

Politics Without Stories
The Liberal Predicament

Liberal candidates, scholars, and activists mainly promote pragmatism rather than large and powerful narratives – which may be called “alpha stories” for their commanding presence over time. Alternatively, conservative counterparts to such liberals tend to promote their policy preferences in alpha stories praising effective markets, excellent traditions, and limited government. In this face-off, liberals represent a post-Enlightenment world where many modern people, following Max Weber, are “disenchanted,” while many conservatives, echoing Edmund Burke, cherish stories borrowed from the past.

Politics Without Stories describes this storytelling gap as an electoral disadvantage for liberals because their campaigning lacks, and will continue to lack, the inspiration and shared commitments that great, long-term stories can provide. Therefore Ricci argues that, for tactical purposes, liberals should concede their post-Enlightenment skepticism and rally around short-term stories designed to frame, in political campaigns, immediate situations which they regard as intolerable. These stories may help liberals win elections and influence the course of modern life.

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*For Tamir, Dudi, Yuval, Tom, Yasmin,
Galia, Adam, Assaf, Ori, and Gili*

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