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Piers Morgan interview shows verbal bullying does no good

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NCR Today

If you haven't already, please watch the Piers Morgan and Alex Jones interview. Warning: Slogging through both part one and part two may increase your risk for migraine, acid-churning ulcers, nervousness, anxiety and loss of all hope for a civilized discussion on gun control.

News shows, columns and blogs are a-twitter with analyses and opinions. Did the hot-headed Jones help or hurt the National Rifle Association's cause with his crazed outbursts, paranoid ramblings and finger-jabbing threats? Was Morgan incredibly naïve in thinking he could have a rational debate with the outspoken radio host? The discussions continue, but there is an even bigger issue to consider.

In the midst of his mad rants, Jones provides a mirror for us to judge the present state of dialogue in our time. And it's a pitiable state indeed. He epitomizes the antithesis of dialogue, at the heart of which is the ability to listen in order to understand the other. Listen? Jones doesn't allow Morgan to complete a sentence before he reloads and fires with another volley of anger and hatred. He embraces the basic philosophy of a verbal bully: Truth is judged by excessive volume and verbiage. If you have enough firepower, victory will be yours.

The interview is difficult to watch. I cringed at the ugliness of the anger, the facial contortions that accompanied the venomous attacks. I was thankful I could turn the volume down and felt sorry for Morgan's inability to do so. Sadly, I get the same feeling reading some discussion boards.

We might think the written word relieves us of the discomfort of seeing and hearing a person in the midst of a hate-filled rant, but it doesn't. Take a close look at some discussion boards; yes, even here on *NCR*. The Alex Joneses are out there. They are the ones who refuse to listen to the other. They twist words or

take them out of context. They believe that sheer repetition equals truth, so they repost their opinions one after another in the effort to silence opposing voices. Rather than a rational sharing of opinions and ideas, the discussion sinks into a pathetic shouting match.

If there is one lesson to be learned from Alex Jones, it is that verbal bullying does not sway the minds of reasonable people. You will probably be seen as yet another fanatic. And the only ones you will convince are those who share your fanatical views.

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