

Nobuddies' Fool:

The former and latest (which says a lot) conservative headliner, Newt Gingrich, used the term "female Latina" when describing Judge Sotomayor to an audience of salivating Nobuddies a couple of weeks ago. To use female and Latina together is a redundancy. A Latina is a female. A Latino is a male. The "a" and the "o" endings make all the difference. Newt knows this. Newt is a very, very smart guy and a shrewd politician to boot. So when he makes use of a dumbism you can be sure it's because his audience needs him to dumb it down a bit. The old adage tells us, "When in Rome do as the Romans do." So when Newt speaks to the ignorant, he speaks in their language, ignorance. He has always found it useful to be bi-intelligent. It just works better that way. You don't want the Nobuddies to be getting all confused during your speech 'cause they need to know when to stomp and cheer. That way Fox can get a lot of video of folks stomping and cheering at the convention while the headliner is speaking. The important thing in producing television news is to shoot enough tape so that back in the editing room you can whittle it down to the ten seconds that best get your message across. That's what TV news is these days...getting your message across...not news, just message. But I digress.

I guess I should explain what I mean by the term "Nobuddies". They are a special subset of the right side of political thinking who, by their insistence on constantly using the negative, participate in a kind of a cluster hug with other similarly afflicted citizens. They function with equal enthusiasm in Congress and at rallies. When one of the stars of their Party is speaking the Nobuddies act as the chorus. "Do you want a Socialist in the White House?" Everyone shout "No!" "Do you want female Latinas crossing our borders? Everyone shout "No!" See how it works? In Congress our representatives apply the same principle but in a legislation-specific way. Should America have health care for everyone...vote No! Should we stop American gun dealers from supplying Mexican drug gangs with their assault weapons? Vote No! It makes life so much easier. If you're in the Senate or the House and the other side proposes...anything...you vote "No". If you're at a rally and your hero raises his voice in a resounding question you yell "No". There's no muss no fuss and no fine points. Black, white. Good, bad. Them, us. That's a Nobuddy's mindset.

Mr. Gingrich used to have a way of remaining above the fray while still pulling the strings and lining up the votes. He was the consummate politician. You may remember his famous answer to the question, "Why are you so set on impeaching President Clinton?" His answer, "Because I can." But he's out of Office now and considering a run for the Big One. It's really difficult to get elected to the presidency if you're not currently holding a prominent position in Government, almost impossible. So he needs to roll every stone and shake every tree to get that groundswell going. He needs to have a lot of noisy citizens and media personalities showing up and talking about Newt. One sure way to do that is to take the discussion as low as it will go.

Therein lies Newt's problem. As shrewd as he is, it's still difficult for him to just spout the usual drivel about women and minorities. It took him less than a day to retract his statement that Sotomayor is a "racist". Somewhere in that Machiavellian heart there still lurks a spark of fairness. He realized that the "racist" epithet was patently ridiculous. Besides, he knows that Rush and Sean and Bill will take care of that stuff anyway. His job will be to step outside the increasingly isolated and shrinking Republican base. If he is to be a true contender he's going to have to find a lot of votes in addition to the Nobuddies. Tough job. I don't think he can do it. But we'll see. Stranger things have happened. Nobody knows.