

Welcome to Community by Conversation!



POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT PROJECT
POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY CLASS (PS 304)
ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF FLC
RESTORE THE BALANCE, LA PLATA COUNTY BRANCH

Land Acknowledgment

The land that Fort Lewis College is situated upon is the ancestral land and territory of the Nuuchiu (Ute) people who were forcibly removed by the United States Government. We also acknowledge that this land is connected to the communal and ceremonial spaces of the Jicarilla Apache (Apache), Pueblos of New Mexico, Hopi Sinom (Hopi), and Diné (Navajo) Nations. It is important to acknowledge this setting because the narratives of the lands in this region have long been told from dominant perspectives, without full recognition of the original land stewards who continue to inhabit and connect with this land.

In this workshop we hope to share conversation strategies necessary to meaningfully engage with each other on important issues and topics; such as this topic of the lands which we are standing and sitting on. Thank you for your attention.

Welcome from our co-hosts!





Welcome



Goals, norms, and a few notes on the psychology of polarization



3 rounds of better conversation tactics and discussion practice

Active listening for understanding

Finding common ground by breaking stereotypes

Reframing to resonate

Event outline

Goal: Bridging Divides



How can we amend our personal and political divisions?

- Intentional conversations help us **better understand** the other side—and identify our **shared values**.
- **Correcting misperceptions** about party supporters **reduces animus** towards the other side (Iyengar et al. 2019).

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Suggested Conversation Norms

Remain curious and don't assume. Let's take this time to learn, not reinforce our own ideas.

Be respectful and mindful of body language, tone, knowledge levels, and backgrounds.

Emotions are normal and expected; take space when needed.

Disagree with the idea, not the person.

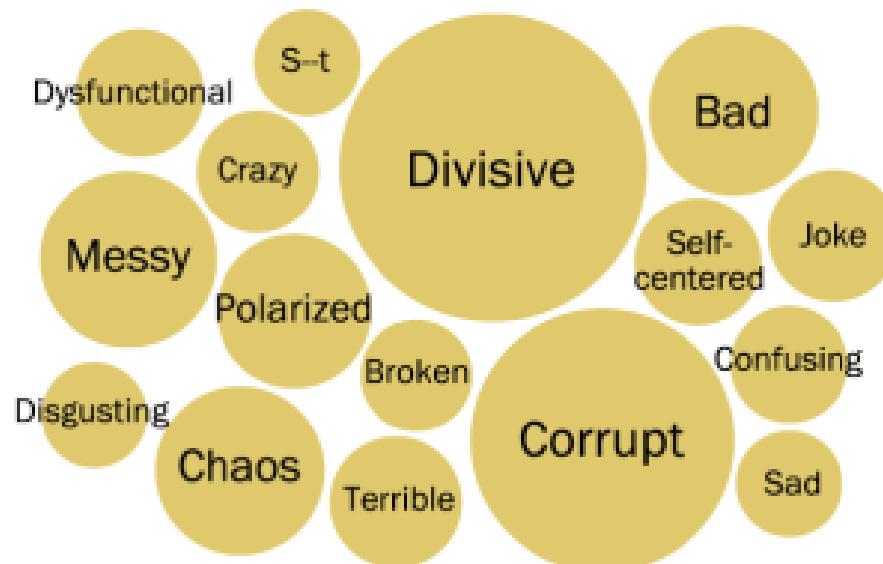
Everyone's opinion is valued and essential. Be mindful to not monopolize the conversation.

Introductions:

- Introduce yourself
- Share why you came today
- Let your partners know which conversation practices are particularly important to you and why

Americans' top descriptions of the current state of politics

What one word or phrase would you use to describe politics in the U.S. these days? [open end]



Note: Circle size indicates relative frequency of a word in responses to an open-ended question. Words with the same root are combined (e.g., "divisive," "division"). Top 16 words shown. For more details, read Chapter 11 and the survey topline.

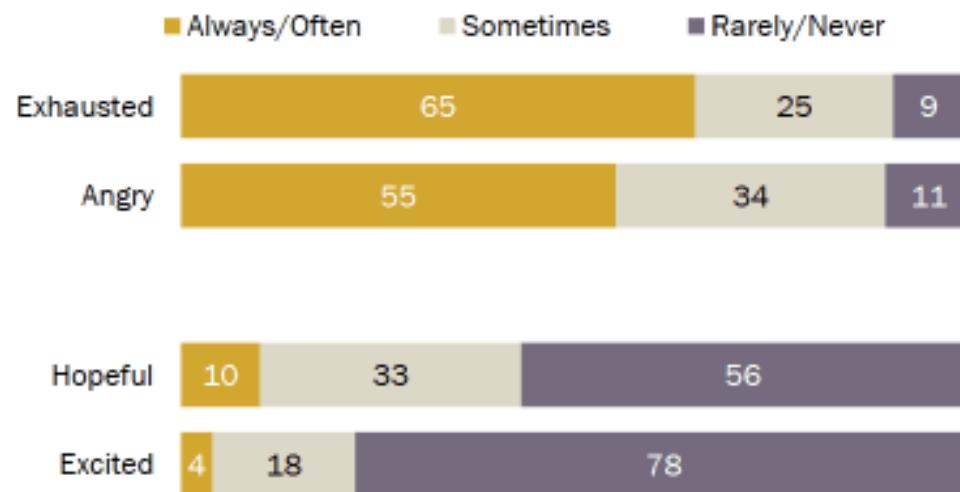
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 10-16, 2023.
"Americans' Dismal Views of the Nation's Politics"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

We have to talk...

How Americans feel when they think about politics

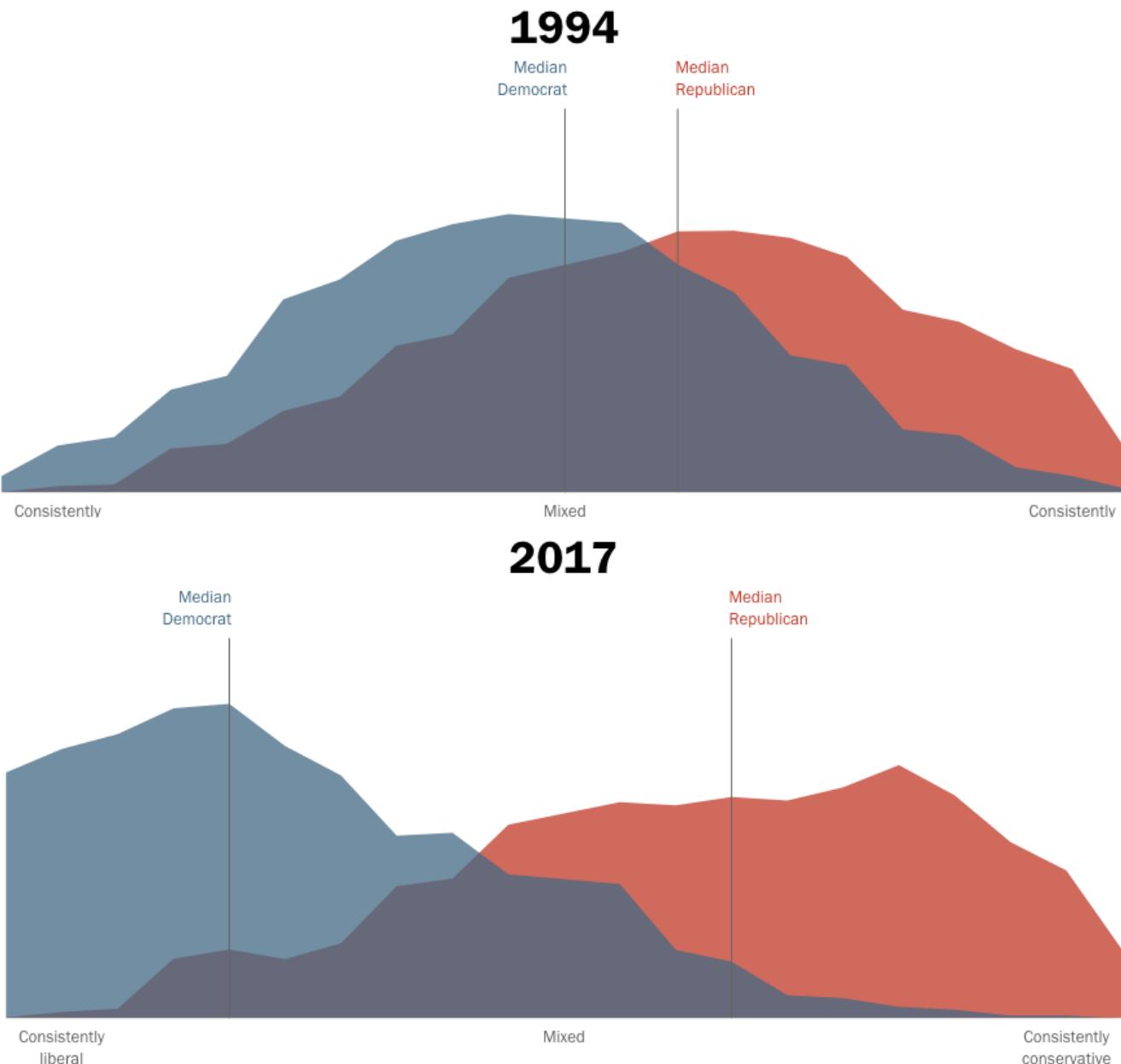
% who ___ feel each of the following when thinking about politics these days



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 10-16, 2023.
"Americans' Dismal Views of the Nation's Politics"

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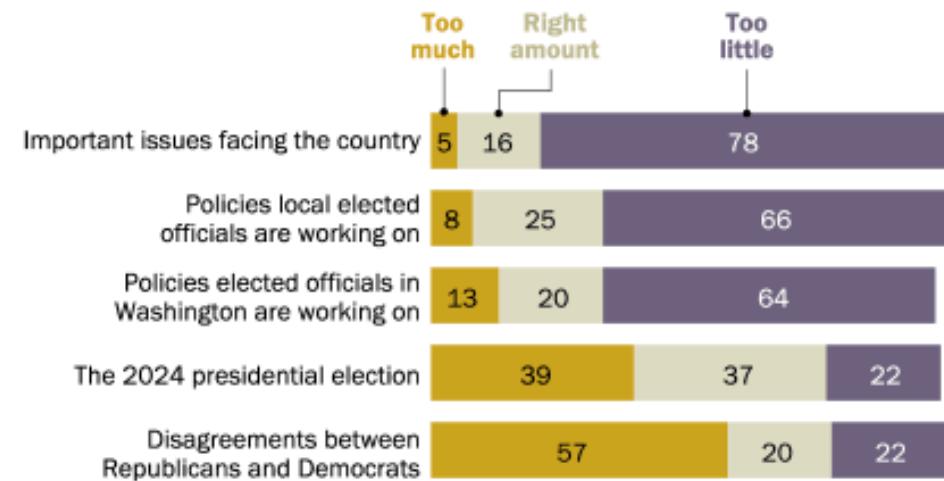
The shift in the American public's political values |

Pew Research Center

The problem

Majorities of Americans say partisan fighting gets too much attention, while issues and policy get too little

% who say there is ____ (of) attention paid to each of the following in our country these days



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 10-16, 2023.
"Americans' Dismal Views of the Nation's Politics"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

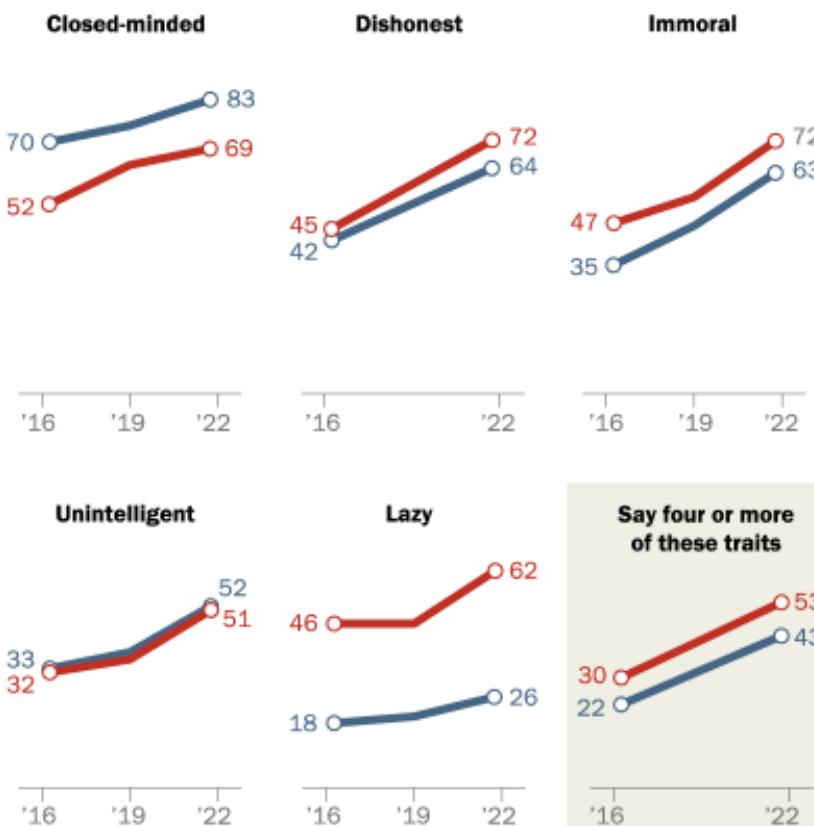
Highly Negative Views of American Politics |

Pew Research Center

Growing shares of both Republicans and Democrats say members of the other party are more immoral, dishonest, closed-minded than other Americans

% who say members of the *other* party are a lot/somewhat more ___ compared to other Americans

- Republicans say Democrats are more ...
- Democrats say Republicans are more ...



Note: Partisans do not include those who lean to each party.

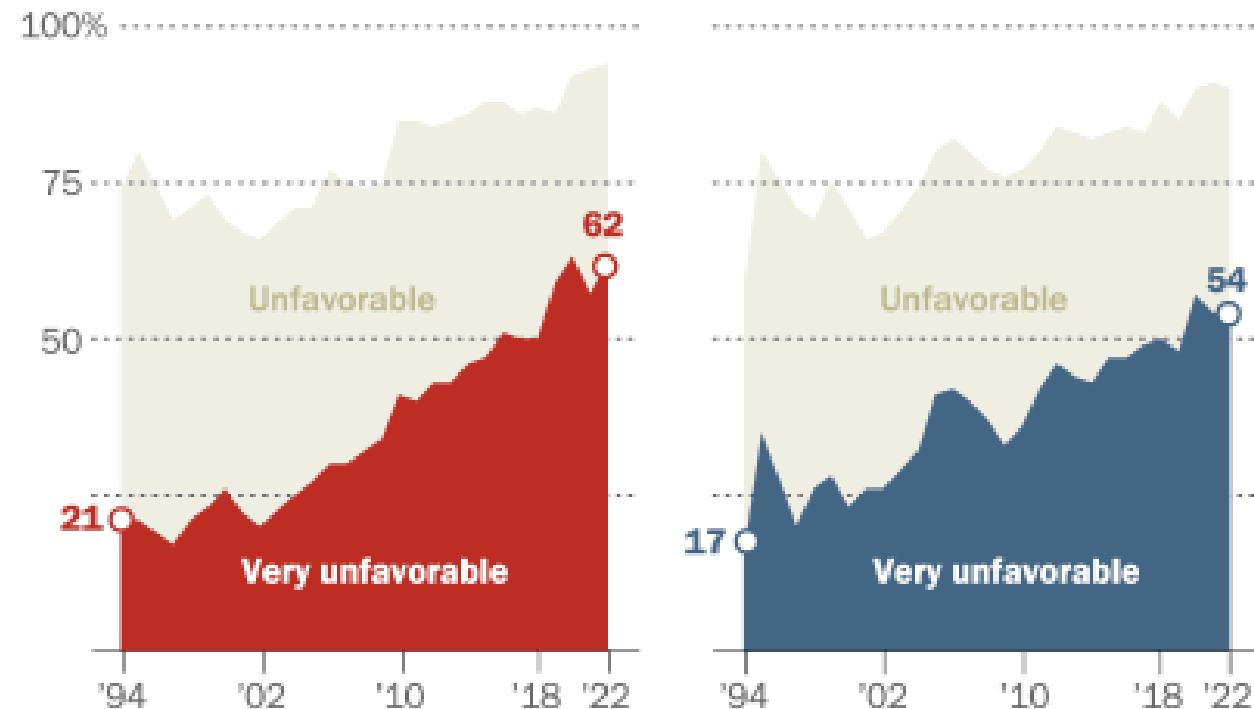
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 27-July 4, 2022.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Two decades of rising partisan antipathy

% of *Republicans* with a(n) ___ view of the Democratic Party

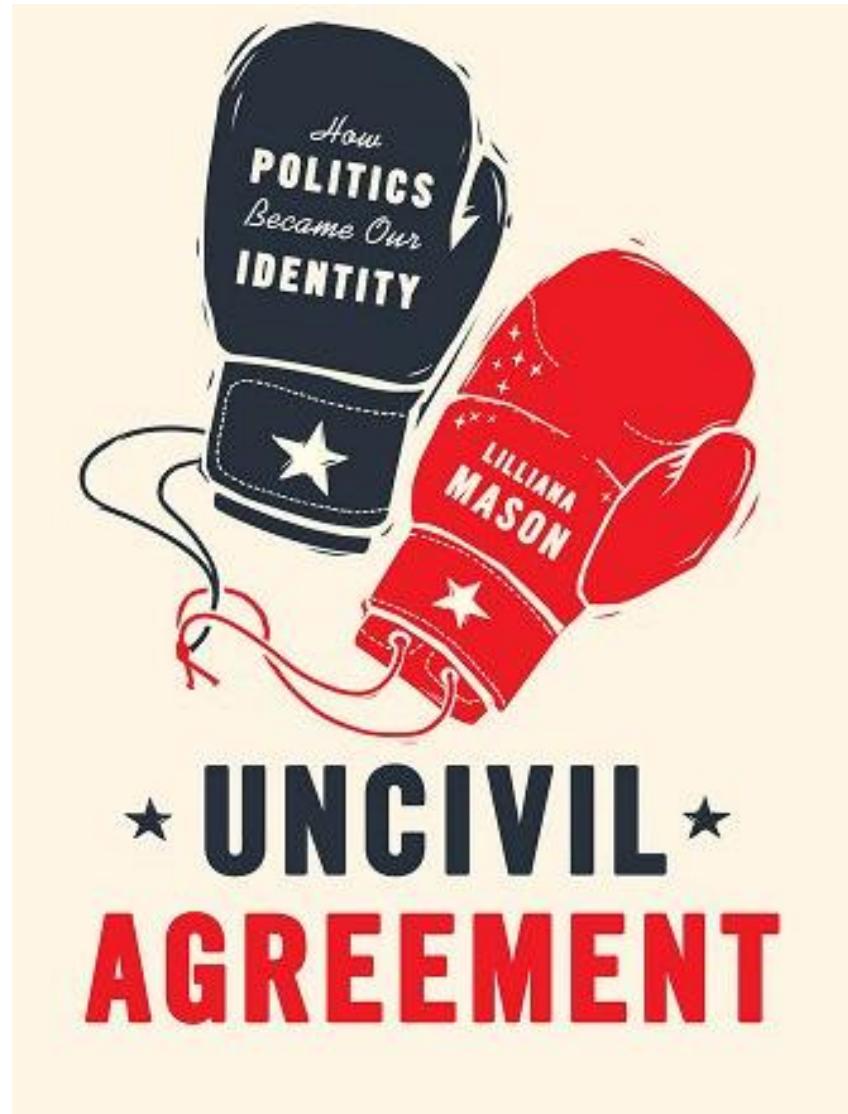
% of *Democrats* with a(n) ___ view of the Republican Party



Note: Based on partisans and does not include those who lean to each party.

Source: Yearly averages of survey data from Pew Research Center American Trends Panel (2020-2022) and Pew Research Center phone surveys (1994-2019).

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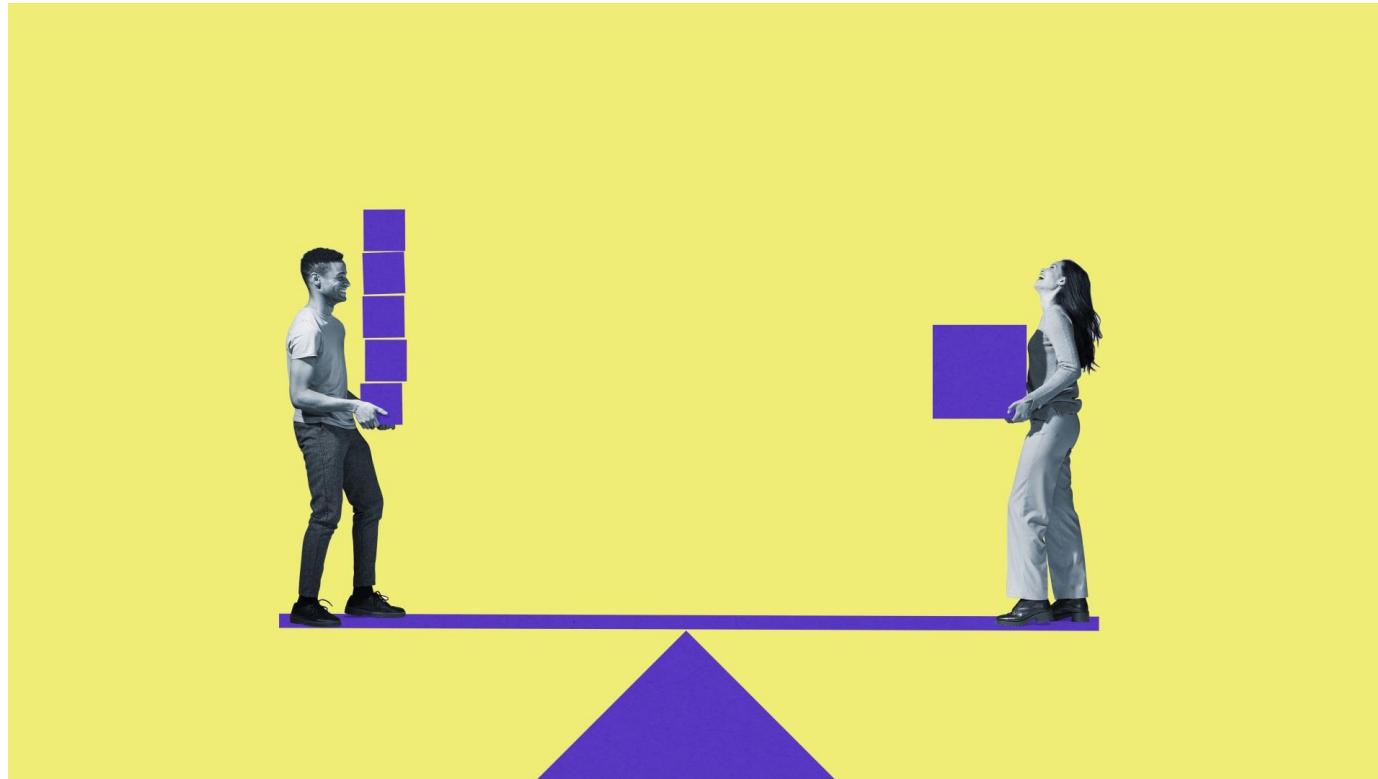


Affective polarization

Ideological divisions not as big as assumed, but we don't need policy disagreement for derogation

Affective polarization: our dislike (hatred?) of the other side

The 5:1 ratio



Gottman's magic ratio:

For **every negative interaction**, need about **five positive interactions** to offset and refill reservoir of trust and goodwill

Fight right!



Insight from psychology of successful relationships:

- **Anger** can help solve problems
- **Contempt** is the relationship kiss of death

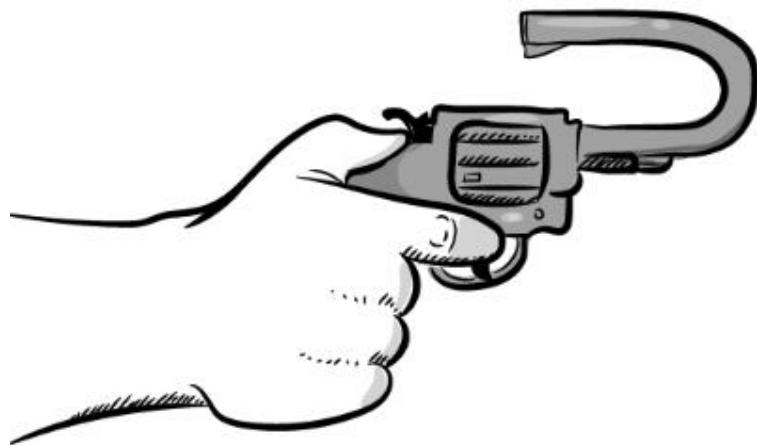
Do not engage in “culture of contempt” (Brooks 2018)

- Only serves pundits and political elites
- Harms your health!

Trying to win or convince? You're likely going to trigger the backfire effect...

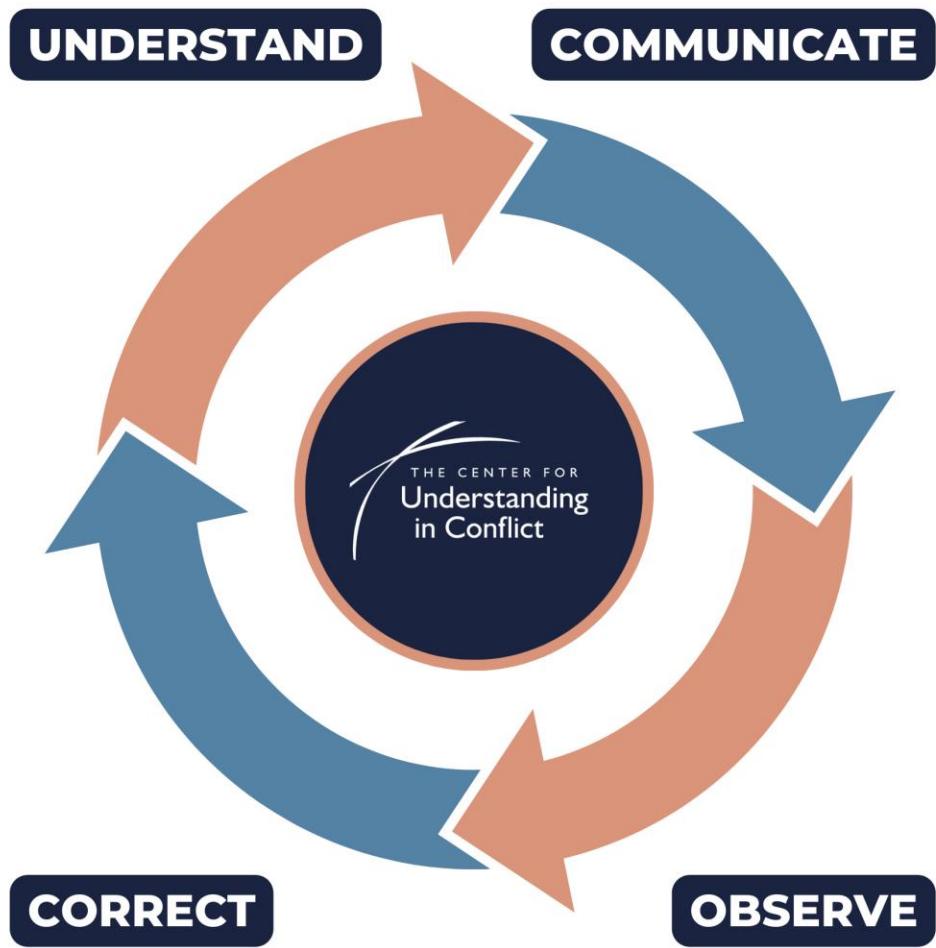
It's called the
backfire effect.

and it's a well-documented
psychological behavior.



But there are biological reasons as well:
the amygdala of your brain is screaming
“BATTLE STATIONS.”





Active listening

Understand: Deliberately focus on what the person is saying in order to understand their points

Communicate: Share what you have understood

Observe: Take note of their reaction to check what you got right

Correct: Update your understanding and check again

Repeat as needed to fully understand your partner's perspective

Asking open-ended questions



Closed-ended questions lead to a short “yes” or “no” response to your words

Open-ended questions let people express themselves in their own words

DR. JOHN GOTTMAN'S SKILLS FOR ACTIVE LISTENING

1. FOCUS ON BEING INTERESTED, NOT INTERESTING
2. START BY ASKING QUESTIONS
3. LOOK FOR COMMONALITIES
4. TUNE IN WITH ALL YOUR ATTENTION
5. COMMUNICATE YOU ARE LISTENING WITH A NOD/SOUND
6. PARAPHRASE WHAT THE SPEAKER SAYS
7. VALIDATE THE SPEAKER'S EMOTIONS
8. MAINTAIN EYE CONTACT
9. LET GO OF YOUR OWN AGENDA
10. TURN OFF THE TV

The Gottman Institute

Your turn!

Ask your student conversation expert any questions about active listening

Choose a topic from the conversation card deck

Take turns sharing your views and engaging in respectful, engaged, reflective listening

Stereotypes vs. reality

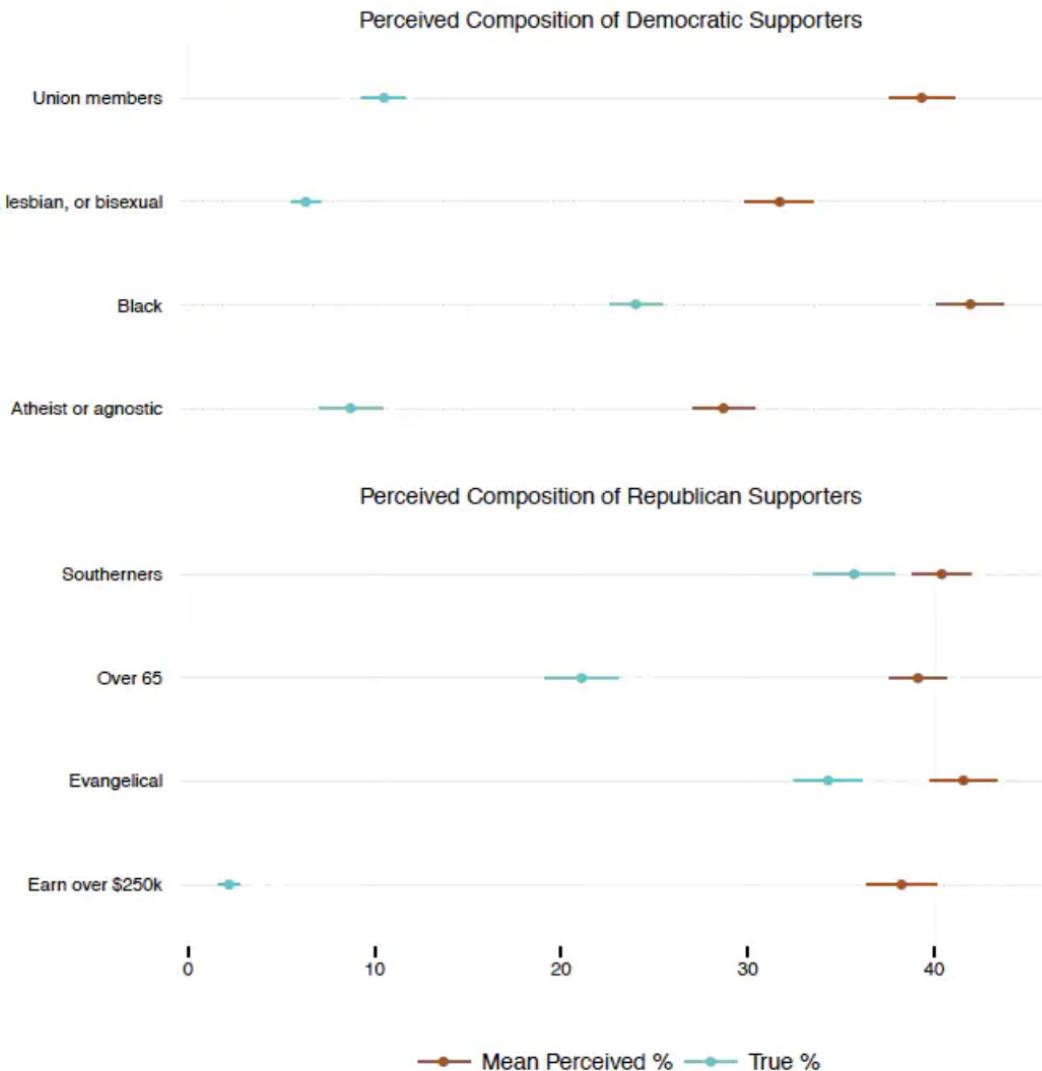


Monkey Cage

Democrats are gay, Republicans are rich: Our stereotypes of political parties are amazingly wrong



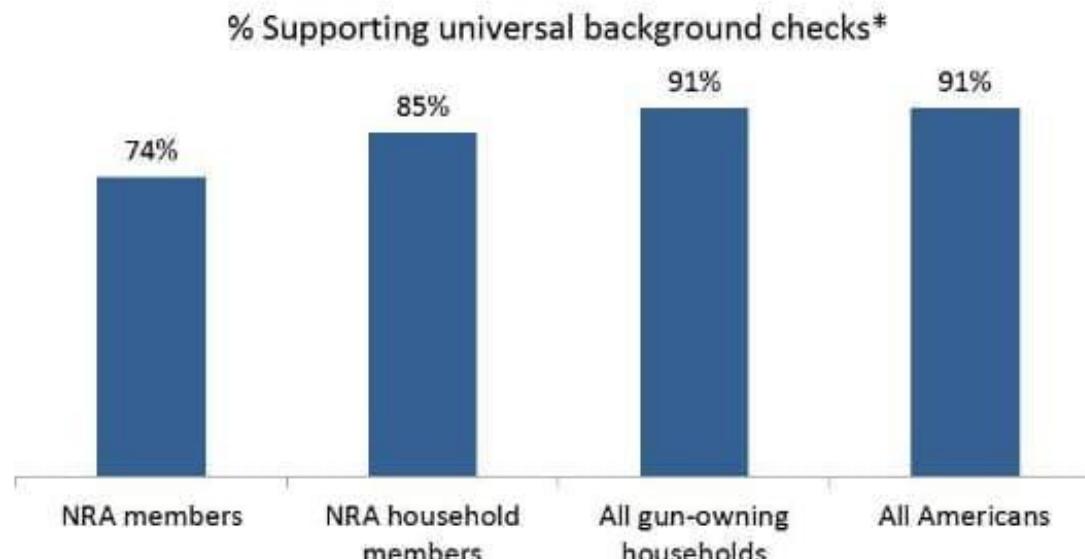
Figure 1: People Overestimate the Share of Party-Stereotypical Groups in the Parties



Graph by Doug Ahler and Gaurav Sood.

Be surprising!

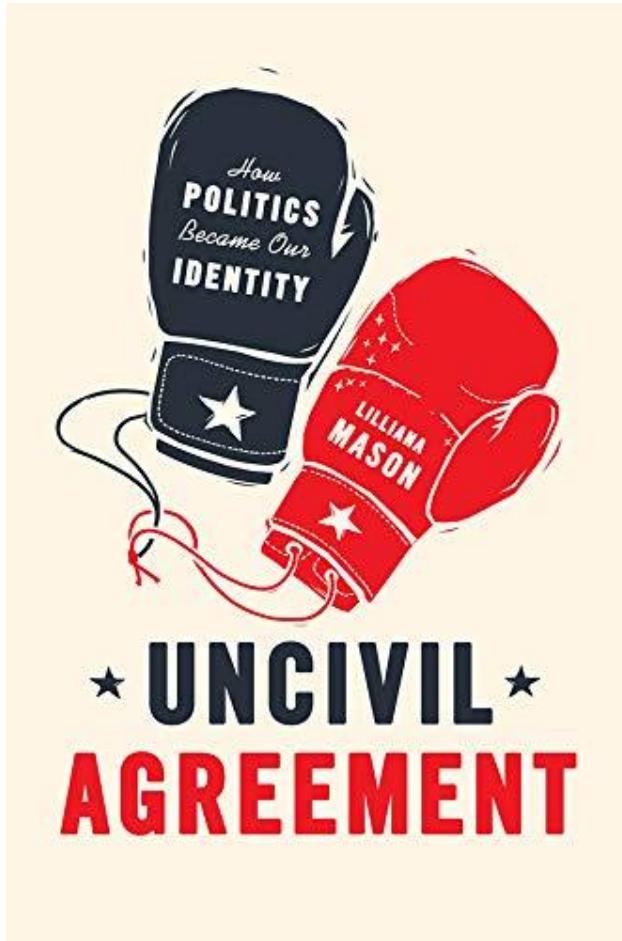
Do NRA members support universal background checks?



*Question wording varies. See original sources for exact wording and methodology.
Sources: Jan. 2013 Bloomberg School of Public Health survey (NRA members); Jan. 2013 CBS News/New York Times poll (NRA household members). March 7-10 Washington Post-ABC News poll (Gun-owning households and all Americans).



Shared goals, threats, and values



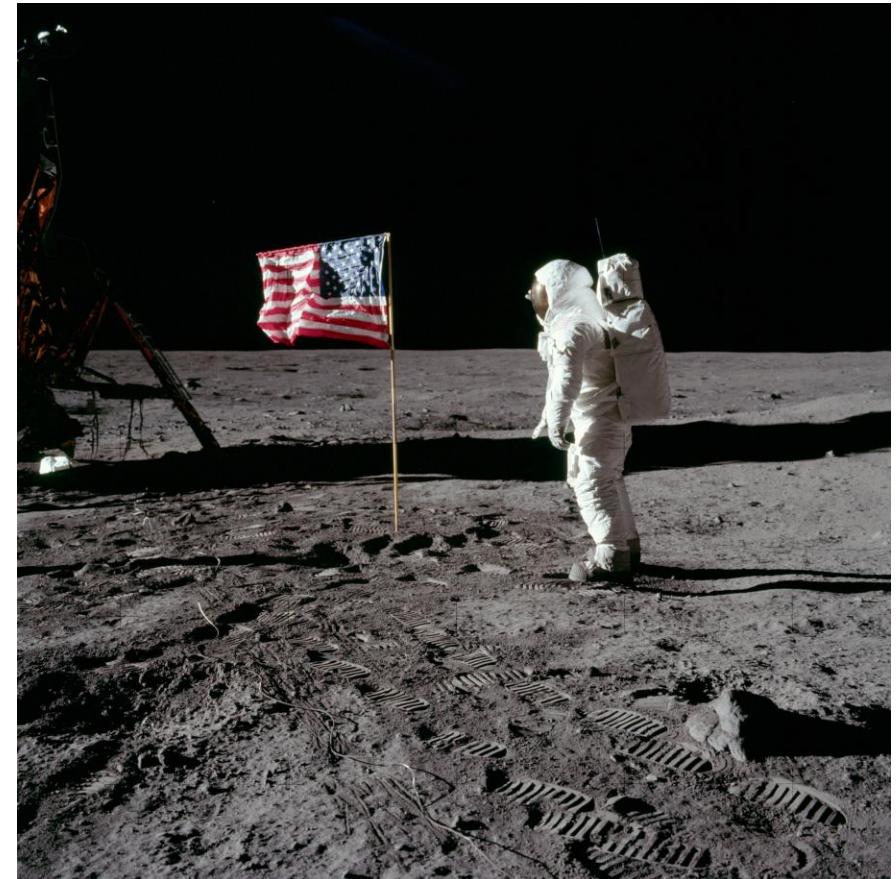
Easy to focus on differences

There are a lot of similarities!

And lots of things to accomplish

“Couldn’t we at least...?”

Common fears and threats



Moral Reframing



A brief description of the strategy of moral reframing by Rob Willer, moral reframing researcher

Issue

Moral Value

Same-Sex Marriage

Patriotism

National Health Insurance

Purity

Military Spending

Equality

Official English

Fairness

Your turn!

How could you use **reframing** to expand your message to new communities?

Join RTB's Upcoming Events!

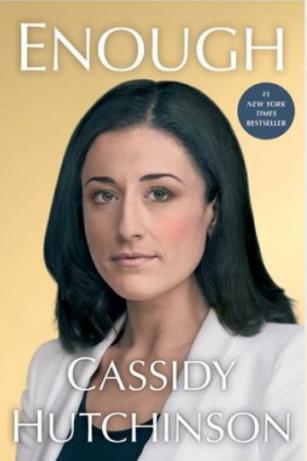
RESTORE THE BALANCE
= BOOK CLUB =

Wednesday | Apr 17 | 6:00 PM

Purple Cliffs, Room 200 (above Sunnyside Market)

More info at
restorethebalance.org

Pick up your own copy of **Enough** today at Marias's Bookshop, and mention the RTB Book Club to receive a 15% discount!



Restore the Balance's

SPRING MIXER



04.23.24

5:30PM @
ESOTERRA CIDERWORKS
CATERING SERVICES PROVIDED BY MISABEL



Thank you!



**Better Conversations
Tactics PEP website**

