

Build your personal story bank! Your moral story is the heart of the conversation - you can argue the facts too, but the story is what you want to stick

(This policy or person is) Socialism. All you Democrats are Socialists!

When I hear this kind of stuff, I can't help but think about my Grandpa, Poppy and what he might've thought about it. Poppy and his twin brother grew up during the Great Depression and they served in WWII. Poppy could fix anything - he was a carpenter - and he loved to go fishing and play the guitar and spend time with his kids and grandkids. He was hardworking and humble, and had the best gentle laugh.

I'll never forget the first time I realized that Poppy was proud of me. I was just a kid, young enough to still go down front during Sunday service for the children's sermon. That particular Sunday, us kids gathered by the altar steps like we did every week, but this week, the pastor gave *some* of us a small box of raisins. Then he paused for a minute to see what we might do. I handed my box to the kid next to me, who didn't have any, and then a few others did the same until everyone had some raisins.

The pastor smiled, and talked about how we all receive gifts from God and should be grateful for our blessings, but that it's not the act of getting that makes us special, it's the act of giving. He asked us if we might've been able to enjoy our raisins as we sat next to someone just like us who had none, and of course, we realized that no, we couldn't. Why would we want anyone to be left out?

That lesson really stuck with me, even at that young age, but what really hit me that day was the smile on Poppy's face. When I got back to the pew, he put his arm around my shoulder and with a squeeze, said "I was so proud when you were the first one to share your raisins." Now, I guess, Tucker Carlson would've said I was a socialist.

At what point did the simple act of wanting to have a good, decent society become some evil "socialist" plot? You're free to feel however you feel about it, but it just feels absurd (wrong) to me. Even worse, it feels like a trick. It feels like something to say on talk radio to get us so angry and afraid of each other that we don't notice when the government shells out all kinds of money to big corporations and the already wealthy.

So I hear your unease about spending, I get it. But it's hard to not see the trick, once you've seen it, you know? Big spending is fine except when it's to help people like you and me and Poppy? I think what we're having here is a conversation about values. Do we want a good, decent society where we get up to share or help or do our part so that our neighbors don't have to suffer? I was raised to say yes, and I suspect you were too.