? Aren't we grown men and women, can't we do anything for ourselves? I always got mad when my big brother tried to fight my fight for me when I knew I could take that kid. Sure, at first it was nice, but then there was the feeling that, you know, I wonder if I could have fought that kid myself? Where is my self respect?

People used to come to America for the opportunity to pursue life, liberty and happiness, and to work in a free society without the restrictions of a cumbersome government. Some still do. But like the children of Israel in the middle of the desert, who looked back and longed for the chains of Egypt, not trusting in the resourcefulness of their hearts and minds, we seem to be placing the yolk of bondage around our own necks, and looking to a government to fix the ills of a society that we have convinced ourselves is beyond

our help.

Don't believe the hype. There are already people in America who do things that the bureaucracy and red tape of government often impedes. One example is the privately built space ship that just returned from two trips to space within two weeks, something only NASA would have previously been considered capable of. Operation Blessing from Virginia Beach feeds millions annually in places like Africa using donations from its own members, and Operation Smile provides free reconstructive surgery to thousands of children all over the world. There are organizations that do everything from building people free houses to giving them life-saving operations. Many churches feed homeless people and even offer them a place to stay until they find work, and people have given not only money, but their own time when others such as those in Florida have suffered loss.

It's been longer than most of us can remember when we actually pitched in and gave of ourselves to help our fellow humans in a crisis, instead of relying on the good old U.S. Government. But I like to think of the words of a great president, a young man called JFK, who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

### Sometimes, all it takes is communication

Dear Lisa,

About your response to the girl who has to do all the planning in the relationship and never gets any gifts from the guy:

You told her to:

- a) don't do anything anymore, and see if he catches on, or
- b) dump him

From a guy's point of view, I think you gave the wrong advice. Her question was how could she make her man more proactive. I think the answer is to TALK with him about it.

As you well know, males and females think differently. Example: If a guy gave a gift to his girlfriend... even if it was just because he loves her, he certainly would NOT expect something in return. The thought wouldn't even register. So just like when HE receives a gift, the thought to reciprocate is just not registering.

They don't do it to be jerks, or because they're selfish... their minds just haven't been opened to the female side of thinking.

The same thing applies to her doing all the planning and organizing, in the sense that, if she does it ALL THE TIME, and if in the guy's mind, he has no problems with that, then he has no reason to try and change it. He figures that she must prefer to do it, if she needed his help she would just ask, and if she had a problem with it, she'd talk to him. He thinks everything is ok. This is how the majority of guys think.

All it takes it just a little communication from the female, telling him how she feels. And, if he's a good guy, then he'll change his habits in the interest of happiness.

She says he's nice, and that he loves her, and remembers her on her birthday and holidays. I'm sure if he knew the little things that would make his girlfriend happy, he'd be doing them all the time.

Take it from a guy - we want to make the girl happy. And we understand that girls "expect" us to always know the right things to do, the romantic things to do... and, the reality is that most guys just don't have it figured all out yet. Help us help you. Communicate.

Guy's Perspective

Dear Guy,

First, thanks so much for showing all of my female readers that there are nice, sweet guys out there in dating-land.

I actually agree with most of what you said, including the fact that her guy probably doesn't even really understand there's a problem. But here's why I didn't advise the reader to talk to her guy about what was bothering her: 1) in the part of the letter I had to edit for space she'd mentioned that she had already tried talking to him several times and it hadn't produced any results, and 2) because most women try talking things out first (and usually second and third,) and writing to me fourth, or eighth, or thirty-seventh.

I also agree that most guys really do want to make their girlfriends and wives happy. And I'm sure you'll agree that a lot of what we say to you men goes in one ear and out the other. My point to her was this: she could stop rowing the relationship boat and see if he picked up the slack, and if that didn't work she needed to figure out exactly how important the issue was to her. In the end, she might have to make the decision to live with his inactivity or leave him.

In fact, the letter isn't really about what he does or doesn't do at all. It's actually about the woman not feeling cared for by her guy. Unfortunately, her telling him what she needs and him not doing it just makes that feeling worse. (Even if he does do it, she'd probably be wondering whether he was doing it because he loved her, or because she'd told him to.) Sometimes you guys (as sweet as you are) need a bit of a wake-up call. She needs to know whether or not he'll step up to the plate without her prodding. My suggestion was a way for her to give him a chance to do just that.

Kisses, Lisa

Dating expert Lisa Daily is the author of *Stop Getting Dumped!*  
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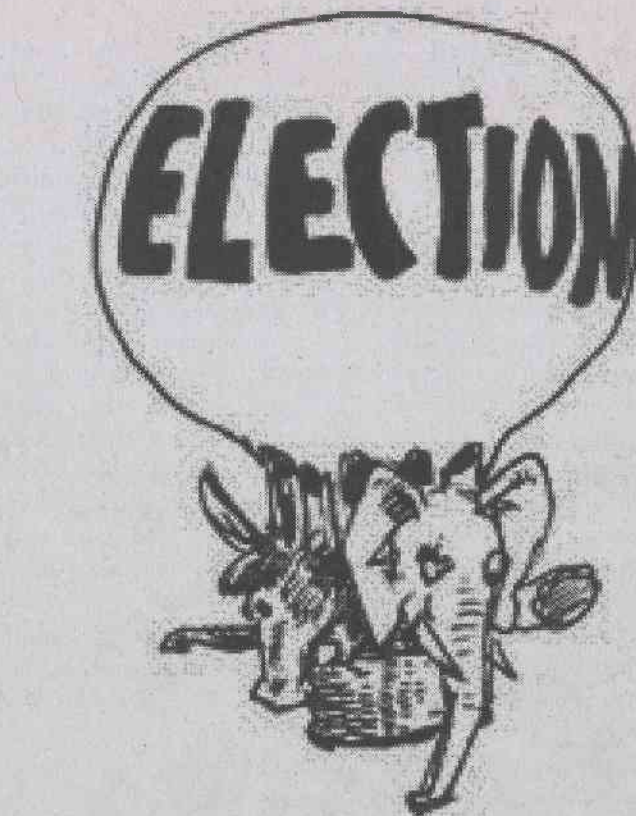
### Teen launches non-partisan political website

Voters in the Next Election Web Site Launched to Encourage, Empower New Generation of Voters

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y.— (BUSINESS WIRE via COLLEGIATE PRESSWIRE)- Oct. 14, 2004-

At an age when many of her classmates are pondering their college choices, 17-year-old Missy Mlotek has even bigger things on her mind - like ensuring that politicians pay attention to the opinions of millions of teens prior to and after the November election. To help mobilize this emerging new generation of voters, she has created and launched Voters in the Next Election, or VINE ([www.votersinthenextelection.org](http://www.votersinthenextelection.org)), a new Internet site that uses a nonpartisan approach to engage teenagers in the political process.

"This is a critical time in our country's development," said Ms. Mlotek, a resident of New Rochelle, N.Y. and a senior at New Rochelle High School. "The decisions that our country's leaders are currently making - everything from the war to abortion rights to the economy - affect all citizens, but none more so than today's teenagers. We are the ones who will be fighting in future wars, the ones who will be having children in the next 20 years, and the ones who will be entering the work force. There are millions of us, and we should have a voice in the political process. That is the goal of VINE - to ensure that there is an open forum in which all teenagers can express their opinions in a meaningful way."



Useful Tools that Transcend Parties

In a heated election that has polarized the country, VINE seeks to present a balanced view of the issues, along with useful explanations and links to helpful sites for first-time voters. Links to candidate sites for the Democratic, Republican and Green parties are included, as well as a summary of other independent candidates. Links to The New York Times, Washington Post, Boston Globe and Wall Street Journal are also featured. Visitors can follow other links to vote online, learn more about the registration process, or take a short survey. Through the VINE message board, visitors can talk, debate and share ideas, and political humor also is spotlighted through cartoons and an animated short that equally skewers President Bush and Senator Kerry. The site also includes VINE editorials that examine a variety of issues,

including 9/11, gun control and the importance of voting.

Ms. Mlotek was inspired to create VINE through her involvement in the government club at her school. Beyond her parents, she has received no financial support to launch or maintain the site. "My goal for VINE is that it will continue to grow and spread across the country," said Ms. Mlotek. "I encourage visitors to the site to share the link with their friends, so the community of politically involved teenagers will grow quickly. The more people that participate, the richer and more valuable the site can become. Ultimately, I hope that VINE and the community it represents become so large that our elected officials know they should listen to what we have to say. It's very simple: if we want to have a voice in the political process, we have to speak loudly as a unified group."

For more information on Voters in the Next Election, visit [www.votersinthenextelection.org](http://www.votersinthenextelection.org).