

## IDEAS

## Unplug Your Mitt-Wit Advisers, Governor!

By: Terry Michael  
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How can Gov. William Jefferson Clinton Romney get out of the flip-flop box his Mitt-wit advisers have consulted him into?

Asking myself that simple question, I was fortunate to run into a pollster friend, Tom Riehle, who had part of the answer. "He needs to collapse."

"Yes!" I said, abandoning the Life Cycle VersaTrainer on which I planned my usual 30 minutes of cardio. "And follow that with a redemptive epiphany worthy of Joseph Smith on magic mushrooms!"

This is a man who is not only capable of seducing men, women and pets, as I continue to explain to my political journalism students. He could probably sweet talk an inanimate object like a bowling ball, on its way toward the right gutter, into taking a left turn into all those eager-to-be-bowled-over center pins (if you get my base/center metaphor.)

I'm not suggesting that Mitt pull a Brit, shave his head and check into re-hab.

But it amazes me that someone so obviously free market and free mind smart could allow himself to be sold a bill of goods by the same kind of lame brainiacs who are over-consulting Hillary Rodham "No Last Name" and like George W. "I Can't Say I'm Wrong" Clinton and John "Who Was I, And Who and Where Am I Now?" McCain.

Governor, unplug yourself from the Rove-ing band of yesteryear political hired guns, who still believe TV preachers are the key to the Republican nomination. Evangelicals themselves are disappointed with their flirtation with politics for the past 30 years. Which is why so many of them seem to be ready to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is not the Republican Party's. They're returning to church, and turning against the false prophets Falwell, Robertson and Reed.

Understand, like the Classic Clinton, that you can win the center in November by triangulating against, not embracing, your wing nuts (think Bill's capital punishment, gun owner rights and welfare reform positions, which the usual suspect analysts said would kill him with the left.) Like Slick Willie, you can seduce both the true believers and the broad, rational, I'd-rather-win-than-lose center of your base with your Hollywood smile. Position yourself as who you revealed yourself to be when you first stepped onto the national/international stage – a reasonable, intelligent, embracing man, with good management skills and a happy home life.

How to do it? Well, Tom Riehle (who, like political savant Charlie Cook, was an understudy of the late great Alan Baron 25 years ago) was right. As Alan no doubt would have advised, you need a come-from-behind moment. Or maybe, as Tom also mused, you could pivot off McCain's impending implosion, or the mess Hillary's loss of direction and over-consultation has gotten her into.

The lines would be simple: "I got into this race because I thought I'd make a good president. I'm fed up with all the consultants and advisers. I have nobody to blame but myself, but I've had it. From now on, I'll be the same Mitt Romney who...." You know the rest.

It looks more and more to me like Romney/Reagan vs. Obama/Oprah.

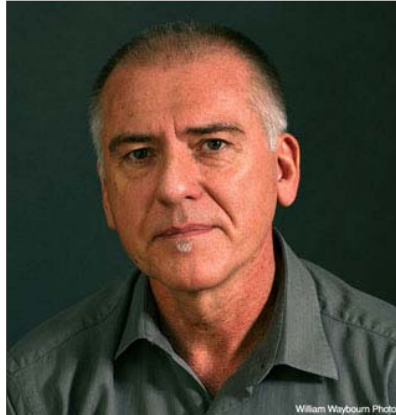
We political junkies need that race. Don't screw it up!

*A former Democratic National Committee press secretary, Terry Michael is director of the Washington Center for Politics & Journalism and writes at his "libertarian Democrat" blog, [www.terrymichael.net](http://www.terrymichael.net).*

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