

p.xii Whether you believe our country's problem is generational, geographical, or partisan, the most important thing to know about the polarization in American politics today is that we are choosing it. We are choosing division. We are choosing conflict. We are choosing to turn our civic sphere into a circus. We are choosing all of this, and we can choose otherwise.

p.26 We've always sought a way to sort ourselves. As our world shrinks and former ways of sorting ourselves become antiquated and clearly understood as harmful, we've homed in on political affiliation as a legitimate dividing line. Our elected officials have seized on this partisan polarization and believe the "team" is the top priority. Campaigns have become multimillion-dollar enterprises that approach elections the same way they might approach trying to influence our choices of soft drinks or shoes. They seek to make us brand loyal, and we're falling for it.

p.53 We have to let go of the idea that there is too much at stake or that one issue is too important to honestly and realistically question our positions on other issues. Abandoning our whys and allowing politicians or single-policy goals to stand in for our values keeps the stakes too high. It means we can never focus on a bigger perspective where values such as liberty and equality are dynamically playing out across our communities and country-- instead we must be willing to sacrifice *everything* for this election or that legislative fight that has come to represent all we hold dear.

p.73 The word *politics* has also become a catchall for any human interaction we don't enjoy.

p.78 We can move to a more productive outlook when we realize that our personal values are not lost if we collectively make decisions that deviate from those values. We can hold on to our values without needing public validation of them. We can recognize that different considerations are at work in the public debate than in our private lives. We can seek out expressions of our values beyond the public sphere. We can recognize that sometimes more good comes out of expressing our values through private action than through public debate.

p.90 Imagine the transformative impact of viewing our fellow citizens as though our big, messy country wouldn't be complete without them, as though we all belong here together, as though the challenge of working through a diversity of perspectives is an inherent, beautiful part of the American experience--of the human experience.

p.93 This focus on conflict - as opposed to giving grace to foster connection and fruitful dialogue - has resulted in our unhealthy obsession with equivalency. If everything is defined in contrast to the other side and if conflict is the goal, then every point should have an equal counterpoint...Our media has decided that presenting the news fairly means that every side is equally represented. This creates the impression that every side is equally right (or wrong) as the case may be.

p.136-7 When we fear discomfort in our bodies and mind, we lose the sense that, fundamentally, we're okay. We need the security and resilience that accompany our willingness to feel discomfort if we are ever to reach out to our neighbors in the spirit of problem-solving for the greater good. Without that security and resilience, we stay in our corners, which leads to gridlock. It also leads to avoiding and trying to escape every problem that doesn't have an easy solution, a clear hero and villain, and a predictable plot that we know will wrap up shortly. Our avoidance of discomfort is ultimately an avoidance of taking our places in history, and it is the reason that so many problems with American culture and government are spiraling.

From a listener: "We don't just avoid the bad stuff; we avoid feeling good stuff, too. We choose ignorance, we choose indifference, we let other people make decisions. We let other people have the control and then get mad when other people have control!"

p.144 When we move our bodies into positions that require a new level of flexibility or strength, we experience discomfort. But it is the discomfort that creates healing in the body. It is the discomfort that facilitates growth of our strength and flexibility. Discomfort is different from pain.

p.150 We think about political correctness as taking care in the language that we use to describe people and ideas that are not intuitive to us. We will happily learn how different people groups want to be described and will adopt those words. This doesn't have to mean we agree with them on various fraught issues, such as gender fluidity, but it does mean we become willing students out of respect for our fellow humans (and for us that means thinking of them as our fellow children of God.) We want to show them respect through our language, just as we want to be shown respect through their language. We don't lose anything by taking care with our words. In fact, we gain new relationships, new knowledge, and new methods to express our care and consideration for others.

p.153 In political discussions, we need a reminder that we won't lose anything if we are wrong about our facts, if the person we're talking with disagrees with us, or if we apologize.

p.155 Prioritize being kind over being right. Treat people online as though they are friends. Talk about people who disagree with you politically with the kind of love you show your family members. Remember that you are part of something so much bigger than one election, one vote, and one law. Remember that life isn't happening to provide you the opportunity to write one long Yelp review. We need one another. We belong together.

p.178 Conflict sells, but conciliation creates progress.