

In a presidential race as razor-thin as 2024, every move, every word, every fleeting moment of restraint or reaction may tip the scale. Both candidates are hurtling toward the finish line, buoyed by their supporters but advised by a chorus of media voices telling them what to say, how to act, and what strategy to employ for that elusive edge. Yet amidst all the conventional advice, one overlooked, counterintuitive approach could prove decisive. And ironically, it's the candidate best known for disruption and unpredictability—Donald Trump—who might benefit most by ignoring his usual playbook and embracing a new strategy.

The advice Harris is receiving is predictable. Pundits on both sides are clamoring for her to shift away from the relentless barrage of attacks on Trump, urging her to close out the campaign on a hopeful, unifying note. And, if 2024 were a typical election, that advice would be sound. But this campaign has been anything but ordinary, and a last-minute pivot to positivity risks losing the very momentum she's been cultivating. Here's why: her attacks, which paint Trump as everything from authoritarian to unstable, have not only gone unchecked by a largely favorable media but have managed to rattle Trump into snapping back, creating the illusion of a back-and-forth that distracts from the issues and keeps her in control.

It's clear Harris has set a deliberate trap. Trump, with his known sensitivity to slights and skill at verbal sparring, is baited every time, responding with familiar counterpunches that play into her hands. With each exchange, she is holding the media's microphone, steering the narrative as Trump hits back. We've seen it before, in their debates, in their back-and-forth speeches. Each time, she keeps her cool as Trump grows visibly frustrated. Her goal? To present Trump as "unhinged," the one lacking presidential demeanor. And she's been largely successful.

But here lies the opportunity for Trump: the path to victory is not more vitriol or counters to her attacks; rather, it is the discipline to flip the script entirely.

Despite his reputation for chaos, Trump's career—both in business and in politics—has been defined by his strategic discipline when it matters most. This is the man who defied the odds, built a multi-billion-dollar empire, and won the presidency against the formidable Clinton machine. What he needs to summon now is a different kind of discipline—the ability to stay above the fray in these closing moments.

Trump has a rare and powerful ace in his pocket: a record of concrete accomplishments and a vision for America that, if clearly articulated, resonates with a weary nation facing both domestic and international challenges. It's time for him to deploy the most underrated weapon in his arsenal: his ability to go positive, to cast his vision with optimism and clarity. We've seen him do this before. Remember his State of the Union addresses? When pundits expected fire, he delivered calm; when they braced for off-script jabs, he gave a meticulous rundown of achievements, stirring even his critics with his unexpected composure.

Trump's best move is to revive that tone, reminding voters of what he accomplished and, crucially, of what he can accomplish again. He has the advantage of a presidential record to point to—a rarity for candidates facing off against a sitting VP. In these final days, he should tap into the same statesmanship we saw in Normandy, in Warsaw, where he spoke not of partisan feuds but of shared values, history, and aspirations that cut across divides. Those speeches projected a leader of the free world, and if he channels that same voice now, it may be his winning card.

This approach would stand in stark contrast to Harris's scorched-earth strategy. Her relentless accusations, unchecked by mainstream media and amplified through repetition, seek to redefine Trump's image in voters' minds, painting him as a risk, an authoritarian waiting to seize control. Trump's job is to counter this by not countering it directly; instead, he should bypass her attacks and tell his own story, focusing on tangible results and a vision forward that reassures the undecided, bringing them into his camp.

The irony is palpable: Trump, the original outsider known for his off-the-cuff style, can win by becoming the steady, statesmanlike candidate Harris and the Democrats least expect. By elevating his message, refusing to engage in a final tit-for-tat, and laying out a clear path for a prosperous America, Trump may reveal Harris's approach for what it is—a distraction from policy and performance.

The stakes are enormous. Trump has a choice: lean into the mudslinging and risk looking like a contender fighting for a jab rather than the office itself, or rise above, embracing the role of the poised, forward-looking leader. He has the track record to make his case compelling, especially when contrasted with a political landscape rife with division and economic uncertainty. Harris's socialist vision may carry some appeal within her base, but it's a tough sell to undecided voters wary of policies that have led to turmoil in the past.

If Trump wants to win, he needs to tune out the noise, avoid the bait, and take the high road with an unwavering, disciplined focus on his message. Rather than engaging in Harris's narrative, he must make his closing argument about the future, about what he can deliver for Americans at home and abroad. By painting a picture of a stronger, more prosperous nation and staying above the fray, Trump might surprise everyone—including Harris—and win it all.