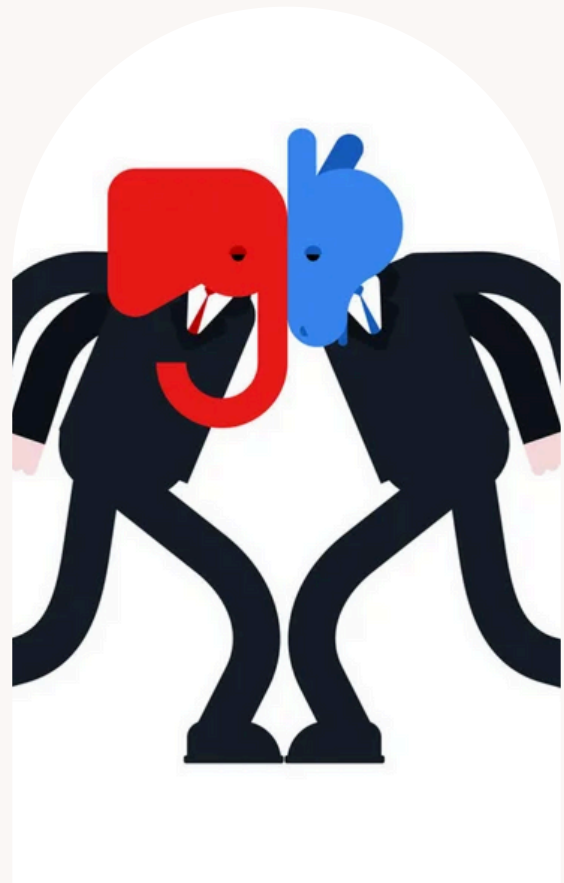


Weekly Newsletter

Let's Reexamine Partisanship



Why do we instinctively feel compelled to be included in a group? Tribalism has been around since the beginning of human life. This was born of necessity as it was much easier to conquer an individual than a group. In theory, the United States of America is a group of states with a common goal. We also group together—if not physically, then philosophically—by religious and political affiliation as well as many other “identities,” such as gender identity and race. This can have a backlash effect, which divides otherwise cohesive individuals while clumping others together.



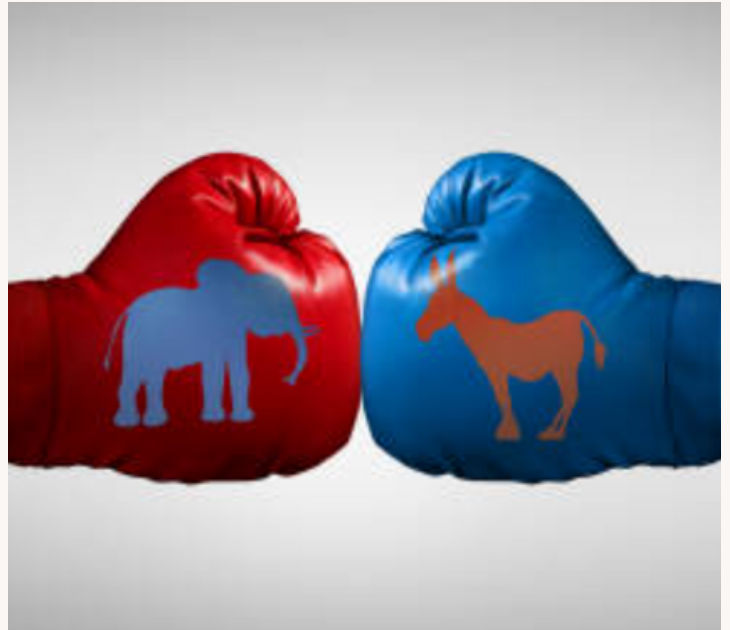
If you think you've never seen such division among Americans, you're right. Social media and a divided media are the main culprits. Social media was great for connecting people who had been out of touch. At first, people naturally followed a type of social media etiquette that included politeness and respectful dialogue. But soon, the impersonal nature of posting rather than making your point face to face got the better of some folks. Making vicious attacks on groups or individuals while hiding behind a keyboard became too tempting.





Another key to divisiveness is media outlets that offer conflicting versions of the “truth” depending on which political party they want to promote. Individuals are encouraged to pick a side rather than to have original thoughts or consider the ideas of others. Three years ago, I created an online podcast to address vitriol and one-sided opinions that leave each side refusing to listen to other viewpoints. The Mouthwash Talk Show, which is Live on Facebook every Tuesday at 9 p.m. EST, features a Democrat, a Republican and a Libertarian discussing current issues. I host the show, and we listen to and respect everyone’s opinion even if we don’t agree. Our viewership has been growing and continues to fulfill our mission.

While it’s good to identify with a political party that shares most of your values, it should not take the place of doing your own critical thinking about each issue. I started a Facebook group some years ago called “People over Politics.” Members from all parties participate. I post polls with questions that challenge party control tactics and blind party loyalty. We emphasize considering others’ ideas, abandoning groupthink, and thinking as an individual.



As a Republican, I agree with most of the positions and core values of my party. However, I am always open to listening, to considering other ideas, and to engaging in conversation with those I disagree with. I have invited my opponent, Andre Carson, to a series of debates and truly look forward to our discourse so that Hoosiers can make an informed choice in November.

Meanwhile, I encourage all of you to buck the current trend of incivility and listen respectfully to others’ opinions. The only way we can conquer divisiveness in our nation is to change our ways as individuals, one by one.

REACH OUT
FOR A CHAT

Let's chat!

LET'S DO
SOMETHING-
TOGETHER

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