

RATIONALE FOR OFFENSIVE TERMINOLOGY LIKE GREEDHEADS
Adapted from Chapter 10 of *A Rhodes Retrospective*, available from Amazon

Until recently I would not have called anyone a “Greedhead,” much less a “Predatory” or “Power Prick.” My writings and presentations throughout my career have been moderate in tone on the assumption that we can all find ways to collaborate regardless of political affiliation or place on the political spectrum. My friends therefore are surprised by this uncharacteristic change in tone, and some advise that I lose more than gain by using highly charged terms like Greedheads.

I would have agreed with them until 2008 when those who held the reigns of economic power almost destroyed our entire economic system, and caused untold misery for millions of others in the process. So too those who held the reigns of political power in effect conspired to let this happen since they were bedfellows with the Predatory Pricks before, during and after the 2008 crisis. The Power Pricks made some CYA changes, but nothing substantially changed. One example, the handful of banks that control most of our economy are still “Too Big to Fail.”

The straw that broke this camel’s back came one day when one of the most influential Republicans in Congress admitted that their strategy was to oppose anything that President Obama proposed. I am not a strong Obama fan because by adoption of the Bush NCLB (No Child Left Behind) program and even aggravation

of its counterproductive effects with the poorly-conceived Race to the Top program, his Administration wasted a rare opportunity to move public education in a better direction. But opposing any proposal, no matter how beneficial, just to weaken the other side violates a fundamental tenant of our constitutional democracy, which is designed to resolve conflict through reason and compromise. This goes beyond “not playing nice in the sandbox” to destroying the sandbox altogether. It is unacceptable, and needs to be challenged and changed before it undermines the constitutional democracy, which has made us strong in the past. This is my “I’m mad as hell, and I’m not going to take it anymore” moment, and therefore I justify the offensive Greedhead and Predatory and Power Prick terminology. It may not be politically correct or even persuasive given the complex character of each individual, but it does highlight undesirable characteristics that I believe are useful in understanding the extent of the problem we face as a constitutional democracy.

As I write this justification for strong language, my blood begins to boil once again. We are warned to be careful of strong language which may be offensive to those who almost destroyed our economy in 2008 and brought unimaginable misery to millions of ordinary citizens? We must be nice and respectful to those who are a continuing threat to our constitutional democracy with their self-interested power plays in the market and government? They should be behind bars

sharing showers with the poor losers who are serving time for stealing bread from 7-Elevens. Think about it. Not one of those responsible for the 2008 crisis is serving time for doing so. And we must be careful not to offend them with strong language? I hereby pledge to jettison my strong language when the Greedheads are convicted and thrown into prison for their part in one of the greatest thefts in U.S. history. At that time I will be happy to identify them in neutral terms such as: Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Number 07407-058 (in dishonor of televangelist Jim Bakker, another infamous Greedhead), or whatever the number happens to be.

To all others who are offended by my strong language I simply say, don't wear the shoe if it doesn't fit. If you are not a Greedhead, or a Predatory or Power Prick as I define the terms, relax, because I am not talking about you. But at least take a minute or two to examine whether or not the shoe fits.

That said, my proposed definitions:

Predatory Prick: A free market proponent relentlessly pursuing the selfish goal of more money as if enough is never enough. Usually a privileged white male one-percenter, but comes in all sizes, shapes and colors. Often contrasted with Power Pricks, but more often the same, as chameleon-like they exchange colors and places. Examples: Bernard Madoff, R. Allen Stanford, Raj Rajaratman and most of Wall Street.

Power Prick: A political operative relentlessly pursuing the self-interested goal of acquiring more power. Often contrasted with Predatory Pricks, but more often one and the same over time, as they trade places in Washington and on Wall Street or lucrative lobbyist positions. Same for their counterparts who operate at state and local levels. Perhaps starting their careers as Goodheads, they find their privileged position at the hog troughs of power too good to pass. Usually unwilling to compromise; principle and/or self-interest more important than the common good. Examples: Most of the U.S. Congress.

Greedhead: A person who is both a Predatory Prick and a Power Prick. It is difficult to be one without becoming the other. Characterized by narrow and fierce pursuit of self-interest more important than the common good. Warning: Watch your back; does not play nice in the sandbox. Greedheads often present themselves to the world as Goodheads, and some would like to be if only they could find a way. For the latter, there is hope, but transitioning from Greedhead to Goodhead is more difficult than vice versa. Examples: The early Cecil Rhodes, and the late Charles Keating, Jr., Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker and most of Wall Street and the U.S. Congress.

Privatizer: Sometimes appears in the form of a Predatory Prick preoccupied with money or a Power Prick preoccupied with power, but motivated more by a narrow ideology assuming that the free market is more efficient than public entities at

delivering essential services like education, health care, highways, prisons and police and fire departments. Usually a white male one percenter or billionaire. Examples: Bill Gates and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Scalia.

Greenhead: A Goodhead whose primary cause is environmental action to preserve our planet. A source of untapped potential against the Greedheads who support global competition since the endless pursuit of bigger and better widgets consumes more and more of the earth's limited natural resources. The pursuit of the civic standard in public education, on the other hand, produces nothing more harmful than informed and active citizens. Example: Sierra Club.

Dogooder: A well-meaning person doing God's work for the less fortunate in private, and in church and other traditional community charities. A Dogooder gives fish to the poor. Comes in all colors, shapes and political and religious affiliations, usually self-sacrificing for the common good. Examples: Numerous, in almost all communities.

Goodhead: A person more concerned about the greater good of the community than the self-interested goals of the individual. A Goodhead gives fishing equipment and seeds to the poor, along with advice on how best to use them. Usually found to the left of center on the political spectrum almost by definition, but often also centrist left or right. Willing to compromise for the greater good.

Usually not as organized or clever at using limited resources to advance goals as Greedheads, but the only hope for making our constitutional democracy work.

Examples of Goodheads: Susan Bailey, Bill Bradley, David Brooks, Paul Brynteson, Warren Buffett, Jimmy Carter, Henry Chauncey, Wesley Clark, Bill Clinton, James Conant, Archibald Cox, Larry Cuban, Lee Dembart, Bill Drayton, Claude Dziuk, Marian Wright Edelman, John Gearen, Gwen Ifil, Brad Katsuyama, Garrison Keillor, Michael Lewis, Harry Lewis, Martha McClung, Deborah Meier, Frank Michelman, John Monro, Asher Mozes, Elon Musk, Diane Ravitch, Michael Rebell, Robert Redford, Oliver Rekow, Nelson Rockefeller, Charlie Rose, Mark Shields, John Simon, George Soros, Jon Stewart, Zephr Teachout, Elizabeth Warren, John Wideman, Prentiss Willson, Michael Yudez, Fareed Zakaria and many millions more.

I tried to find more individuals from the right side of the political spectrum who I feel I know sufficiently, through personal contact or relevant literature, to add to my list, but Goodheads almost by definition are more often found on the left than the right. My definition of Goodheads almost defines what most Greedheads consider antithetic to their political and economic philosophy since they believe that the pursuit of personal gain in a market economy benefits almost everyone through job creation or “trickle-down” effects.