

*Never underestimate
the power you have
to change your world*



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Categories?

Let's start by imagining our nation
the day after the election.

Half the people party;

their candidate won.

The other half mourn;

their candidate lost.

Is this what we want?

Do we really want to divide our nation
into winners and losers?

Do we really want to force others
to lose

so we can win?

Is that who we are?

I don't think so.

Let's imagine a different outcome.
The election is over,
and everyone is happy,
because every voter wins.

Impossible?
Maybe.
But then again,
maybe not.

It all depends
on whether we're willing to think
outside the box.

What if we woke up tomorrow
and there were no political parties?

No Democrat.

No Republican.

No red state.

No blue state.

No liberal.

No conservative.

What if we were all just people?

What would we discover
about one another?

Suppose we could reboot
without all the baggage in our brains.
Who knows?
We might actually like each other.

Maybe we aren't as far apart
as we think we are.

Three hundred million people
call America home.
There's something wrong with a system
where a presidential election
becomes a choice
of the lesser of two evils.
Instead, it should be
a tough choice
among our favorite leaders.
We should want
to vote for everybody
on the ballot.

Where are those candidates?
Why can't we find them?
And how did we create a system
that divides the country
into winners and losers every election day?
Why can't we all be winners?

Right now, when someone gets elected,
half the country parties
while the other half feels
as though doom itself has fallen
upon our nation.

Whoa!

We gotta find a better way
of coming to a consensus than that.

Elections are not wars
that are won or lost.

Elections should be opportunities
for all of us to be heard
and every person to be validated.

It's possible
you know.

We just need to change
the way we think.

And we need to find a way
to listen.

Every person has a story.
What would happen
if we listened
to those stories?

What would we discover?

Suppose we listened
to the quiet people
who don't do bumper stickers
or political posts on Facebook
but have much to add
to the conversation.

What if we welcomed them
into the conversation?
What if we gave them
a voice?

The way we have the conversation
is just as important
as the point
we want to make.

The louder one talks
the less we hear.

If we don't care about each other,
we cannot have a conversation.
If we don't respect one another,
we cannot have a conversation.
If we won't understand each other,
we cannot have a conversation.
If we don't trust one another,
we cannot have a conversation.

Political debate
without care
without respect
without understanding
without trust
is pointless.
It gets us nowhere.

Change the culture first;
politics will follow.

Suppose you and I
were locked in a prison cell, and
we had three days to learn
how to understand,
care about,
trust and
respect each other.
If we succeed,
the door opens
and we walk into heaven.
If we fail,
the floor vanishes,
and we fall into hell.
Could we do it?
Would we do it?

Don't we create
our own heaven or hell
here on earth
by the way we treat one another?

The campus protests of the 1960s
need not set the tone
for national dialogue today.
We went through a troubled time.
But we grew up.
Standing across from each other
and shouting
is so *yesterday*.
Couldn't we sit down,
invite one another to pull up a chair,
share a cup of coffee,
and listen?

What I'm talking about here
is a change in mindset.
Instead of pointing in every direction
and finding enemies,
let's look around
and find friends.

Some say
we must compromise.

I'm not so sure.
When we compromise,
don't we both lose
something?
Doesn't everybody feel
just a little bit cheated?

What if we kept talking
and listening
and thinking
until we came up with
a creative alternative
that everyone likes.

We can do that
you know
if we stop caring
who gets the credit,
who gets to be in charge,
and what's in it for me.
Instead, we focus our care
on what's best for everybody.

If everybody
wants what's best
for everybody,
then everybody
wins.

What if
we changed the way
we elect our president
and our other political leaders?

Suppose
instead of two political parties
at war with one another,
we identified leaders
who want the best
for everybody.

What if,
in the case of
a Presidential election,
we narrowed it down
to the ten leaders
America likes the best?

At the voting booth
you get to rank them:
your first choice,
your second choice,
and so on,
for as many as you wish to vote for.

If your first choice doesn't get enough votes
then your vote gets transferred
to your second choice
and so on.

In this way,
almost everybody
wins.

When the constitution was written,
we didn't have the technology to do that.

Now we do.

This system—
sometimes called
ranked choice voting,
instant-runoff voting
transferable voting,
or preferential voting—
may also help us decide critical issues
where every American
should have a voice.¹

1 For more information, see
<http://youtu.be/s7tWHJfhiyo>,
<http://youtu.be/3Y3jE3B8HsE>,
<http://youtu.be/l8XOZJkozfl>

I'm not a Democrat,
and I'm not a Republican.
I'm not conservative,
I'm not liberal,
and I'm not centrist.
I don't do categories.
Categories divide.
Leaders unite.

You're you.
I'm me.
If we listen to each other long enough,
we'll discover
what we have in common
is far more important
than what we don't.

Seesawing back and forth
between Democrats and Republicans
does nothing to move our country forward.
All it does
is pit one half the country
against the other half.
If the only way to win
is to make half the country lose,
have we really won?
As Jim Rohn once said,
“There’s just one problem
with trying to sink half the ship ...
guess what happens to your half.”
Leadership moves the country forward—
leaders who care about all the people,
not just the ones who vote for them.

What if we stopped keeping score?

Who cares

whether a solution

is a Democrat idea

or a Republican idea

or a Libertarian idea

or whatever?

What if public servants

stopped serving a political party

and just served the public?

*Thinking
outside the box*

The health of a nation
is determined
by how those who have power
treat those who have none.

I dream of a nation
where the rich,
the poor,
and the middle class
take the time to listen to one another,
understand one another
and learn from one another.

Don't underestimate
what the poor have to offer.
Their life experiences
give them perspective
that a middle class or rich person
may never have.

Some people want to

stick it to the rich.

But, hey,

if we got honest,

wouldn't all of us like to be rich?

I dream of a nation
where we're honest enough to admit
that something isn't working
and brave enough
to try something else.

For example,
our war on poverty—
how are we doing?

Not so good.

The government gives out welfare benefits.

For some, this is a life saver—literally.

For others,

this is the cause of great resentment.

They believe their hard work

is going to prop up

those who are too lazy to work.

Is that belief true and accurate?

Maybe not,

but one thing is clear:

The current system

is not getting people out of poverty.

We've created a system
where welfare workers
have zero motivation
to lift their clients out of poverty.
If they do,
they get lifted
right out of a job.
In addition,
for many people on welfare,
making more money
actually lowers their standard of living
because of the loss of food stamps,
earned income credit,
health care benefits,
Pell Grants
and so on.
Instead of ridding ourselves of poverty,
we've erected a wall around poverty
that keeps people in
who want to get out.
The harder they work,
the less money they have.

Would you work overtime
in order to get a smaller paycheck?
Would you double your hours at work
in order to get half a paycheck?

Think about that.

For a middle class or rich person
the harder you work,
the more money you have.
But for many poor people,
the harder they work,
the less money they have.

How do we solve this?
We begin with respect.
People in poverty deserve
to be treated with respect
just like anybody else.
They need to be listened to.
Their voices need to be heard.
They have something of value
to offer.

Why would we assume
that just because people are poor
they don't have anything to teach us?

In the process of listening,
I think we'll discover
one size does NOT fit all
when it comes to lifting people
out of poverty.
Every family is different,
and the needs of each individual
should be taken into account.

Before you turn the page,
I need to ask:
Are you willing to think
outside the box?

Consider this:
Who knows the most
about making money—
the rich,
the poor,
or the middle class?

What if it was in the financial interest
of the rich
to teach the poor
how to make money?

What if, for example,
a rich person got a tax rebate
for every family s/he lifts out of poverty?
Doesn't that make more sense
than the government spending all its money
trying to prevent welfare fraud?

Find the rest of this book at

<http://dwightclough.com/books2/dwight-clough-books/dove-for-president/>