

Conventions point to the life of a party

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It's time to prepare for an onslaught of political sound bites and videos, especially for those living in the swing states where the election actually will be settled.

I woke up this morning thinking, "If I were running for president today, which political convention would I want to be my own?"

Would I want the one with the carefully selected "self-made" entrepreneur boasting of "I did it on my own," who conveniently ignored the help he got from the Small Business Administration, the tax breaks from his local Industrial Development Authority, and the Department of Labor that supplied him with job applicants?

The convention that featured the mother of the autistic child who bragged about his overcoming obstacles, while failing to mention the schoolteachers and health professionals who supported her family through it all, and the student loan program that made college affordable for her son?

Or would I want the convention that featured people who humbly admitted that their personal success stories were enabled through community support?

The same convention that empowers women to control their own destiny, with equal pay for equal work and self-determination regarding family planning?

You would think as an aging white male I would choose the party that wants to punish rape victims with mandated pregnancy. The party of rich coupon-clippers who think vouchers are the way to go for health care, but sneer at food stamps — the mark of dependency for losers.

I took that online test from PBS, developed by the Pew Research Center. A test that decided that this opinionated Irish-American Presbyterian deacon (a lifelong Republican) was actually a Democratic, religiously unaffiliated Hispanic female teenager.

What pew am I really sitting in on Sunday mornings?

Sure, there are some people who fail at life because they don't even try, taking the easy way out with alcohol, drugs, public assistance and substandard housing. But there are other people who play by the rules and still can't get ahead, living paycheck to paycheck. Struggling to pay the rent or feed their children, while the federal government spends billions abroad nation-building for other people's children.

Corporal acts of mercy should not require a passport, nor should we wait for natural disasters to bring out the best in us. There are daily disasters worthy of our attention in our own country.

So, if I were running for president, would I want the party with the quick fix, solving our troubles by upsetting all the apple carts in the farmers markets?

Or would I want the party that is digging us out of our hole, one shovelful at a time?

The party that represents all the big corporations, or the party that represents the little people?

The party where barefoot and pregnant is still an acceptable fate for females?

Or the party that encourages my granddaughters to go to college, earn their own keep, then carefully choose life partners who respect their abilities and their bodies?

I think I know the answer. I don't need a nun on a bus to convince me. But if you were running for president today, what would you like your own convention to look like?