



BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

# Real Talk: Pop the Disinformation Bubble

Virtual Training Session  
4th Thursdays 8pm-9pm EST



Caz Margenau  
she/her

Boulder, Colorado



Ace/Aro



Single mom



Research Proposal Manager  
for climate and aerospace



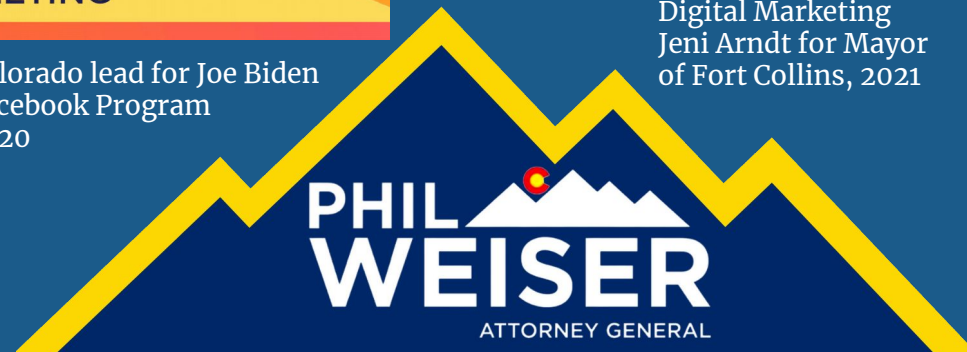
State Lead,  
Colorado for Pete Buttigieg  
2019-2020



Colorado lead for Joe Biden  
Facebook Program  
2020



Digital Marketing  
Jeni Arndt for Mayor  
of Fort Collins, 2021



Finance Committee Manager  
Phil Weiser for Colorado Attorney General, 2021-2022

# BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

## Our Mission

Guided by the principles of servant leadership, Building Bridges mobilizes and empowers networks of relational grassroots organizers equipped to support campaigns and causes based in progressive values.

## Our Values

We recognize that the effort adds value, regardless of the result.

We are committed to the development of a broad and inclusive coalition.

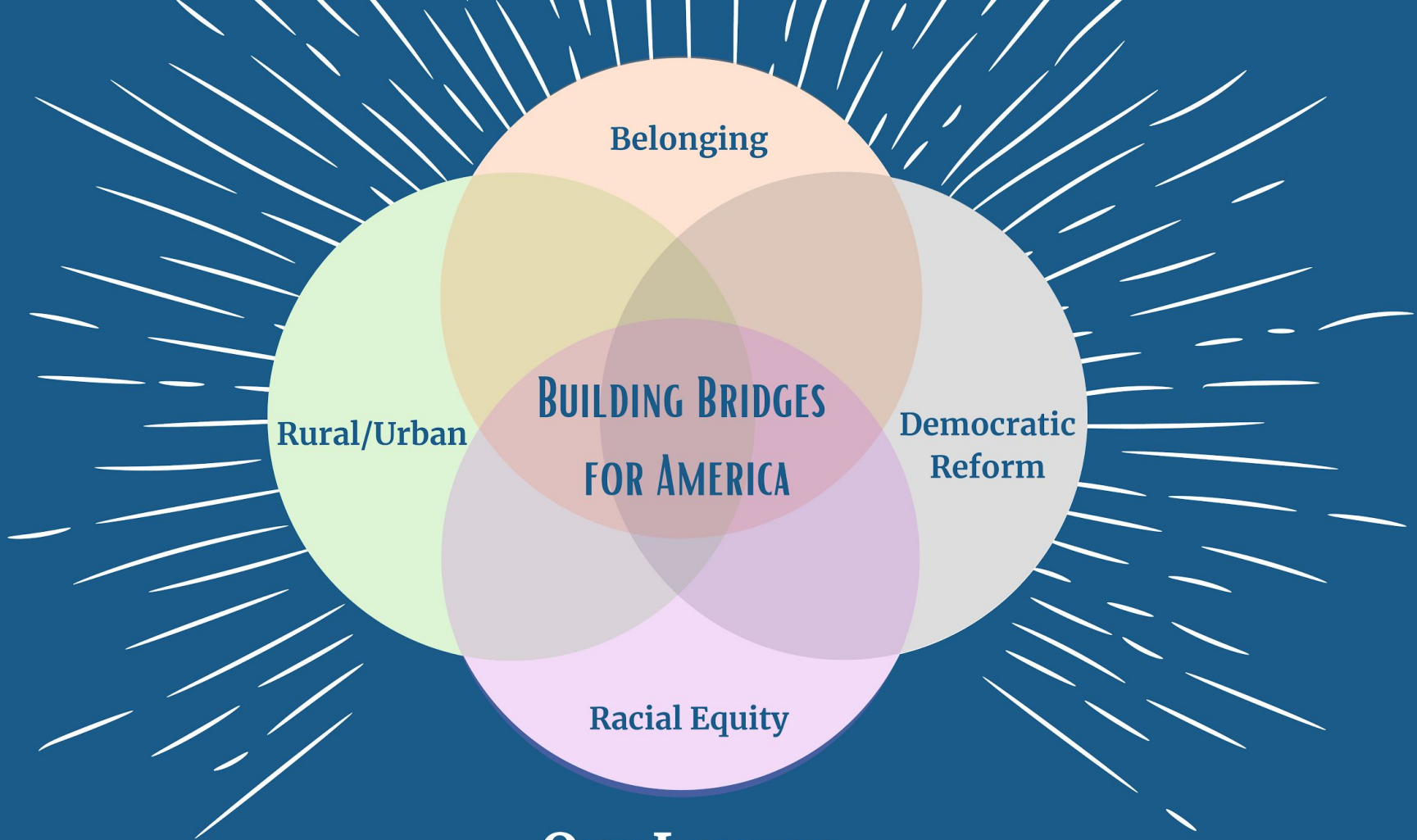
We conduct our actions and are informed by the legacy of Pete Buttigieg's 2020 Campaign's Rules of the Road.

## Our Vision

A just and equitable democracy, safeguarded by an informed and engaged electorate, where everyone is valued and belongs.

Respect Belonging Truth Teamwork Boldness Responsibility Substance Discipline Excellence Joy





**Our Lenses**

# Inform and Engage

## BUILDING BRIDGES TO THE LOCAL



Support  
**Reggie Harris**

City Council  
Cincinnati, OH

The Bold New Face  
of Cincinnati Politics

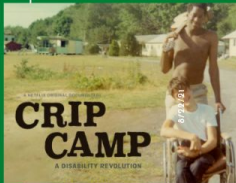
## DOCUMENTARY SERIES



Sunday Aug. 22nd  
7:30pm EST

Q&A afterwards

Join us for this special event!



[www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com](http://www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com)



LET MY PEOPLE **VOTE** **FLORIDA** **RIGHTS**  
RESTORATION COALITION

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA



**MOVIES &**  
*call to action*

Wednesdays 8pm est

- 8/4 Cool Runnings
- 8/11 Blades of Glory
- 8/18 Touch the Wall
- 8/25 Lords of Dogtown.

[www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com](http://www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com)

# Inform and Engage

Real Talk sessions are for everyone. They are made for a general audience.

Take political action.



## Building Bridges Real Talk Series

FREE Virtual Training Sessions Every Thursday 8pm-9pm

[www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com](http://www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com)

Need help getting started?  
Download or print guides, workbooks, and sample letters and postcards.

## GRAB 'N GO GUIDES



Organizing for Change are sessions for volunteers and grassroots organizers and those wanting to get started.



## Building Bridges Organizing for Change Series

Weekly FREE Virtual Training Sessions

[www.BuildingBridgesforAmerica.com](http://www.BuildingBridgesforAmerica.com)



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# BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA



[www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com](http://www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com)

# TEAM UP WITH BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

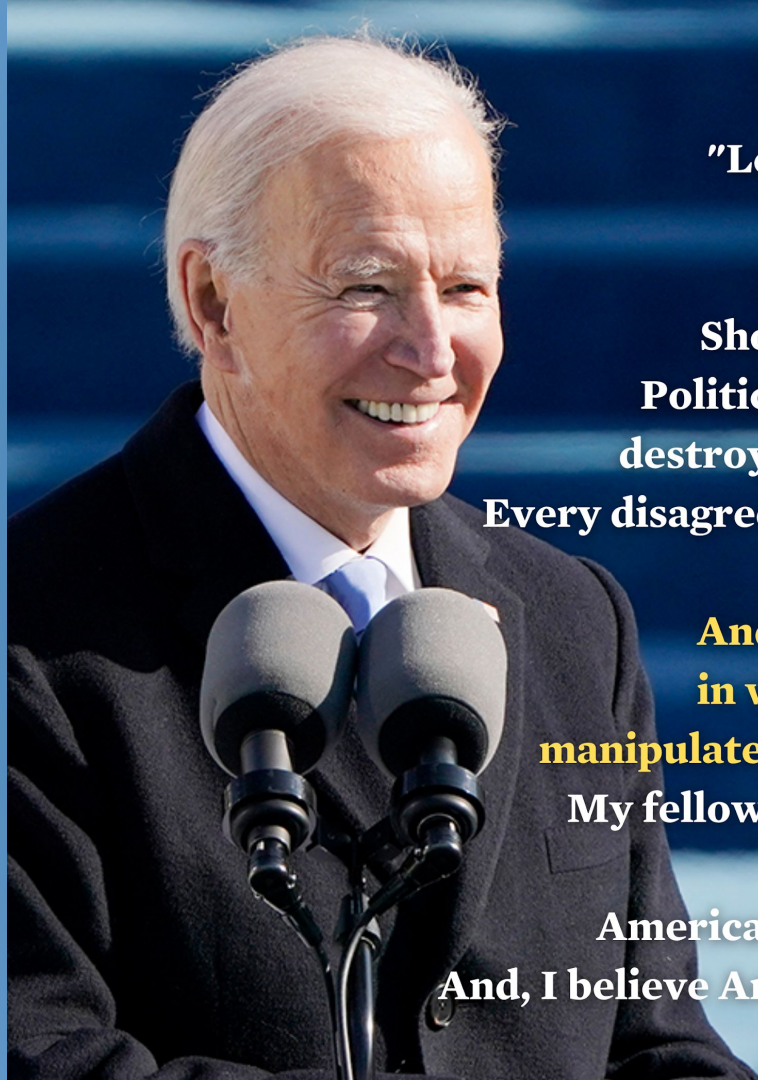
FIRST TUESDAYS. 8- 9ET

INFORMATION SHARING 8:00PM ET

SOCIAL TIME 8:30PM ET







**"Let us listen to one another.  
Hear one another.  
See one another.  
Show respect to one another.  
Politics need not be a raging fire  
destroying everything in its path.  
Every disagreement doesn't have to be a  
cause for total war.  
And, we must reject a culture  
in which facts themselves are  
manipulated and even manufactured.  
My fellow Americans, we have to be  
different than this.  
America has to be better than this.  
And, I believe America is better than this."**

- President Biden





**How do we do it?**

**Be Informed**



**Inform with  
Empathy**

# Today's real talk:

- Know what disinformation is and why this is happening.
- Assess your media literacy and learn best practices.
- Understand how people can believe this stuff.
- Discuss the politicking of climate.
- How to break through with the truth.





# Ice Breaker– Zoom Poll– Question #1



Have you talked about the need for action on climate change in the past few weeks?

- Yes
- No

# Have you talked about the need for action on climate change in the past few weeks?



Pew Research Center

## A majority of U.S. adults have talked about the need for action on climate change in the past few weeks

*% of U.S. adults who say over the past few weeks they've talked about the need for action on climate change ...*

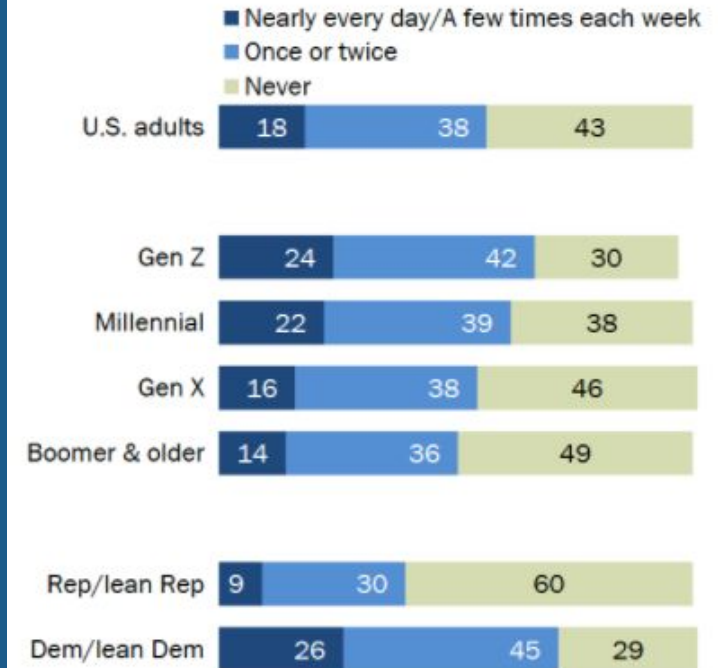


*% of U.S. adults who say when they talk with someone they **disagree** with about the need for action on climate change, they generally find it to be ...*

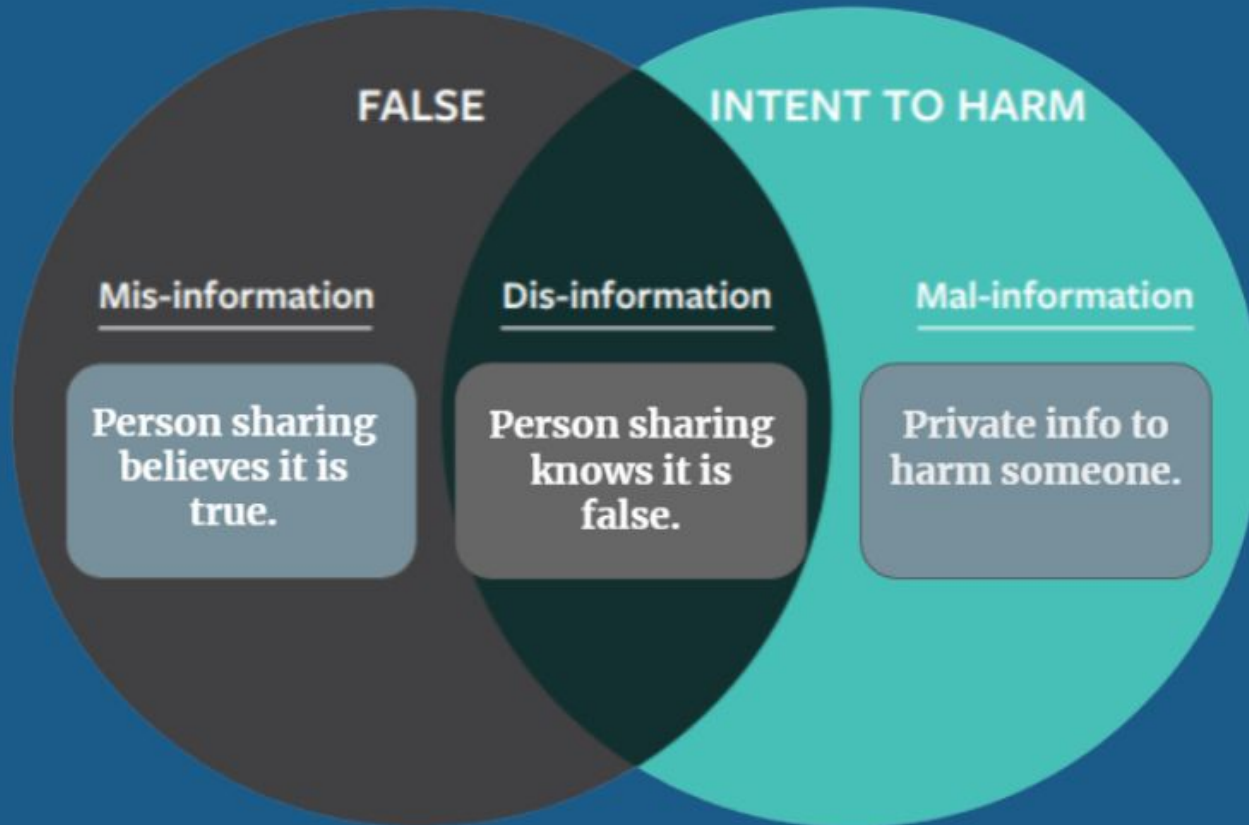


## Gen Z, Millennials discuss need for action on climate change more often

*% of U.S. adults who say over the past few weeks they've talked about the need for action on climate change ...*



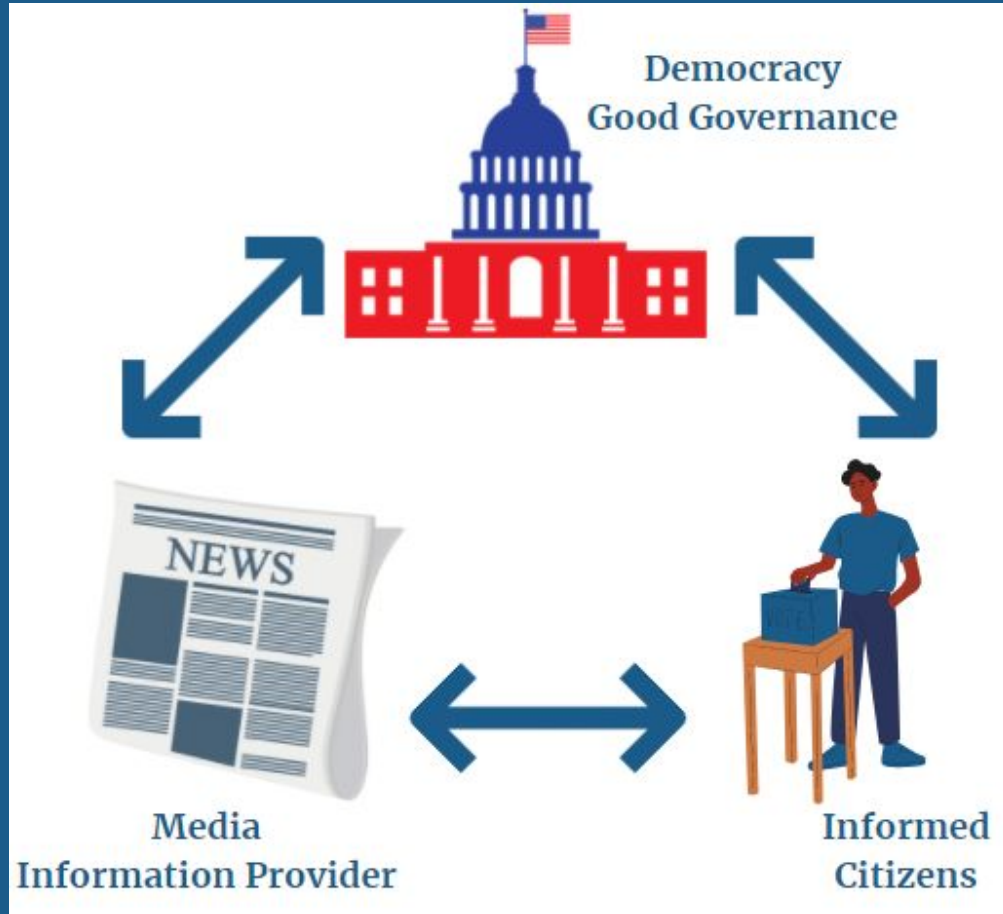
# What is disinformation?



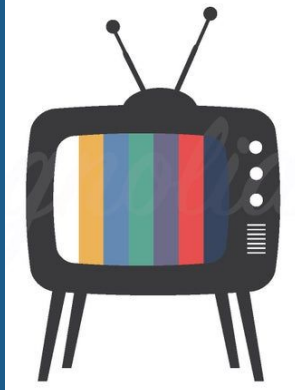




# How did we get here?



# How did we get here?



Pre-digital  
Gatekeeper model– Journalistic practice  
fact checked before publishing.

Shared experience of the news.



Now  
We are our own gatekeepers.

We create our own media bubble, our own reality,  
even our own truth.

Intentionally misleading content lowers trust  
and lets us slip into our own reality.







# The Media Bias Chart®

Version 7.0 January 2021

Interactive version with more sources at  
adfontesmedia.com

ad fontes media

Most Extreme Left

Hyper-Partisan Left

Skews Left

Middle

Skews Right

Hyper-Partisan Right

Most Extreme Right

Original Fact Reporting

Fact Reporting

Mostly Analysis OR Mix of Fact Reporting and Analysis

Analysis OR High Variation in Reliability

Opinion OR High Variation in Reliability

Selective, Incomplete, Unfair Persuasion, Propaganda, or Other Issues

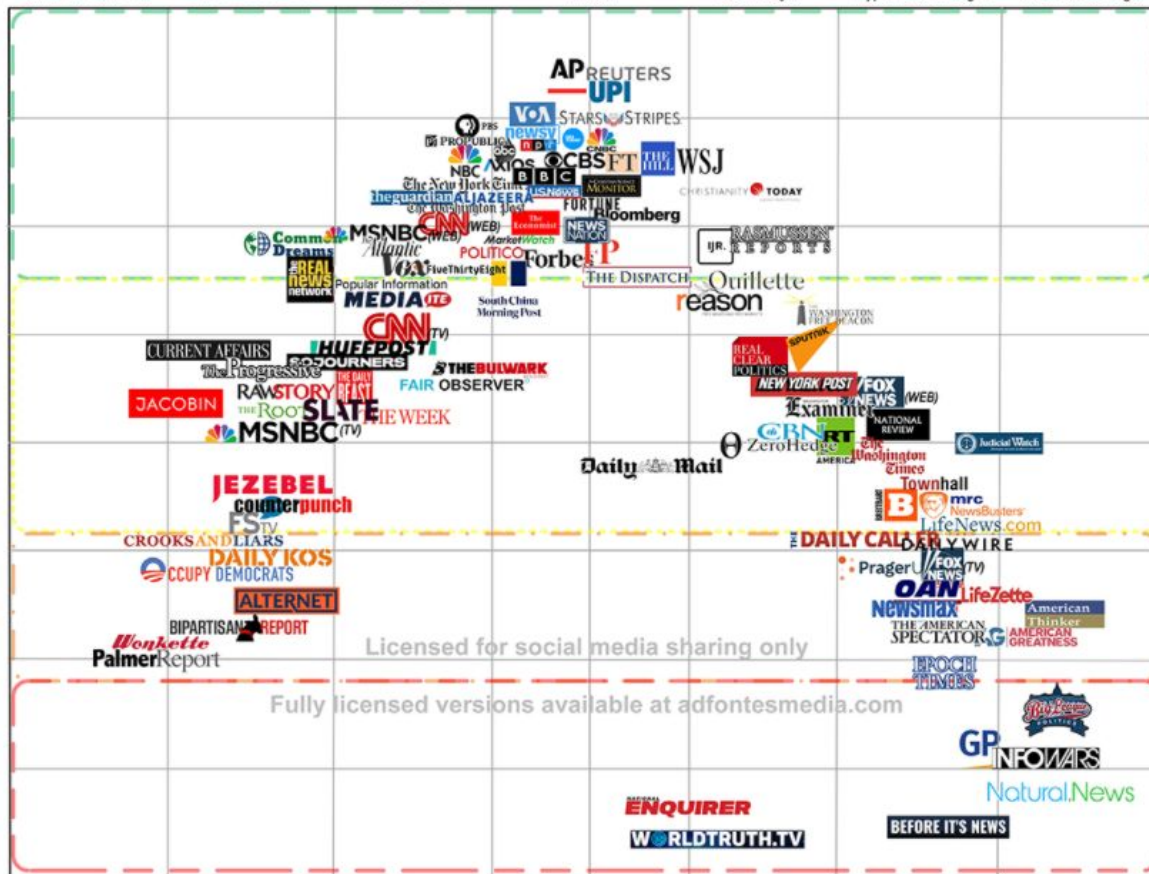
Contains Misleading Info

Contains Inaccurate/Fabricated Info

MORE

News Value and Reliability

LESS



Licensed for social media sharing only

Fully licensed versions available at adfontesmedia.com

LEFT

Bias

RIGHT

Curate  
your  
sources



# How did we get here?



**Both-sides reporting** creates an inaccurate perception that there is significant disagreement on an issue where there is actual consensus.

It can change.

Reporting on climate change has shifted in the past 15 years:

90% of articles reflected the consensus.

5% offered false balance

4% were denialist

“So, it will be important for researchers to examine the **stealthier ways in which opponents of climate action are now working to undermine efforts** to address the causes and consequences of climate change.”



# Is this legit?



Check the  
original  
source

Check where it is  
posted

Smell  
Test



# Is this legit?



Bee  
@mount\_bees

Rep. Louie Gohmert warned OAN viewers about the "hundreds and thousands" of "Flamers," aka birds who survive windmills but wind up spontaneously combusting after flying over solar farms in the Southwest US. This is how the green new deal will bring the nation down.



8:49 AM · Aug 12, 2021 · Twitter Web App

1,686 Retweets 2,747 Quote Tweets 7,153 Likes

Check the  
original  
source

Check where it is  
posted

Smell  
Test





# Why does this work?

"Another part of that green deal is the huge solar farm that they have out on the border of California and Nevada. Thousands of acres of concave mirrors that magnify the sun toward three towers, heat up the liquid in there and turn turbines. **They weren't anticipating** that there would be **hundreds and thousands** of what they would call **flamers** because when the **birds fly through, if they survive the windmills**, then they hit that magnified sun, explode in flame and down, they go bird, **guts all over the mirrors**. So that **takes some cleaning up**. This is the green stuff that's just **out of control** and is going to bring the nation down"

- Confirm belief
- State a number
- Give it a memorable catch-phrase
- Talk about something we care about
- Tie it to a familiar story
- Paint a picture



# How superspreaders work



**20** “superspreader” pro-Trump Twitter accounts were the original source of **20%** of misleading narratives about voting.

User Name	Handle	Followers
Anonymized, Pro-Trump account	*****	391.7K
Charlie Kirk	charliekirk11	1.8M
Tom Fitton	TomFitton	1.2M
Chuck Calleso	ChuckCalleso	304.9K
Josh Caplan	joshdcaplan	83.5K
Jim Hoft	gatewaypundit	340.6K
Breitbart News	BreitbartNews	1.5M
James Woods	RealJamesWoods	2.6M
Donald J. Trump	realDonaldTrump	87.3M
Breaking911	Breaking911	818.8K
John Solomon	jsolomonReports	758.5K
Anonymized, Pro-Trump account	*****	113.4K
Sean Hannity	seanhannity	5.3M
Benny	bennyjohnson	357.5K
Eric Trump	EricTrump	4.3M
Anonymized, Religious + Patriot account	*****	230.5K
Omar Navarro	RealOmarNavarro	301K
Anonymized, QAnon account, now suspended	*****	281.1K
Anonymized, Pro-Trump account	*****	50.4K
Anonymized, Pro-Trump account	*****	131.3K

In two months, of 812,000 anti-vaxx posts on Facebook, **73%** come from **12** accounts.

1 Joseph Mercola.....
2 Robert F. Kennedy Jr. ....
3 Ty & Charlene Bollinger..
4 Sherri Tenpenny .....
5 Rizza Islam.....
6 Rashid Buttar.....
7 Erin Elizabeth .....
8 Sayer Ji.....
9 Kelly Brogan.....
10 Christiane Northrup .....
11 Ben Tapper .....
12 Kevin Jenkins.....

Most shared posts every day are from far right opinion accounts.



# How superspreaders work



— ANALYSIS —

## SHAPIRO: Debunking Climate Change Hysteria



**NEWSMAX**

[Home](#) | [Politics](#)

Tags: [trump](#) | [biden](#) | [climate change](#)

## Trump Derides Biden On Climate Change



Turning Point USA ✓

June 18 · 🌐



## Climate Change Panic Is Not Based On Facts

Charlie Kirk Is So Right... Conservatives Are Pro-Science, While Leftists Are Pro-Panic! Climate Change Is A HOAX! #ThinkForYourself  
See Less



8.2K

846 Comments 8.6M Views

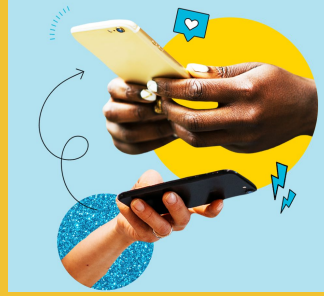


# Countering Best Practice



## Stop. Drop. Go.

Ignore it! Ignore the hateful or dumb post. Walk away. Leave that RT or reply in the drafts!!



## Help a friend.

Put an arm around them and share best practices.



## Amplify good stuff.

<b>GOOD:</b>	<b>BETTER:</b>
Retweet	Retweet with your own comment
Like	Reply

**BEST:**  
Add original posts  
Post about a mix of topics that interest you



# Countering Best Practice

**Do not** retweet bad content, even to say it is bad.



**Do** take a screenshot and share that.



Any Click  
=  
Vote for  
importance



# We got a lot in common

## DEMOCRATS

(Budget Reconciliation)

- Rapid expansion of wind and solar energy
- Increase energy storage
- Electrify transportation
- Clean Electricity Payment Program
- Energy efficient buildings
- Methane pollution fees
- Tariffs on imports from high carbon emitting countries

## BOTH

(Infrastructure Bill)

- Upgrade power grid
- Charging stations for electric vehicles
- Modernize public transit
- Safety for pedestrians and cyclists
- Research new clean energy technologies
- Technology to capture and store carbon dioxide emissions
- Developing new nuclear reactors

## GOP

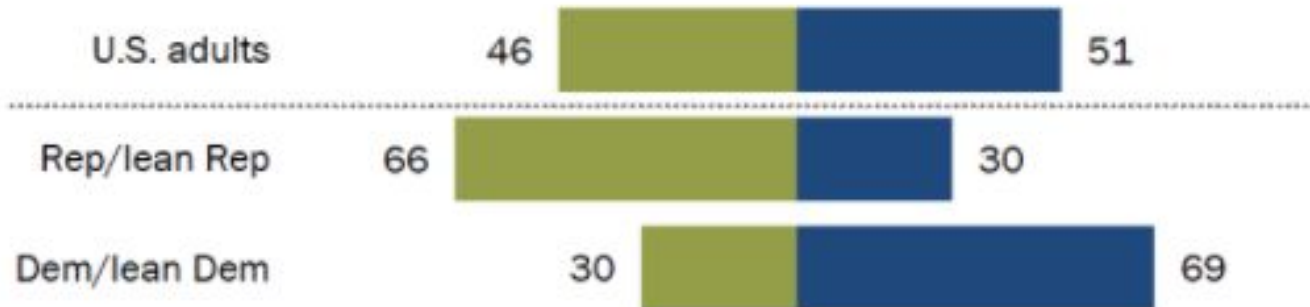
- Planting trees
- Tax credits for carbon capture

# Difference- technology will save us

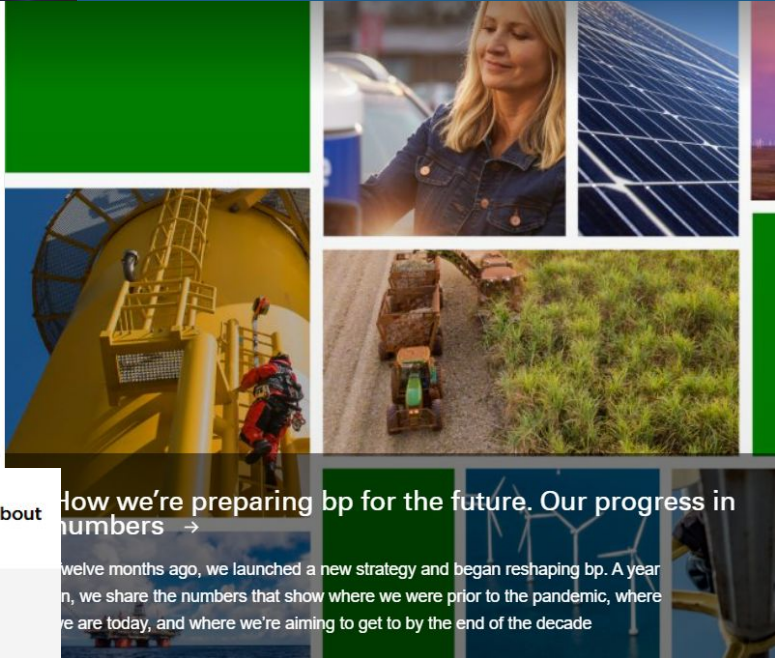
## Looking ahead, Americans closely divided over whether lifestyle changes will be needed, or new technology can mitigate effects of climate change

*% of U.S. adults who say that 50 years from now, it is more likely that ...*

- New technology will be able to address problems from climate change
- Major lifestyle changes will be needed to address climate change problems



# Difference- technology will save us



**ExonMobil** Operations Energy and innovation Sustainability Newsroom Investors About us

Emission reduction  
commitment through  
carbon capture and  
storage

**bp**

- Home
- Who we are >
- What we do >
- Global products and services

project portfolio operations technology **Chevron** sustainability investors about

How we're preparing bp for the future. Our progress in numbers →

twelve months ago, we launched a new strategy and began reshaping bp. A year on, we share the numbers that show where we were prior to the pandemic, where we are today, and where we're aiming to get to by the end of the decade

**chevron hosting 2021 energy  
transition spotlight**





# Intentional Confusion

**SO WHY IS IT THAT NORTHERN SCOTLAND,  
BACK IN THE 1700S, THEY HAD A  
MEDITERRANEAN CLIMATE.  
WHAT MADE THAT CHANGE?**

**DO YOU LIKE THAT TRUMP HAS FINALLY  
LOWERED CO2 EMISSIONS**

**IS SCIENCE A DEMOCRACY?  
DO WE VOTE ON GRAVITY?**

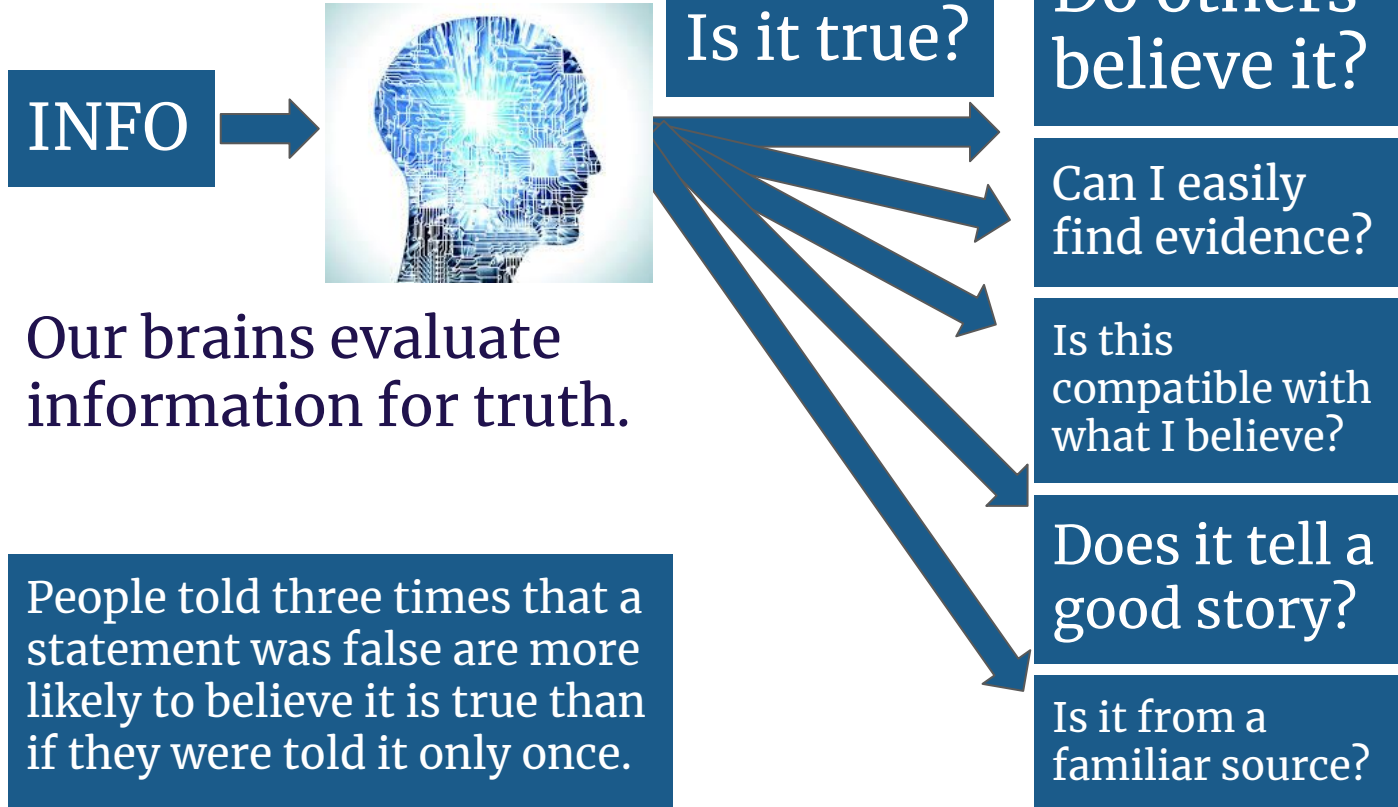
**DO YOU THINK SUNSPOTS HAVE  
ANY SORT OF CONTRIBUTING FACTOR?**

**CO2 EMISSIONS ARE DOWN, WE'RE PLANTING  
A TRILLION TREES, WE'RE FINALLY ENERGY  
INDEPENDENT, AND WE HAVE A PATHWAY  
TO HAVE AN ABOVE-ALL ENERGY STANDARD  
MEANWHILE, THE OTHER SIDE WANTS TO  
SHUT DOWN THE AMERICAN ECONOMY**

**SO 97% OF SCIENTISTS  
AGREE THAT ONE?  
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE 3%  
BELIEVE. YOU KNOW WHY? BECAUSE  
USUALLY THE 3% DISSENTING OPINION  
AGAINST THE MAJORITY IS THE ONE THAT  
WE SHOULD LISTEN TO THE MOST.  
THAT'S CALLED THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD**

**WHY WOULD WE HINDER AMERICA'S ENERGY  
DOMINANCE AROUND SOMETHING THAT  
HAS HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE DATA?**

# How can people believe this stuff?



Our brains evaluate information for truth.

People told three times that a statement was false are more likely to believe it is true than if they were told it only once.

Familiar  
=  
Easy to  
process as  
true.

# How can people believe this stuff?

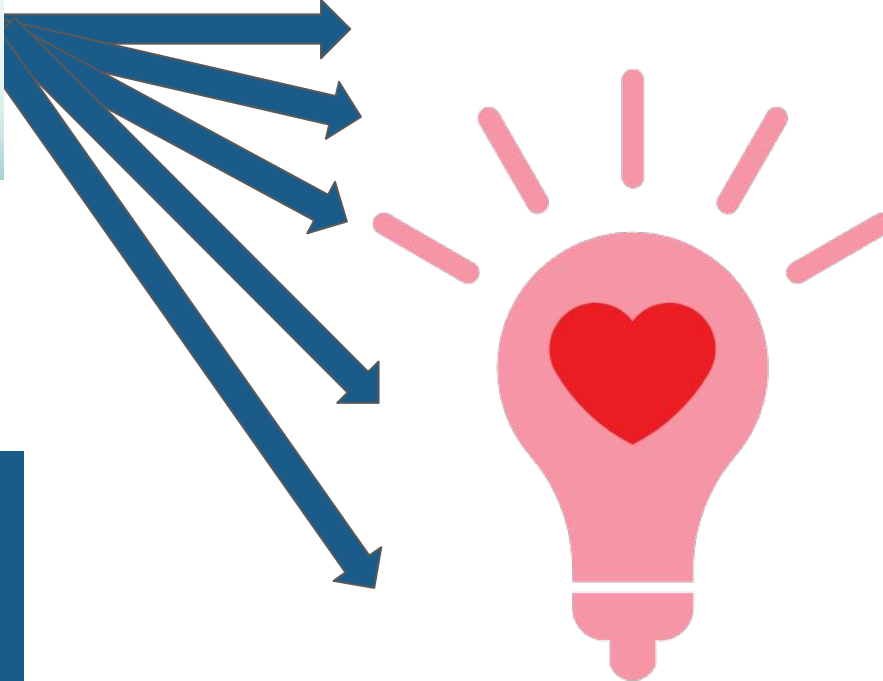
INFO



Do I want it to be true?

Our brains evaluate  
information for truth.

People told three times that a  
statement was false are more  
likely to believe it is true than  
if they were told it only once.



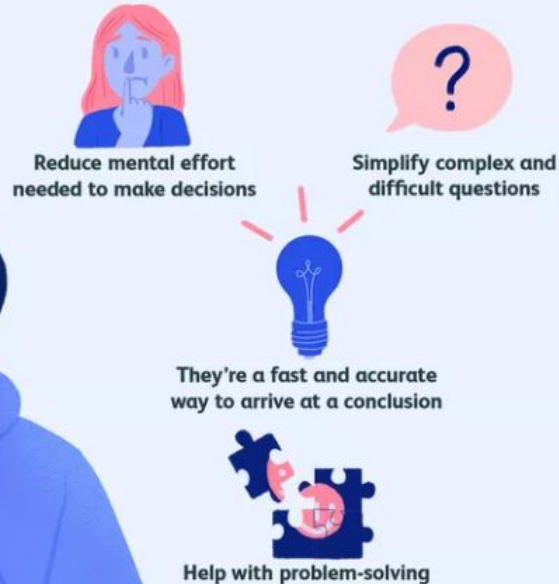
# How can people believe this stuff?

A heuristic technique, or a heuristic, is any approach to problem solving or self-discovery that employs a practical method that is not guaranteed to be optimal, perfect, or rational, but is nevertheless sufficient for reaching an immediate, short-term goal or approximation.

Many people have a heuristic to trust science. They do not need to know how it works.

Skeptics and those who distrust American government and institutions do not have a heuristic shortcut to help make the complex decision. They are confronted with all the intricacies of climate science when they determine trust.

## Common Uses for Heuristics





# How can people believe this stuff?

People with little expertise or ability assume they have superior expertise or ability.

They don't have enough knowledge to know they don't have enough knowledge.

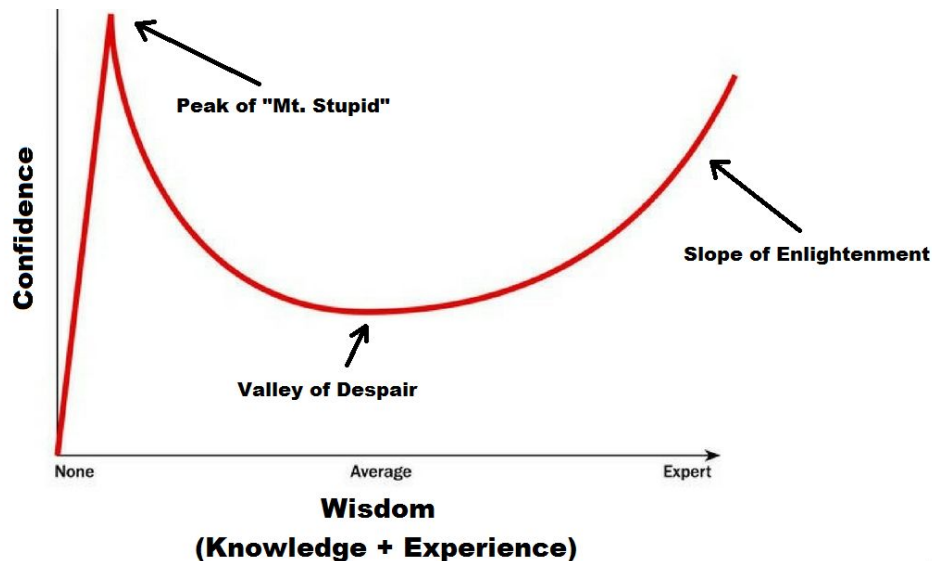
## Illusion of Explanatory Depth

We think we understand complex systems better than we do.

**"Explain that to me"**

Explaining what they think they understand will make them more humble, curious, nuanced, more moderate and less extreme.

## Dunning-Kruger effect



# Repeat the truth and actively listen.

- Start with empathy and be vulnerable. “I can feel your yearning for things to be different than what they are.”
- “Explain that to me.” And listen. Do not interrupt. Be curious.
- Ignore their politics. And do not say yours.
- Pick your one battle and repeat the one simplified truth. “Extreme weather from climate change we thought would come decades from now is here today.”
- If they ask a question you do not know how to answer, say that, say “I don’t know, but let’s look it up” and pull out your phone and google it.
- Talk to people you know. You are familiar and they will listen and trust you.



# What is the goal of disinformation?

Dismantle trust

## Why?

Trust is necessary for our democratic society.

Trust is necessary to progress into a racial and economically equitable society.

“Access to trust in and by institutions, from the first days of enslavement to the present-day economy, has been deeply unequal in our country. And many systems and institutions we depend on have seen whatever trust they did have erode over time...

Progress will depend on our ability to rebuild what has been lost, and in some places to build trust that was never there in the first place.”

## How?

Pushing conspiracies and sense of belonging– When someone whispers “Trust no one,” they are inevitably also saying, “Trust me.”

Both sides-ism creates controversy.

Feeding algorithms negativity to sow division.

Denial of facts and shared reality.

# Rebuild trust through vulnerability

The foundation of trust is vulnerability.

A core feature of trust is reciprocity.

To build trust– Be vulnerable. Create space, be curious, actively listen.

- “It scares me, it is changing so fast and I don’t know what I am supposed to do.”
- “I’m not sure about that, let’s look it up.”
- “How someone voted doesn’t make them a bad or good person.”

# Next Steps

Download this session's handout and complete the activities to get started on media literacy and having empathetic conversations.

Need more help starting those conversations? Use our Unlock Your Political Power workbook to walk you through step by step.

[www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com/courses](http://www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com/courses)





# References

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9. Adam Grant “Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don’t Know”  
<https://bookshop.org/books/think-again-the-power-of-knowing-what-you-don-t-know-9781984878106/9781984878106>



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[www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com](http://www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com).

Thank you for joining us.