

environmentalist, civil libertarian, spiritual, and antiauthoritarian (see *Moral Politics* for details). Each thought process has consequences in choosing what causes to pursue, how to rank priorities, how to use political capital, where and how to raise money and what to spend it on, who your friends and acquaintances are, what to read, who to pay attention to, and so on.

A great many progressives have been critical of President Obama. If you were to make a list of the criticisms, they would mostly be defined by one or more of these parameters: too pragmatic, not a real progressive, going too slow, too timid or cowardly, not militant enough, not doing enough for *my* major interest.

When you consider that each progressive has some distinct combination of these parameters, the number of types of progressives becomes astronomical. When Will Rogers said, “I am not a member of any organized political party. I am a Democrat,” this is the kind of thing he meant.

This makes it all the more important to understand what unites progressives and how to openly discuss that unity—despite the differences defined by these parameters.

Programs are a major problem for attempts at unity. As soon as a policy is made specific, the differences must be addressed. Progressives tend to talk about policies and programs. But policy details are not what most Americans want to know about. Most Americans want to know what you stand for, whether your values are their values, what your principles are, what direction you want to take the country in. In public discourse, values trump policies, principles trump policies, policy directions trump specific programs. I believe that values, principles, and policy directions are exactly the things that can unite progressives, if they are crafted properly. The reason that they can unite us is that they stand conceptually above all the things that divide us.

Ideas That Make Us Progressives

What follows is a detailed explication of each of those unifying ideas: