

Don't Give People a Club to Beat You Over the Head With

In November of 2016, I wrote an article called “[The Alt-Right and Tyler Durden's Advice](#)” (I'll get into the meaning of the Tyler Durden reference at the end of this writing), and in December, the next month, I did a modification of it called “[Seize the Center: A Critique of the Alt Right, Including Tyler Durden's Advice](#).” The two pieces were written just after Donald Trump had been elected president and there was a feeling in the air that the alt-right—its spokesmen and their take on things and ways—was *the* action in white racial activism, and more, that alt-right was now who we all were, including me. The writings reflected my discomfort with the alt-right nomenclature and approach, including the way it had latched on to Trump in a big way, which I saw as being, on balance, detrimental to the white racial movement as a whole. Closer to home, I personally didn't see myself as an alt or right anything, and Trump wasn't my guy. Really, the two articles were one; there was very little difference between them. For shorthand, I'll refer to the two here as the Tyler Durden article, or just Tyler.

When I finished Tyler Durden, I ran it by some people whose opinions I value. All of them had a negative take on it. Either they disagreed with my analyses and assertions, or thought that that while Tyler made some valid points, going public with it wouldn't help the white cause. So it went, our man Trump has just won the presidency, the alt-right has become a visible and vocal part of the mainstream public discourse, alt-right is us now, all of us collectively, and we're on a roll. The alt-right train has left the station and we're all on board, except you it sounds like. To stay with that metaphor, the word I was getting is that this article I had put together just put a bend in the track up the line and caused trouble.

I accepted the responses I was getting and put Tyler on my

personal web site, which as far as I can tell, nobody reads. There it sat until now—it's March of 2018 as I write this.

Why am I revisiting Tyler after all this time? Four reasons.

1. It looks to me as if the white racial movement and its leadership are even more on the vilified fringe of American life than before.
2. It looks to me that white activists' adversaries feel more emboldened than ever to turn loose on them, no-holds-barred: demonize them; exclude them; beat them up; riot, interrupt, and rush the stage if they try to speak; shut down their websites, Twitter accounts, and YouTube channels; and cancel their PayPal's.
3. I wrote some pieces for this publication this past year that got me thinking.

One of them was a commentary on the Charlottesville protest last August. With some trepidation—I had the feeling I was throwing cold water on people trying to do a good thing—I found myself writing this:

With its stridency and far right symbolism and predilection toward violence, even if is in self-defense, the Charlottesville protest was problematic as a media event, and that's how most people experienced it, as a show, in the same category as "Game of Thrones." Just as were George Lincoln Rockwell-led protests in the 1960s, it was a perfect set-up for whites' adversaries to haul out the tried-and-true smear labels—white supremacist, racist, Nazi—and to dismiss the whole of the white racial movement as beyond the pale and a menace.

Later on, I wrote profiles of three white activists from years past-- George Lincoln Rockwell, William Pierce, and Revido Oliver. As I looked them over, it struck me that all three of these men contributed to portraying white racial concerns and activism as extreme, "over there," scary to dogs and little children. I worry that set a precedent, and that the alt-right thrust is continuing it.

4. It's become clear to me the past few months that I need to do some work on myself, and I've made it a priority. Public and private concerns are interrelated: both need to be taken into account. Any movement is only as healthy and effective as the individuals who comprise it.

In January of this year, I read a book by Jordan Peterson called *12 Rules for Life: An Anecdote to Chaos*. Without the Peterson book kind of pulling things together for me, I don't think I would have had the personal wherewithal to reconsider this rejected Tyler article. Peterson is a Canadian clinical psychologist and academic who has recently achieved notoriety for his negative critiques of postmodernism, feminism, and political correctness. He makes it clear that he is no friend of white identity politics, but he's very bright and stimulating and, I think, worth Googling.

One of Peterson's rules is *Stand Up Straight With Your Shoulders Back*. He means that quite literally. It sends a message to the world and to yourself that you are nobody's bottom dog. I'm working on it.

Another is *Treat Yourself Like Someone You Are Responsible for Helping*. I was doing things to myself that got me through the night, as they say, but tomorrow came and I paid heavy dues.

Another rule is *Set Your House in Perfect Order Before You Criticize the World*. I don't know about "perfect order," but I needed to get my personal act in better shape if I wanted to be good for others, and for myself.

A fourth Peterson rule is *Make Friends with People Who Want the Best for You*. Some people in my life had to go, and others had to come in.

For the rest of this writing, using some of Peterson's rules of life as headings and accompanied by brief comments, I'll repeat sections of the 2016 Tyler writing that I think are still relevant, set in on the margins and in smaller type.

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One of Peterson's rules for life is *Be Precise in Your Speech*. I question the precision of alt-right as it is currently being employed to identify, tie together, bring together people and activities in the domain of white racial analysis and activism. I also question its wisdom. Alt-right is looking to me like—the title of this piece—a club we're giving people, including whites, to beat us over the head with.

In Tyler, I wrote this:

Two things about the term alt-right of note: First, right is on one end of the ideological/cultural/political spectrum. There's right, center, and left, and right is over on the side; it's not in the middle. Second, right is pejorative. If somebody says you're a rightist, or a right-winger, most likely they aren't paying you a compliment. There is the Berkeley Center for Right-Wing Studies at the University of California at Berkeley. You can check out the Center's website, or you can take my word for it that its title legitimizes attacking people, organizations, and activities those involved with the Center don't like. In sum, right is a red flag.

And there's the alt (alternative) part of alt-right. The inclusion of the word alternative denotes that there are two or more ways of looking at something and/or doing something, and that this individual or group is one of those ways; that is to say, he/it is *a* way, not *the* way. I'm trying to think of any other movement, any corporation, anything, that has deemed it a good idea to attach alternative to what it calls itself, which underscores that it isn't the only game in town. Have there been any alt-progressive organizations?

Let's say it's back in the '70s and Steve Jobs is starting a computer company and he is deciding what to call it. There were already Altair computers around (I looked it up).

Jobs thinks to himself, “I’ll call my company Alt-Altair, because my computer is an alternative to the Altairs out there now.” But then he thinks, “I should try to establish my own identity, plus I don’t want people thinking about Altairs every time they think of my company—so I’ll go with Apple.” You see my point?

I’m having major trouble figuring out why people would identify themselves in a way that sets them up to be marginalized and demonized—we are getting booted in our backsides [and hit over our heads] enough as it is without choosing to wear alt-right kick-me [or conk-me] signs—and that punches up the fact that they are but an option. With the alt-right label, we are announcing that, indeed, we are a rightist movement, and ceding the central ground, and the whole left half of the spectrum, to those who oppose us. We are implying that to accept our ideas and join up with us you have to see yourself as right wing and to a greater or lesser extent feel outside the mainstream society, and most people don’t.

At the time I wrote Tyler, three prominent white racial activists—Jared Taylor, Peter Brimelow, and the editor of this publication, Kevin Macdonald—were scheduled to speak at a conference to be held in Washington, D.C. on November 19th, 2016 entitled Become Who We Are/2016. CELEBRATE THE ALT RIGHT! proclaimed the flyer for the conference that was sent around. I questioned the fit of these three men in an alt-right conference.

Jared Taylor, founder of the American Renaissance website, spoke at the conference. His remarks at an alt-right press conference on August 12, 2016, included this:

What is the Alt Right? It is a broad, dissident movement that rejects egalitarian orthodoxies. These orthodoxies require us to believe that the sexes are equivalent, that race is meaningless, that all cultures and religions are equally valuable, and that any erotic orientation or identification is healthy. These things we deny. The Alt Right is also skeptical of mass democracy. It opposes

*foreign aid and foreign intervention—especially for
“nation building.”*

Reading what Jared said, I asked myself, what is right about that? It comes off to me as core, conventional, accepted, common sense thinking in America from its founding all the way up to recent decades, at which time powerful forces altered the through-line, the basic direction, the central narrative, of this country. America was founded on the idea of equal individual rights, not egalitarianism. Historically, this nation has recognized that people and groups are different from one another, including qualitatively different. Until recent times, the sexes weren't viewed as equivalent, nor was race considered meaningless—and science still hasn't gone along with those cockeyed notions. The Founders were very skeptical of mass democracy, which is why we pledge allegiance to the flag and to the *republic* for which it stands, not to the *democracy* for which it stands. Foreign intervention, nation building?—George Washington's farewell address and the peril of entangling alliances. Jared's paragraph, and Jared generally—I know him and his truly remarkable work well, and I mean this as a compliment—is as American as apple pie. Alt-right? I don't think so.

Peter Brimelow, author and founder of VDARE.com., also spoke at the alt-right conference. At significant personal cost to himself, Peter has courageously and very effectively brought attention to the negative, even disastrous, impact of the current immigration patterns on America. In his remarks at the August press conference promoting the November alt-right conference, Peter seemed to distance himself personally from the alt-right:

It happens that immigration is one of the issues that the Alt Right is deeply interested in. I have a number of writers who are members of the Alt Right, very prominent members, obviously much younger than I am: [he named two of them; I won't in this context]. These people all live in Washington. They work in institutions in Washington. They may be your colleagues. They may be sitting next to you at this conference. But they do not wish to show their faces. These are people who have careers, who have

families to support and so on, and they simply cannot speak out on this issue of public policy and expect to go unpunished in the Land of The Free. So that's why I am here—to speak for them. I'm too old to care!

If I read Peter's comments correctly, he was there to help some people out. He doesn't see himself as a rightist, and that makes sense, because he isn't one. He's smack dab in the middle of the political spectrum. I pieced together this quote from one of Peter's writings and the statement of purpose for VDARE.com:

John Jay in The Federalist Papers wrote that Americans were "one united people, a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs." ...The National Question is, in short, how long can the U.S. continue as a coherent nation-state in the face of current immigration policy. . . . Human differences are not social constructs. It is only with an honest consideration of race and ethnicity, the foundations of human grouping, that human differences can be explained and their social consequences understood, whether those differences are philosophical, cultural, or biological. VDARE.com stands on the side of science in publishing coverage of the ongoing discovery and research in the realm of human differences. The racial and cultural identity of America is legitimate and defensible.

There is nothing right wing about any of this. It's the people that disagree with Peter that are fringy, not Peter.

Kevin Macdonald also spoke at the alt-right conference. Dr. Macdonald, who is the editor of the online *The Occidental Observer* and its companion print journal *The Occidental Quarterly*, had a distinguished university career as a tenured full professor, and now holds the esteemed rank of professor emeritus. In an impressive number of books and short writings during his university years and still, Kevin has produced informed, documented, insightful, and groundbreaking analyses and critiques of Jews as a group and Jewish-gentile relations.

Predictably, this activity has resulted in Kevin’s being subjected to unwarranted and cruel attempts to hurt him and dismiss him as an irrational, malevolent anti-Semite and relegate him to a peripheral and ineffectual public presence. There is nothing right, or left, about Kevin’s writings about Jews. He makes factual claims that are either true or untrue, and he offers inferences from those claims that are either justified or not and worthy or not. He should not be burdened with a label attached to him and what he expresses that prejudices mainstream audiences’ interpretations and conclusions regarding him and his ideas.

An alt-right identity brings Kevin guilt by association. It puts him in a category and with people where he doesn’t belong, and it greases the skids for those who want to discredit and marginalize him (“He’s one of *them!*” “Get him!!”).

An illustration of this phenomenon, a very visible part of the alt-right is *The Daily Stormer* website. A sampling of its recent articles:

- **“Greasy Neocon Kike David Frum Says Whites are Losing Race War”**
- **“CBS Jew Les Moonves Makes Ridiculous Excuses for Decline in Monkey Ball [National Football League] Ratings”**
- **“I’ll Put an Ass Up Your Boot” – Filthy Jew Terrorist Max Boot Goes Off the Rails on Twitter”**
- **“Rampaging Old Grizzled Kike Ginsburg Apologizes to Evil Negroid Kaepernick”**
- **“Diabolical Kike Dan Senor Deletes Pussygate Tweets After Being Accused of Leaking Tape”**
- **“Weasel Shill Paul Jewsef Watson Says ISIS Hurts Jews”**

Kevin is brought down and rendered vulnerable by a connection with this kind of thing.

The three examples just mentioned—Taylor, Brimelow, and Macdonald—and there are a number of others that space

prevents me from citing, have the potential to be as appealing to people in the center and left and conservative right as they are to people on the far right.

Another of Peterson's rules of living is *Assume That the Person You are Listening to Might Know Something You Don't*. Two things stand out in that rule: The first is do less talking and more listening, including to people who disagree with you. Hear them, see things from their side, see yourself from their perspective. And the second, if somebody is accomplishing something you'd like to achieve—such as approval, encouragement, support, and good results—look into how they are doing it.

Three successful movements in recent decades have been the black civil rights movement in the 1950s and '60s, the modern feminist movement, and the gay rights movement.

Things these movements *didn't* do:

None of them called themselves the alt-left. Martin Luther King didn't say, "As a member of the alt-left, I offer that there be racial integration in America." Feminism didn't bill itself as a leftist movement. Gay marriage wasn't pitched as a left-wing alternative.

These successful movements were careful to stay away from any self-labeling that might be problematic for them. "I'm a Communist, but don't let that get to you, just listen to my good ideas"—none of that. Hubert Humphrey was a proud liberal and it got him the vice-presidency and a presidential nomination, but the people in these three successful groups saw that that handle wasn't doing to work for them and they shunned it.

All three successful movements went straight for the center, the mainstream, of American life, where they knew the action is; they didn't come on as fringe types. They attended closely to the manner in which they presented themselves. They knew how to play to their audience(s). They used language, arguments, and approaches that resonated with the mass public. Those front and center in the black civil rights, feminist, and gay rights movements

were appealing, reasonable, credible, accessible, comforting, and likeable.

These movements didn't present themselves as an alternative. What they were for was *it*, period. It was *the* true, decent, fair, equitable, just, good, moral thing to do. It was *the* American thing to do. What they advocated was the proper thing, the *only* thing, to do if you wanted to be respectable. To be against what they were insisting upon—their pitches were couched as imperatives—was no less than shameful. If you were unable to go along with it, you were obliged to get over on the side and out of the way—over on the right side, way over there, that's where the likes of you belong.

These successful movements associated themselves with attractive, convincing, and emotion-evoking images—they could be called in today's parlance 'memes'. The civil rights movement got a lot of mileage out of the image of four little black girls who were killed in a KKK church bombing in 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama. The gays had Ryan White, an Indiana teenager who became HIV/AIDS infected from a contaminated blood treatment—that is to say, he wasn't gay. Americans watched Ryan die and it tore at their heartstrings. The gay movement also has had the casts of "Will & Grace" and "Transparent," which personalized, humanized, and legitimized its arguments. The alt-right has Pepe the Frog, which goes over big among young men with gleams in their eyes and affinities for Twitter, and that's good, but Pepe comes across as a scary menace to the general public, and that's not good.

All three of these successful movements had radical, in-your-face components. The black movement had H. Rap Brown, Stokely Carmichael and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Huey Newton and the Black Panthers, and Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam. There were the radical feminists. The gays had the ACT UP group. Arguably, all of these more hard-edged individuals and organizations contributed to the cause, but if it were only these groups, it is highly questionable

whether these causes would have succeeded as they did. Would there have been a voting rights act or public accommodations law if the black civil rights movement, in the public's perception, had been just the Black Panthers? Not likely. Martin Luther King and those like him had to be there front and center.

Important in this context, none of the more extreme components of these movements were condemned or expelled by the—call them—respectable elements. At the same time, the more acceptable people and organizations in these movements didn't openly embrace or identify with the radicals. They didn't have an overarching movement name—say, alt-left—that linked them and what they were doing to these more confrontational and threatening personages, groups, and activities. They basically stayed clear of their rough-and-tumble compatriots and went about the business of making their own appeals. Martin Luther King represented himself and his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, nothing more than that.

These successful movements avoided identifying themselves with, or linking their fates to, individual politicians or a political party. They kept the focus on the cause, not politics. Martin Luther King didn't talk about Lyndon Johnson; he talked about civil rights for black people. The gay rights movement didn't intertwine itself with, say, Bill Clinton to the point that if Clinton wasn't your man you were disposed to think that gay rights wasn't your cause. The women's movement kept the attention on women's interests, not the Democratic Party, and if you were on their side, whichever party you favored, wherever you were on the political spectrum, welcome aboard. Individuals within these movements were politically active, but the movements as movements, and their leadership, stayed on message, whether it was black civil rights, women's rights, or gay rights.

Obviously, in this last paragraph I was referring to attaching white advocacy to the candidacy of Donald Trump.

I suppose the alt-right label and the Trump candidacy did result in greater visibility for the white movement. But what kind of visibility has it been? I don't hold to the notion that all publicity is good publicity. The alt-right/Trump thrust this past year or so has been the occasion for those of us on this side of the cultural/racial divide getting smeared big time. I've read a lot of the following sort of thing, and I worry that some of us are unwittingly setting all of us up for it:

. . . anti-Semitic, racist against blacks and Hispanics, sexist, and bigoted against the disabled, and ready to hold the door while Pepe the Frog feeds his opponents, including a large contingent of conservative and liberal Jewish journalists subjected to unimaginable invective by the Alt-Right, into the ovens.

A November 22nd, 2016 article in CNN reported:

Richard Spencer, a white supremacist and leading figure in the alt-right, delivered a racist and anti-Semitic address to a gathering of the group's members in which he declared, emphatically, "Hail Trump! Hail our people! Hail victory!" Spencer's chants prompted some audience members to raise their right hand in an apparent Nazi salute.

This same CNN piece quotes Donald Trump as saying, "I don't want to energize the group, and I disavow the group. It's not a group I want to energize, and if they are energized, I want to look into it and find out why." The very person we were fawning over wants nothing to do with us. What message does that send to the general public, and to us, for that matter?

There was this anecdote in Tyler:

A little more than week before the election, my twelve-year-old daughter Dee, as I'll call her here, went Halloween trick-or-treating—yes, I know, she is maybe a little old for that, but she's still into it—with her friend from school, Meredith. Afterwards, over a bowl of chili (the girls were in another room trading candy), Meredith's mother Christine—bachelor's degree, suburban—brought up the big election

coming up in just over a week. I usually stay clear of political talk, but this time I bit. “Well, whether he wins or loses, Trump is raising some important issues, like immigration and—”

“HE’S REPULSIVE!” Christine bellowed. “Grabbing women by the . . . Megyn Kelly, blood coming out of the wherever . . . Seriously, do you want Dee to be in the same world with that vulgar lowlife orange beach ball? I mean, really Robert.”

I have to admit I agreed with her.

In any case, end of conversation. The lesson: I’d rather not make my pitch about the issues facing America in general and white people in particular to educated woman carrying Donald Trump on my back.

And in Tyler I offered this:

I spent my working life around university students, and of course I’m generalizing here, but based on my experience with them, their most central motivating impulse is to be decent and fair and just to people. Which, by the way, is why the idea of social justice resonates so well with them. They don’t want to be great, they want to be good. They don’t want to be on one end or the other of the social/cultural/ political spectrum. Rather, they want to be secure and accepted and respected in the middle of wherever they are, in the dorm or in the community. They want to belong. They want to be seen as OK people, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. Political correctness in universities matches up well with students’ basic impulses.

What appeals most effectively across the board with university students is . . . sincerity, respectfulness, niceness, and humility. I’m from Burlington, Vermont and way, way back I took a community education course from a very young Bernie Sanders. Bernie was a single parent back then, barely getting by on unemployment benefits. He was tall and upright, not hunched over as he is now, and he had an abundant mop of dark curly hair. I can’t remember what the course was about; labor history perhaps. I

remember Bernie saying pretty much the same things he is saying now. During the course I took from him, Bernie didn't strike me as the brightest person, or the most informed, but one thing that stood out about him was his sincerity. He truly believed in what he was saying. And he connected with me in a respectful way; he didn't come off as a self-consumed hot shot. I got the distinct impression that I mattered to Bernie. He was kind to me. He was a nice guy. All these years later, could it be that the young people who flocked to Bernie this past election cycle were responding to the same qualities I experienced in him those many years ago?

The alt-right impulse has brought some new people into the white effort, and that is to be applauded. Young. Tech savvy. With fresh takes on things, educative to the rest of us. Active—they were the ones in the park at Charlottesville. They know how to use humor and satire effectively. They take no crap from anybody. But they don't play well with most people. That's the problem.

If a movement is to be successful, it needs places in it for a wide range of people, including women (how many women can you name in the alt-right?), university students, and solid folks of the sort that are working at Fidelity and forming families and establishing positive reputations and places in the community and coaching Little League teams and attending piano recitals. The word is that more people have joined up with the alt-right than ever before, but who are they, and just as important, who *aren't* they?

Two other Peterson rules of life are *Tell the Truth—or at Least Don't Lie* and *Pursue What is Meaningful (Not What is Expedient)*.

I've been pretty good about not outright lying, but I haven't always been good about telling the truth. I'm talking about my truth, not the truth; I'm not so presumptuous as to think that I'm in contact with Truth, Wisdom, anything like that. To tell my truth, I need to put in the time and effort to get all the way down to it. In this racial area, in all areas of my life, a lot of times I've accepted a plausible and palatable surface reality and gone with it. It wasn't

my best effort and, in my personal life for sure, it cost me: I didn't get the results I might otherwise have achieved.

I've also caught myself doing the expedient thing rather than the meaningful thing. "I don't want any more trouble, I just want to get back to ESPN.com and my apricot brandy." At my scary advanced age, time's really short for me, and I've got to stop doing that.

Which leads into the end of the Tyler article, the Tyler Durden story.

I'll end with a reference to *Fight Club*, a film that came out the same year as *The Matrix*, 1999. [I'd referred to the concept of the "red pill" from that movie in the Tyler article.] The scene, two young men who haven't met before (or think they haven't; it's complicated) sitting next to each other on an airplane: the narrator (played by Edward Norton); and Tyler Durden (played by Brad Pitt).

Narrator: Tyler, you are by far the most interesting single-serving friend I've ever met. See, I have this thing: everything on a plane is single-serving

Tyler Durden: Oh, I get it. It's very clever.

Narrator: Thank you.

Tyler Durden: How's that working out for you?

Narrator: What?

Tyler Durden: Being clever.

Narrator: Great.

Tyler Durden: Keep it up then. . . . Right up.

Lately, there seems to have been the enlistment of a good number of clever guys into the white cause, and I'm with Tyler Durden, if cleverness is working for them, they should keep it up—right up, with an emphasis on political right if that's what they want. We need clever guys, we really do. I think this whole business comes down to each of us doing what works for us as the unique individuals we are. It's obvious that the alt-right label and Trump, despite his

accomplishment (or was it that Hillary was so bad?), don't work for me, so I'm not doing them. But if they work for you, absolutely, keep it up, or do something else; whatever best gets you through your life, whatever squares with your being, whatever you think is the most ethical thing to do, do it. From this perspective, then, rather than Become Who We Are [the title of the alt-right conference], leaving open the possible inference that we are all alike, a better title for the conference would be Become Who You Are.

What wasn't truthful there? The idea of doing what works for you personally, whatever it happens to be. The hands-off, non-judgmental posture. The truth—my truth, my best truth—would have been: Do who you are, but take into account the fate of other people as you decide what that is. You might do something that gets you payoffs—attention affirmation, power, whatever else—that gets somebody else's PayPal discontinued. If you march around with torches, it could get somebody fired from their job or suddenly without Twitter, and it could make everybody who speaks of whites without putting them down look like a bigot who deserves to be, figuratively or literally, hit over the head with a club.

Why didn't I say that? Why did I do my benign "whatever works for you" number? Because I was doing the expedient thing. I wanted to avoid the verbally cutting alt-righters' characterization of me as an "unwith-it" boomer whose time has come and gone (which would be especially discomfoting because it hits home). I just wanted to watch my Amazon movie rental of *Last Love* with Michael Caine in peace.

But I need to be better than that. The truth—my truth—is this assertion: We ought to drop "alt-right" as an overarching label for white activism. Unless "right" fits you like a comfy glove, don't ever speak or write a sentence having to do with you with the word "right" in it. And besides wishing alt-righters well and learning from them and respectfully suggesting that they keep the well-being of their racial kinsmen in mind when they do things, publicly

stay clear of them.

My heart just skipped a beat.