

Building Up A Personal Guide to Your Role in Healing a Divided Country

Is it possible to focus on something besides the 2020 election, or which side you're on in the currently divided America? Whether it's Twitter, Facebook, or even a simple catch-up conversation with a friend or relative, we seem to be inevitably drawn to these topics that we can't avoid, and about which we can't agree.

But we can. It just takes some effort.

Following is a tool kit to help you #changetheconversation and be a citizen who is building up rather than arguing, as the current moment feels to many of us.

Commit to Changing the Conversation

Whether it is in your social media posts or your conversations with friends, family, and colleagues, pledge to yourself to make a conscious effort to find other topics to talk about – topics that are positive, and which are productive. That takes effort. It means changing your diet, not what you eat, but what information you consume. This doesn't mean you must only post pictures of cute puppies, but it does mean that you must actively search for content that is outside what we are commonly seeing. Here are some ideas.

1. Read your local newspaper, and seek out information about your local community (are there online publications you've not been previously reading?)
2. Tune into the activities of your local community leaders, and lift them up. It might be your mayor, a nonprofit leader, or a faith leader. It might be the leader of your child's school PTA who is undertaking an interesting initiative.



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3. Refuse to share political, partisan content on social media, and commit to sharing some other kind of news. A few ideas on where to find such nonpartisan content:
 - [Upworthy](#)
 - [We Are The Mighty](#)
 - [Story Corps](#)
4. Pledge to yourself to have three conversations a week about how you are personally trying to change the conversation in your community and among your network of friends and colleagues. Think through ways to bring up topics other than national politics. For instance:
 - Begin a conversation with, “I just read an article about a local leader...”
 - Scan through [“How Do I Talk to Someone I Don’t Agree With”](#).
 - Never forget that humor helps build connections. Even a silly “dad joke” can break tension and build rapport, which is your ultimate goal.

Commit to Taking Action in Your Community

As tired as we might be, and as much as we want to say, “I give up, I’m out. I’m just checking out,” we all know that quitting isn’t an option. We all deeply love our country, and we all believe in our hearts that we should be working to help our communities and our country. But that can feel overwhelming, and it’s easy to think, “why would my efforts make a difference?” The truth is, we can make a difference, just by showing up.

Pledge to yourself (like a New Year’s resolution), to do one thing each week which is an act of service in your community. And commit to recruiting two or three friends to join you. Here are some ideas:

- [Millions of Conversations](#) has compiled their [“Mutual Aid Hub,”](#) an expansive list of grassroots, community-building organizations and mutual aid programming across major cities in the U.S. where you can volunteer.
- Find Volunteering Opportunities near you with the [United Way](#), or your [local food bank](#), or through [VolunteerMatch](#).

Finally, take heart and have faith. As we declared when we began this work:

We share our love of our country, and we pledge to work for a stronger democracy and a more unified country. America will be what we make it.

