

# I know you are but what am I



Aspirational – (1) characterized by a strong desire to achieve something high or great (2) a term no longer applicable in the 2016 Presidential election

When the nominating process for both major parties kicked off, there was a lot of enthusiasm and energy behind the idea that a new, better America was going to result from this year's candidate.

It's not an unusual proposal, on either side, to sell hope over despair, since it has appeal beyond the borders of a single party and dives deep into the dreams of all Americans.

Within a short while, on the Republican side, the debate devolved into bashing and fear-mongering. In this, the resulting presumptive nominee should have been easily foreseen, given his mastery over those two talents.

The Democrats, meanwhile, tried to portray a more civilized front, but as soon as a presumptive nominee was certain, they also fell into the same tired rhetoric against their Republican foes.

For the next five months, then, we will be hearing, ad nauseam, two non-aspirational messages:

Republicans – "Hillary Clinton is crooked and untrustworthy"

Democrats – "Donald Trump is unfit and unqualified"

Basically, why you should fear the other candidate getting

elected.

Not why you should be proud to be an American. Not why you should be hopeful for the future. Not why you should feel safe and secure.

If it doesn't surprise you to know this, it should at least dismay you.

Part of this is the way we live in the world now, meaning part of this is our fault.

How often do we hear a kind or complimentary word? How often do we give one? It's much easier to be mad at everyone else and, by extension, our government. And then it becomes easier to make the offhand negative comment or insult.

So, when political candidates try aspirational language and hopeful tones and get no response, either in polls or in media attention, is it surprising they fall back on good old playground politics.

When they call each other names and toss off random insults they seem more like us, making it easier for us to identify with them ("I like that guy, he talks like me"). So what if no one gives us any detail about what they're going to do...if they think like us, they'll do right by us.

So we get what we deserve, a fight between two people on the playground talking not about how to make our lives better but why you-know-who is going to make it worse.

Instead of the silly expectation that politicians should lead and we follow, why don't we try to act better ourselves and then expect...no, demand...politicians follow. That's tougher than, say, being mad at everything and demanding everyone else change.

Just being angry is easy, because, like in our own days of name-calling, we know if we get called on it we only have to

stick out our tongue and go “Nyahh, nyahh, I know you are but what am I”.