



Worthy Quotation Guideposts

Stephen Covey – 5th Habit

“Seek first to understand before being understood”

Seth Godin – Author, Entrepreneur, Teacher

“There are countless ways to make a point. You can clearly demonstrate that you are angry, smart, concerned, stronger, faster or more prepared than the person you’re engaging with.

But making a point isn’t the same thing as making a difference.

To make a difference, we need the practical empathy to realize that the other person doesn’t know what you know, doesn’t believe what you believe and might not want what you want. We have to move from where we are and momentarily understand where they are.

When we make a point, we reject all of this. When we make a point, we establish our power in one way or another, but we probably don’t change very much.

Change comes about when the story the other person tells themselves begins to change. If all you do is make a point, you’ve handed them a story about yourself. When you make a change, you’ve helped them embrace a new story about themselves.”

And even though it’s more fun (and feels safe, in some way) to make a point, if we really care, we’ll do the hard work to make a difference instead.”

David Brooks – Political & Cultural Commentator and Author

“My theory of social change is that society changes when a small group of people find a better way to live, and the rest of us copy them.”

WELCOME!

BUILDING BRIDGES Group at The Pinehills

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.

Cohort 4 Session 1 on March 6, 2023

Arlene Samuel, Terry McManus, and Rick Frazier, Facilitators

BuildingBridgesPH@gmail.com

www.BuildingBridgesPH.com

Session 1 – *TONIGHT*

INTRODUCTIONS and FOUNDATIONS

- Welcome and Introductions [Rick]
- Foundation Principles for Civil Discourse [Terry]
- Introduce Small Group Discussions [Rick]
- Small Group Breakouts [All]
- Share and Summarize Learnings from Breakouts [Terry and Rick]
- Expectations and preparations for the next session [Rick]

Welcome and Introductions

Introductions

Group Overview

- Why do the group?
- Partisan Divide Overview

March to May 2023 Roadmap

Monday Nights 6:30-8:30 pm

Define Problem, Select Issue, Learn and Agree on Methods

[0] – Pre 3/6

Registration, Issue Ranking,
Political Typology Survey

[1] – 3/6 (Cabana)

Introduction & Foundations
– Methods, Role Plays, and
Practice

Apply Methods to the SELECTED ISSUE

[2] – 3/20 (Rec Room)

Caucuses

[3] – 4/3 (Cabana)

Fishbowls

[4] – 4/10 (Cabana)

Small Groups

Conclude Learnings

[5] – 5/1 (Cabana)

Small Group Report Outs,
Wrap-up, and Summarize
Learnings

[6] – 5/15

Optional Feedback Session
on zoom

Why do the club?

- Threatening issues go unresolved with worsening impact and wider partisan division – Democracy suffers
- Division plays out “real” badly in all circles
- Multiple organizations have developed methods to help remedy the situation, but these methods are sparsely known and seldom implemented
- Influence participants to become better informed uniters and depolarizers within their influence circles – family, friends, neighbors, communities, organizations, cities, states and the federal government

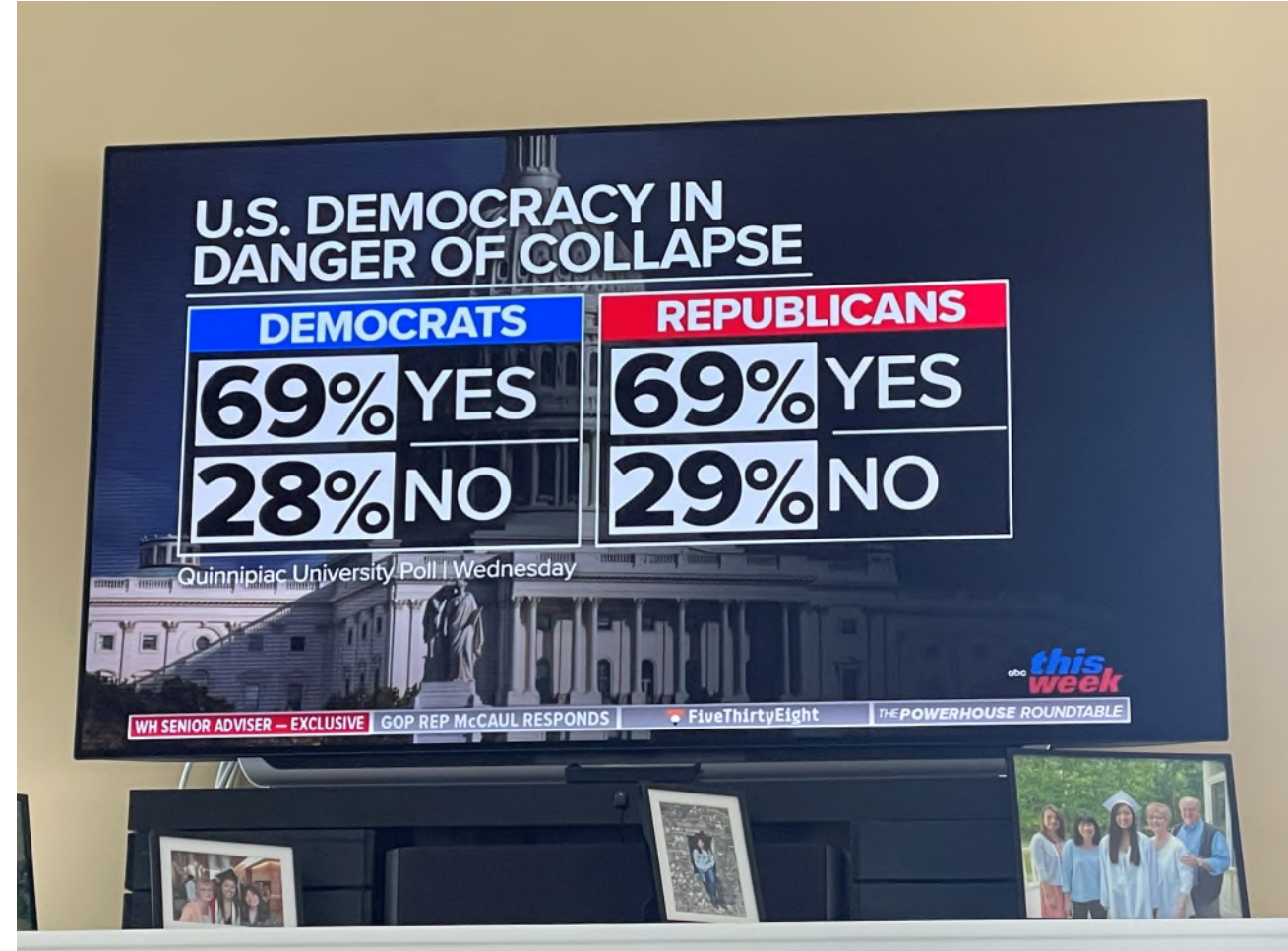
How might you benefit?

- Enrich (depth and breadth) your understanding of the selected issue – *both* your view and other views
- Identify and build common ground on our selective divisive issue
- Learn ways to disagree without being disagreeable
- Develop skills to become a uniting and depolarizing presence in your daily life

Pure Disgust → Angry Disagreement → Civil Dialogue

Overview of the Divide Problem

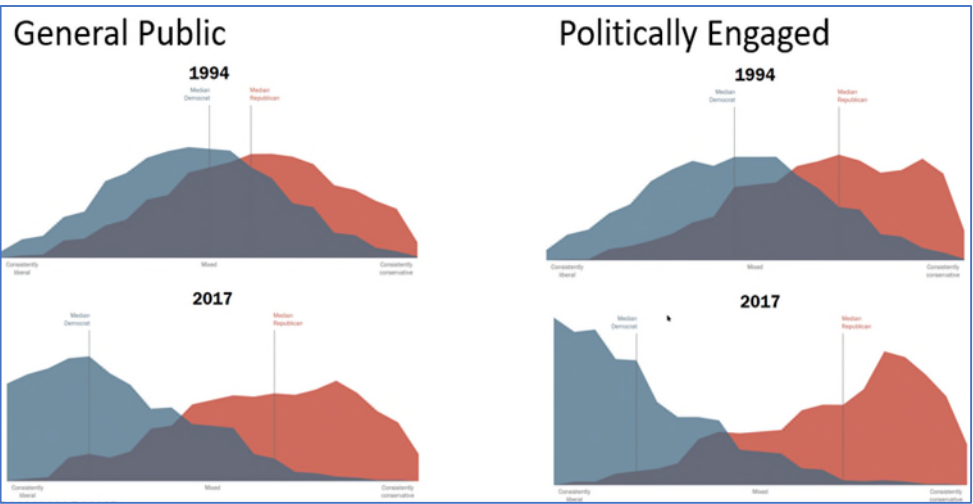
- Are actual views on issues really widening?
- Are we really that divided in the US?
- Are divide trends getting worse?





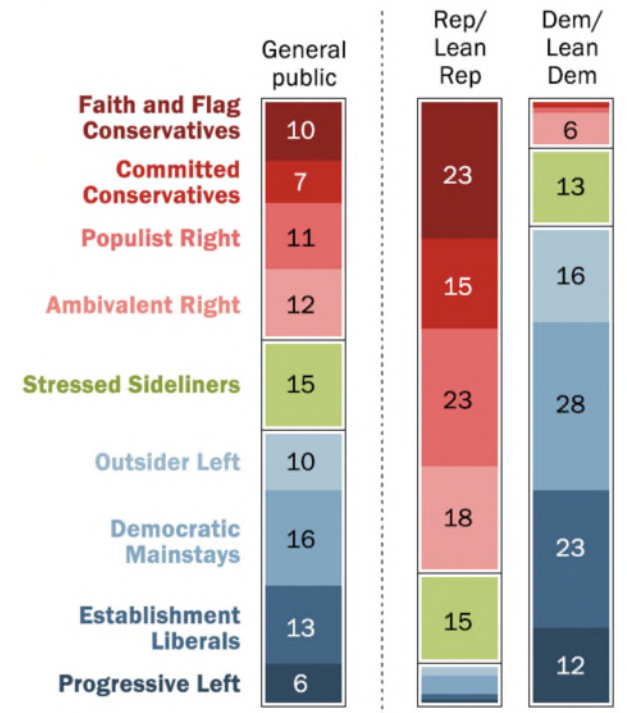
Are actual views on issues really widening?

YES! Very real, getting worse, and very “nuanced”, Pew Research Data



The 2021 political typology

% of ___ who are ...

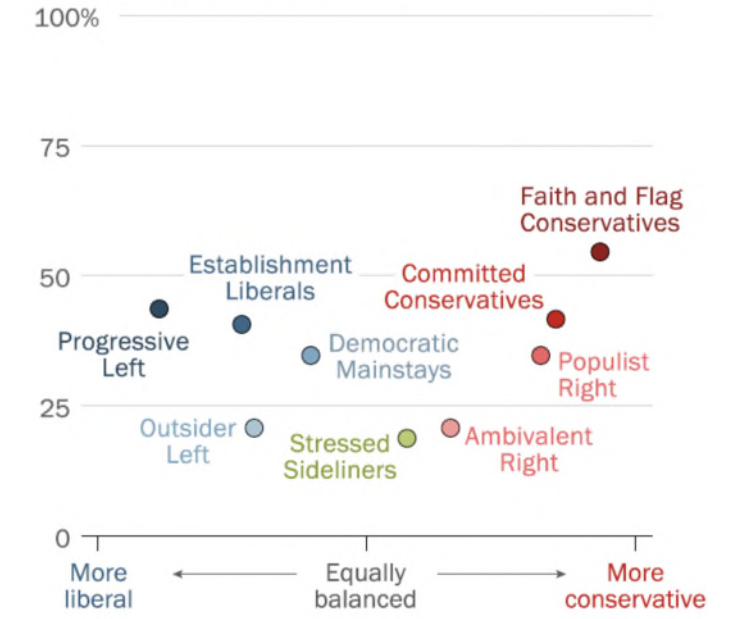


Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 8-18, 2021.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Groups in the ideological middle show lower levels of engagement with politics

% who say they follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time

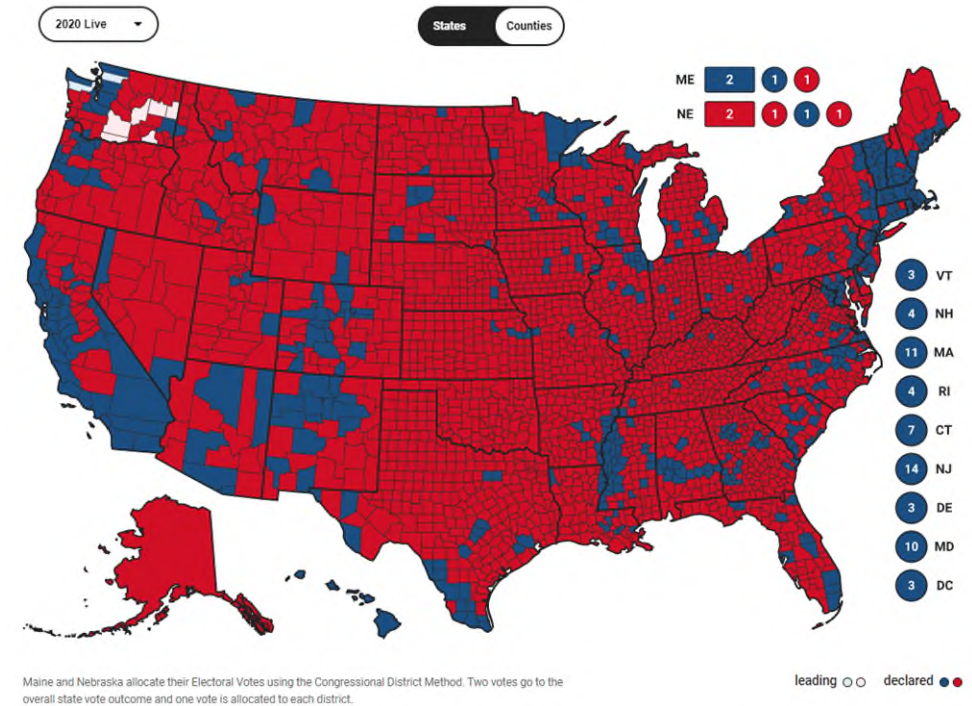


Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted July 8-18, July 26-Aug. 8, and Sept. 13-19, 2021.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Are we really that divided in the US?

- YES! No major changes by county 2016 to 2020 - blues bluer, reds mixed.
- The recent rise of extremism at both ends of the political spectrum
- Identity politics is rising (who are you voting against?)
- Clashing freedoms, reduced obligations
- Desire to build communities, trusting relationships, and deep understanding is waning
- Much more ...



Are divide trends getting worse?

- **A never-ending and overflowing list of dividing issues**
 - Racism, climate change, inflation, voting, border wall, immigration, bipartisan cooperation, tariffs, economy, foreign policy, healthcare, race relations, income inequality, gender issues, role of government, etc
- **Several other explosive biggies**
 - Polarization moving from “issue-based” to “identity-based” (Psychology Today, 9/5/2018 Joe Pierre)
 - Everyone is shouting. No one is listening. No one feels “listened to”.
 - Survival mode on personal issues (Lives, Livelihoods, Liberties, etc)
 - No longer a shared US vision – alternative universes are more evident than ever
 - Only agree on “15 minutes from oblivion due to the *evil other side*”
- **Dividing Accelerators Abound**
 - Media – Amplification by Social Media, Media bias for extremes (for viewers), echo chambers
 - Mistrust and competence of institutions – government, non-profits private sector
 - Shifting demographics – urban/rural, age, race, economic, mfg/office, income, globalization
 - Disinformation and Misinformation everywhere

Foundation Principles for Civil Discourse

Overview of Principles for Civil Discourse
Group Discussion on Principles Implementation

Principles for Civil Discourse

What is it all ABOUT?

- ***Increase* self AWARENESS**
- ***BE* open minded**
- ***Prioritize* relationships OVER ideas**
- ***Seek* to UNDERSTAND with depth**
- **TAKE** winning off the table

AWARENESS – Increase your own self-awareness

- Examine yourself to define who you are, why you think the way you do.
- What values and attitudes do you bring to the conversation?

What has influenced you? What are the values that mold your world view?

Ask yourself, am I open to carefully consider the opinions and ideas of others?

Am I willing to examine my own beliefs? Am I able to answer questions about my views and critically assess my own answers?

Am I able to admit that I may be wrong?

How aware am I of my feelings?



BE open-minded

- Open ourselves to the notion that views opposed to mine may also have merit

We must come to a conversation with an open mind. We have come to learn and to grow. We have come to reach outside of our safety bubble. To do so, we must come humbly with the recognition and the ability to say, you may have a point!

Maybe my view is imperfect. Needs some alteration



Prioritize relationships OVER ideas

- Just because we disagree about a particular topic, or even many topics, the value of human relationships far outweighs anyone's opinion
- Through conversation, we seek to find what we have in common, and where our humanity intersects

Of course, all of our opinions don't align. We all come from different backgrounds.

It is simply unproductive to think about others in terms of our differences of opinions and to allow those differences to color our relationships.

Each of us so much more than our opinions about a particular topic. In our relationships with others, it is far more productive to focus on our similarities than our differences.



Seek to UNDERSTAND with depth

- Unleash your sincere curiosity!

Tell me what info supports your view.

Tell me how you arrived at your thinking

How do your values, your background and experiences inform your point of view on this issue?

Am I able to admit that I may be wrong?

If your view were enacted, what do you think the consequences would be?

How would your view be enacted?

TAKE winning off the table

- You are not here to convert
- You are here to help others understand your story

Listen - No interrupting. Resist the temptation to impose our own view while the other has the floor.

Acknowledge the speaker's comments. I'm hearing you say,...is that right?

When it's our turn - the goal is to present our view respectfully

Principles for Civil Discourse

What is it all ABOUT?

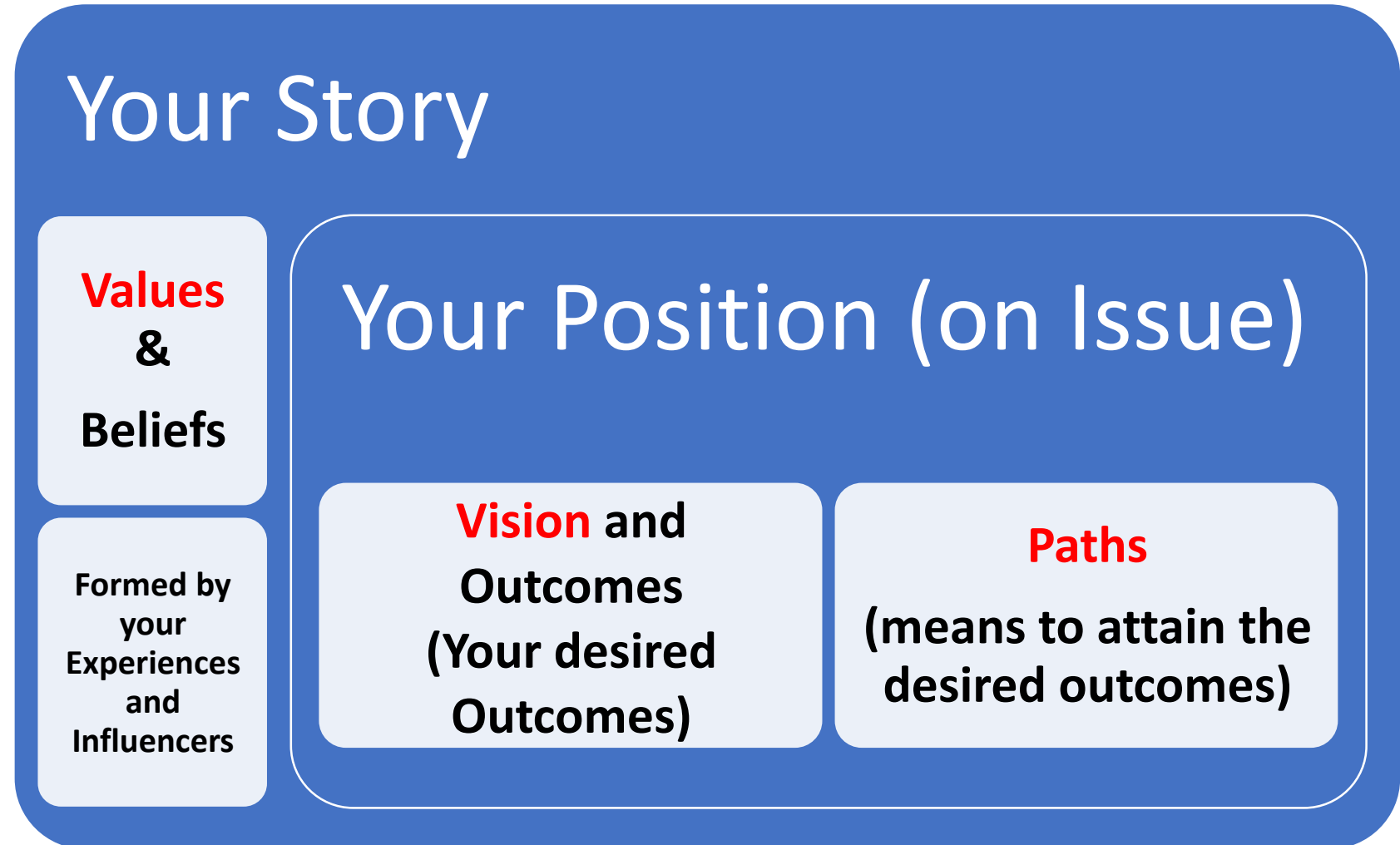
- *Increase self AWARENESS*
- *BE open minded*
- *Prioritize relationships OVER ideas*
- *Seek to UNDERSTAND with depth*
- *TAKE winning off the table*

Small Group Engagement

Use Foundation Principles & Methods
Share Influencers/Experiences/Beliefs/Values – important to the topic
Prepare a 3 min summary for future use

The Notion of Story versus Position

- Apply the ABOUT Principles
- It's your story, not just your position ...
- Embrace full spectrum conversations



Typical Illustrative Values – Liberal

(source: Braver Angels)

Here are some core liberal values and beliefs that underlie many liberal policy ideas.

- Emphasis on ongoing historical patterns that create inequality and discrimination.
- Importance of an active government to help those in need and create conditions for equal opportunity.
- Patriotism balanced with criticism of the country and the idea all nations have worth.
- Desire to protect stigmatized groups from speech/ behavior that can further harm them.
- Inclusiveness, concern for those on the margins
- Diversity, the value of human differences
- Equality of opportunity, a leveling playing field
- Concern about abuses of free-market capitalism

NOTE: These values and beliefs vary between more leftist progressives and moderate liberals—and between some minority and white liberals.



Typical Illustrative Values – Conservative

(source: Braver Angels)

Here are some core conservative values and beliefs that underlie many conservative policy ideas.

- Individual freedom and responsibility, concern about grouping people into categories
- Limited government (especially federal) and fiscal restraint to free up individuals and businesses to make their own choices
- Skepticism about the ability of government to manage complex programs
- Value of local initiative and local charity
- Patriotism: enthusiastic love of country
- Free market capitalism as an engine of human progress
- Social values of religion, family, respect for tradition and authority
- Suspicion of utopian promises and caution about social engineering as coming with many unintended consequences

NOTE: These values and beliefs vary between libertarians, social conservatives, and free enterprise conservatives.

The Small Groups Discussions

- 2-3 persons each with political diversity
- **Only** Values and Beliefs as formed by Your Experiences and Influencers – the beginning of your story
- **NO** issue discussion (yet) – Vision, Outcomes, Path
- Manage your time (<10 minutes each person to start)
- Save 5 minutes at end for each person to prepare their own 3 minute version to be used in future caucus and small group discussion activities



Full Group - Share & Summarize Learnings from Small Group Engagements

- Did you all feel heard?
- Process observations
- Degree of difficulty
- Other

Expectations and preparations for the next session

March to May 2023 Roadmap

Monday Nights 6:30-8:30 pm

Define Problem, Select Issue, Learn and Agree on Methods

[0] – Pre 3/6

Registration, Issue Ranking,
Political Typology Survey

[1] – 3/6 (Cabana)

Introduction & Foundations
– Methods, Role Plays, and
Practice

Apply Methods to the SELECTED ISSUE

[2] – 3/20 (Rec Room)

Caucuses

[3] – 4/3 (Cabana)

Fishbowls

[4] – 4/10 (Cabana)

Small Groups

Conclude Learnings

[5] – 5/1 (Cabana)

Small Group Report Outs,
Wrap-up, and Summarize
Learnings

[6] – 5/15

Optional Feedback Session
on zoom



CAUCUSES

Agenda

- Review and Brief Check-in
- Introduce Caucus Engagements
- Simultaneous Issue Team Caucuses
- Share and Summarize Learnings
- Expectations and preparations for the next session
- Preparation
 - Identify, consume and evaluate articles, videos, websites, etc
 - If worthy, submit to BuildingBridgesPH@gmail.com for posting to our website
 - Prepare to tell your whole story in 5 minutes at the caucus