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**Behavior doesn't negate truth**

Those of us who study rhetoric know the importance of Aristotle's concept of ethos. One of the most challenging yet essential tasks in the current polarized political environment is carefully separating our beliefs about a person's actions and policies from the veracity of what they say. Ethos offers us a way to address this challenge, and former FBI Director James Comey provides an instructive example.

In retrospect, did he make inappropriate decisions regarding the Hillary Clinton email investigation? Perhaps so. Was it a mistake to publish a book, as well as promote the book via numerous public interviews, while the Russia investigation is ongoing? Strong arguments have been made indicating it was indeed an error.

Nevertheless, none of these actions and our views about them vitiates the accuracy of Comey's claims about his interactions with President Donald Trump. Those who know and have worked with him — and are familiar with his copious note-taking habit immediately following interactions with Trump — suggest that Comey is telling the truth. Contrast this with the president's documented record of being less than truthful.

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