The Flowchart That Will Resolve All Political Conflict in Our Country

Do you want to have a conversation with someone who holds political views different from your own?

Move along. This chart is not for you.

Do you want to vent, have an argument, or generate conflict?

Listen:
- Allow uninterrupted speaking
- Reflect back what you hear
- Use “I” statements
- Ask open-ended questions

Perspective-Taking:
- Be curious and nonjudgmental
- Really focus on the other person
- Assume they have positive intentions
- Ask questions; float hypotheses
- Try advocating for their position
- Consider why they might hold their views

Persuade

What is your goal?

Do you understand their perspective?
- Can you treat them with respect?
- If not, go back to listening and perspective-taking.
- If so, and if you still want to try to persuade them, carry on...

Do you understand their perspective?

PERSUADE

COMMON GROUND

NO

YES

Liberal and Conservatives all have morals, but they have different priorities. Where are they on the political spectrum?

Appeal to:
- Sympathy
- Compassion
- Nurturance
- Rights
- Justice

Appeal to:
- Loyalty
- Obligations
- Authority/respect
- Traditions
- Social order
- Purity/sanctity

Seek shared personal or political hopes, fears, goals, interests, likes, dislikes, experiences. Agree to disagree.

How can I deal with distressing feelings that come up during dialogue?
- Anticipate and be aware of reactions
- Breathe
- Remember your motivations
- Pause the dialogue
- Seek support elsewhere

Rethink whether you should be having this conversation

Do you want to understand their perspective?

NO

YES

Raise your voice
- Interrupt
- Question motives
- Point out why they’re wrong
- Say “are you f***ing kidding me?”

Reread: Allow uninterrupted speaking
- Reflect back what you hear
- Use “I” statements
- Ask open-ended questions

How can I deal with distressing feelings that come up during dialogue?
- Anticipate and be aware of reactions
- Breathe
- Remember your motivations
- Pause the dialogue
- Seek support elsewhere

NO

YES

NO

YES

NO

YES

NO

YES

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