FROM TO CONFLICT CONVERSATION

# Vermont School Boards Association
# Vermont Superintendents Association

Matt Lehrman, Social Prosperity Partners
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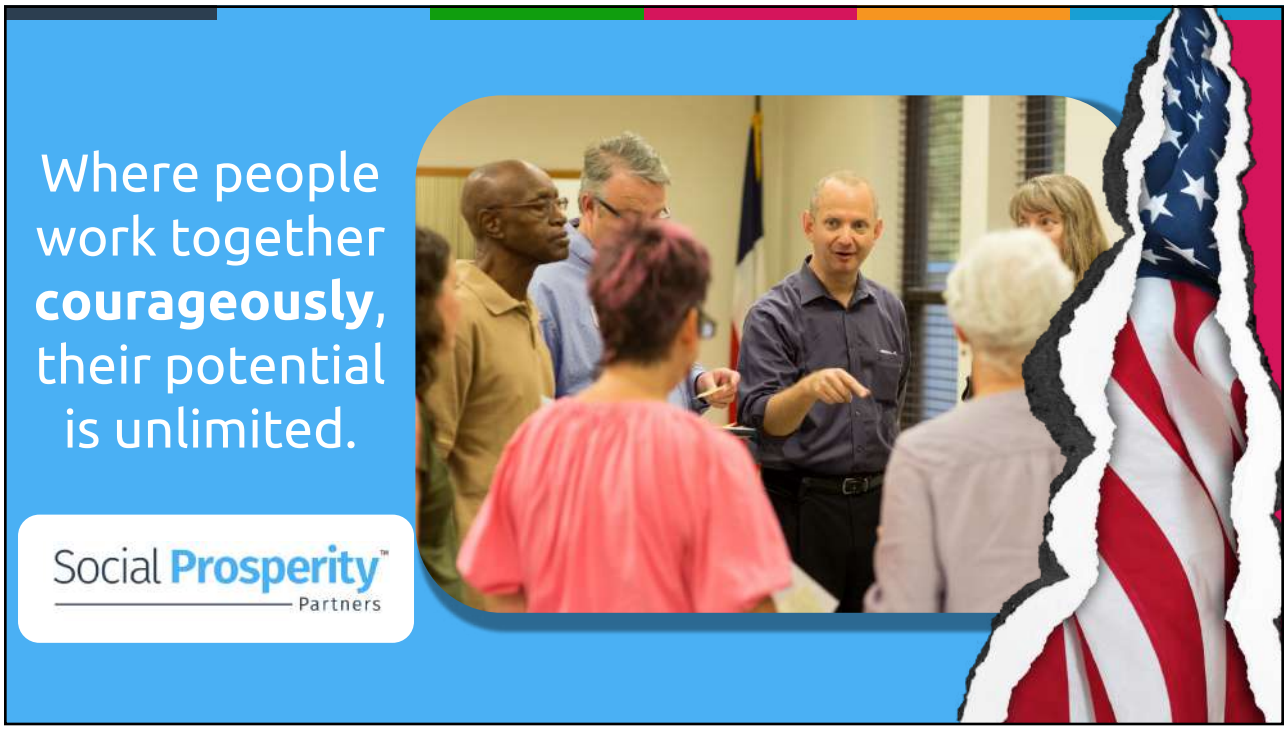
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2


"One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."
Pledge of Allegiance
"A divided society, addicted to outrage, mired in anger, cynicism, and exhaustion."
A Civic Assessment

3


Where people work together **courageously**, their potential is unlimited.
Social Prosperity™ Partners

4


PRINCIPLES
NOT POLITICS

5


YES
A Journey in
4 Steps
FROM CONFLICT TO CONVERSATION

6

1

# What is our **leadership imperative?**



FROM CONFLICT TO CONVERSATION

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## IN MY COMMUNITY, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MOST OFTEN LEAVES PEOPLE FEELING...




Vermont School Boards Association
Vermont Superintendents Association

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Oregon School Boards Association

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Minnesota School Boards Association

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IN MY COMMUNITY, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MOST OFTEN LEAVES PEOPLE FEELING...
Georgia School Boards Association

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IN MY COMMUNITY, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MOST OFTEN LEAVES PEOPLE FEELING...
Wyoming School Boards Association

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IN MY COMMUNITY, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MOST OFTEN LEAVES PEOPLE FEELING...
California School Boards Association

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IN MY COMMUNITY, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MOST OFTEN LEAVES PEOPLE FEELING...
League of California Cities

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League of Minnesota Cities

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Florida School Boards Association

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Michigan Association of School Boards

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Arizona School Boards Association

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IN MY COMMUNITY, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MOST OFTEN LEAVES PEOPLE FEELING...
frustrated
empowered
good
happy
engaged
encouraged
connected
informed
involved
heard
valued
bored
exhausted
confused
overwhelmed
disappointed
unheard
tadd
proud
tired
angry
anxious
satisfied
energized
fulfilled
scared
kids first
defeated
hopeless
openness
not much
respect
rewarded
communication
unsure
responsibility
trust
helpful
apathetic
positive
curious
inspired
powerful
understood
transparency
discouraged
nervous
team
honesty
entitled
divided
thankful
proud
great
responsiveness
improvement
cautious
togetherness
purposeful
integrity
respected
trust leadership
appreciated
isolated
included
worried
lost
giving
tired
uncomfortable
aggravated
misunderstood
validated
collaborate
Forward thinking
satisfaction
jealous
participate
I wont go back
wanting better
disconnected
attacked
not satisfied
skeptical
unsure of process
awesome
doubtful
Indiana School Boards Association

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IN MY COMMUNITY, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MOST OFTEN LEAVES PEOPLE FEELING...
frustrated
connected
involved
overwhelmed
empowered
good
disconnected
uncomfortable
left out
trust
awkward
faithful
excellence
defensive
unfullfilled
scared
powerful
hopeful
integrity
satisfied
equality
divided
community
depends
eye opening
concerned
puzzled
change
engaged
included
nervous
proud
exhausted
anxious
unheard
heard
informed
discouraged
intimidated
validated
inclusive
disengaged
upset
confused
stressed
fulfilled
angry
rewarding
collaboration
understood
transparency
engagement
wounded
dissappointed
unrepresented
understanding
drained
healthy
thankful
disillusioned
life long learning
grateful
community empowerment
appreciated
committed
it depends
respect
defeated
truth
happy
motivated
productive
trustworthiness
student success
uninterested
trusting
feeling of belonging
important
annoyed
unity
seen
hurt
negative
listened to
confident
values
connection
helpful
stressed
commitment
stewardship
inclusivity
clarifying
uninformed
outsider
selflessness
not heard
ostracized
put down
st john great
cooperation
hopeful
under represented
rewarded
empowered educators
dedicated
powerless
frustratedly
student outcomes
trusted
joyful
overwhelmed
impossible
honesty
teuth
skeptical
mad
student focused
fairness
bored
complacent
uninvolved
together
uncertain
gratified
bothered
encouraged
equality
satisfied
integrity
hopeful
powerful
scared
unfullfilled
anger
great
lost
confused
stressed
valued
good
okay
open
gross
love
tired
mos
excited
time
fulfilled
collaboration
understood
engagement
wounded
dissappointed
unrepresented
understanding
drained
healthy
thankful
disillusioned
life long learning
grateful
community empowerment
appreciated
committed
it depends
transparency
North Dakota School Boards Association

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IN MY COMMUNITY, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MOST OFTEN LEAVES PEOPLE FEELING...
misunderstood
unhinged
helpless
connected
informed
optimistic
loved
left out
upset
anxious
overwhelmed
inspired
involved
unheard
stressed
reassured
heard
confused
louder
encouraged
engaged
ricky
frustrated
lost
together
ignored
absent
angry
bla
happy
hopeful
fulfilled
indifferent
worried
satisfied
proud
sad
empowered
mad
grateful
better
tired
excited
included
needed
disappointed
questioning
hopeless
understood
Tennessee School Boards Association

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IN MY COMMUNITY, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MOST OFTEN LEAVES PEOPLE FEELING...
likemiamifootballbad
disenchanted
relieved
unwanted
ignored
disapointed
underwhelmed
unappreciated
indifferent
uncaring
participating
good
doubtful
child
connected
skeptical
isolated
conflicted
lethargic
bored
come
exasperated
disappointed
useless
blah
leaderless
absent
unsatisfied
happy
left
tired
involved
heard
sad
blank
uninspired
powerful
cave
lost
frustrated
unheard
willing
fiulfillef
involve
stressed
waste
belonging
informed
hopeful
useful
included
mad
confused
angry
agitated
empowered
overwhelmed
polarized
knowing
empty
disconnected
fighting
powerless
excited
bad
engaged
drained
bullied
depleted
thwarted
dissatisfied
part
exhausted
encouraged
disengaged
dissappointed
unimportant
disillusioned
knowledgeable
alone
annoyed
voiceless
delayed
acknowledged
upset
appreciate
suspicious
fatigued
Tennessee Municipal League

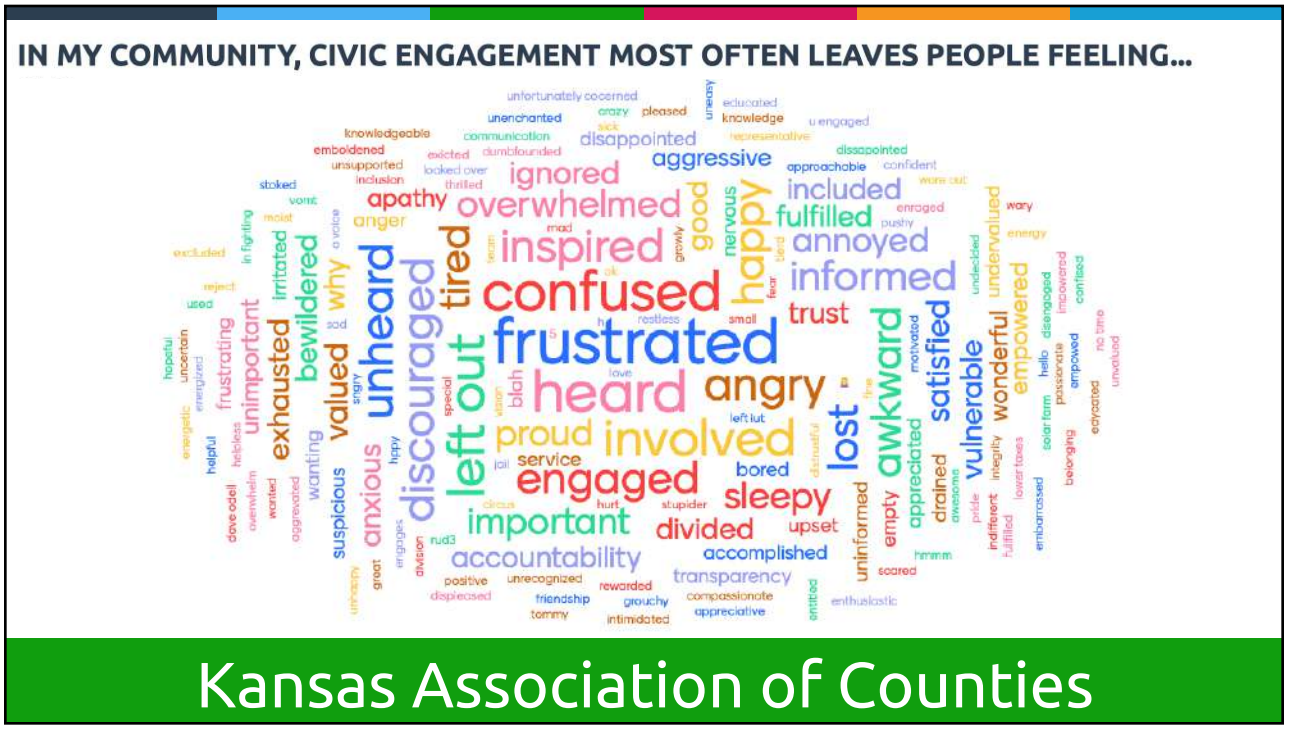
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IN MY COMMUNITY, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MOST OFTEN LEAVES PEOPLE FEELING...
Kansas Association of School Boards

23


IN MY COMMUNITY, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MOST OFTEN LEAVES PEOPLE FEELING...
questioning
interested
encouraged
informed
overwhelmed
invested
involved
alone
unheard
included
ignored
successful
heard
frustrated
many
engaged
chiefs
bullied
exhausted
disappointed
tired
crazy
drained
angry
depleted
left
stressed
empowered
proud
confused
valued
unfulfilled
unengaged
annoyed
offended
League of Kansas Municipalities

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Kansas Association of Counties

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Kentucky School Boards Association

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Texas Municipal League

27




Alaska Municipal League

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# *Duality?*

Society exists with **perpetual paradoxes**:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Tradition** | **&** | **Progress** |
| **Confidence** | | **Skepticism** |
| **Competition** | | **Collaboration** |
| **Included** | | **Excluded** |

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**What is our leadership imperative?**

"The purpose of local government is to enable individuals to join together in recognizing and solving community problems."

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"The purpose of local government is to enable **individuals** to join together in recognizing and solving **community** problems."

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"The purpose of local government is to enable individuals to **join together** in recognizing and solving community problems."

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This is our primary **Leadership Imperative:**

**join together**



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Where do we begin to find **common ground**?

FROM CONFLICT TO CONVERSATION



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# Who Belongs to *any* **Service Organization?**

35

The Four Way Test

## Rotary

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

36

***Recite from memory*** the
**CORE VALUES**
of the community
**YOU** have been
**elected**, **appointed**,
or **hired** to serve.



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- ☑ Unity
- ☑ Progress
- ☑ Fairness
- ☑ Peacefulness
- ☑ Security
- ☑ Well-Being
- ☑ Stewardship



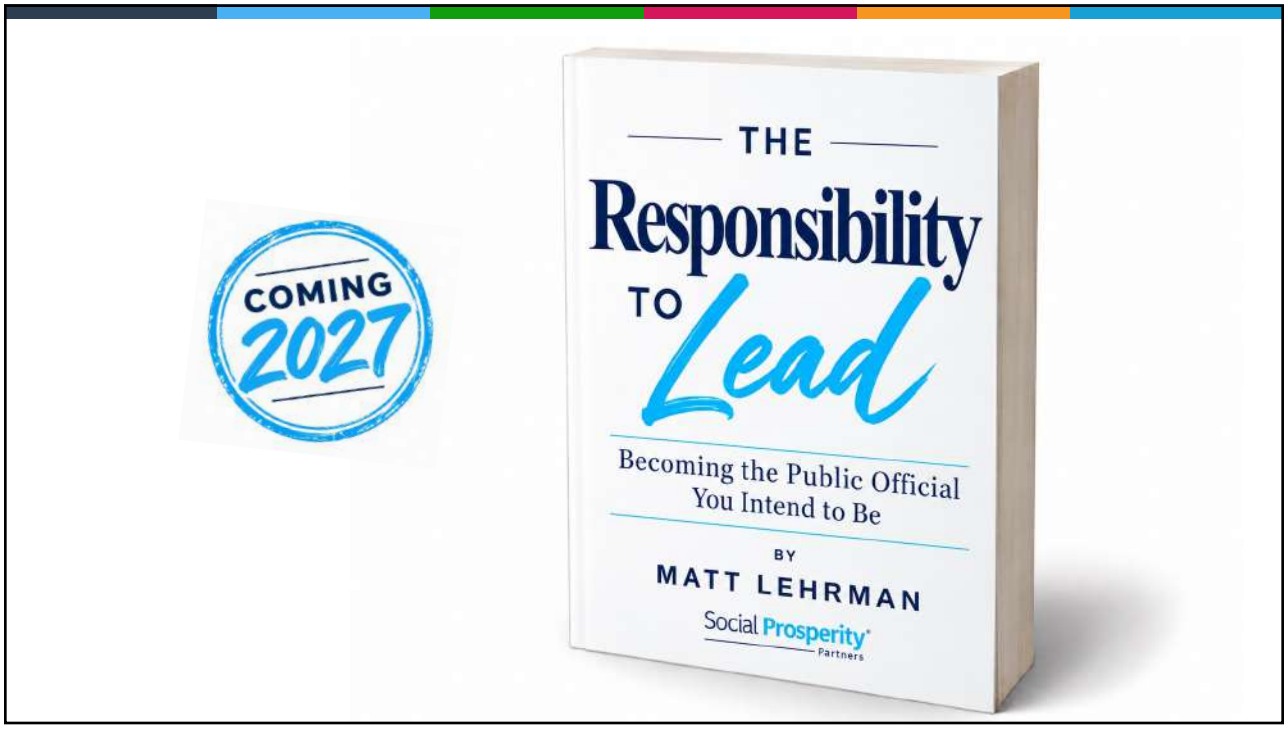

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**"[I] do solemnly swear (or affirm) that [I] will faithfully execute the office of ____ for the ____ of ____ and will therein do equal right and justice to all persons, to the best of [my] judgment and ability, according to law.**
**(If an oath) So help [me] God.**
**(If an affirmation) Under the pains and penalties of perjury."**

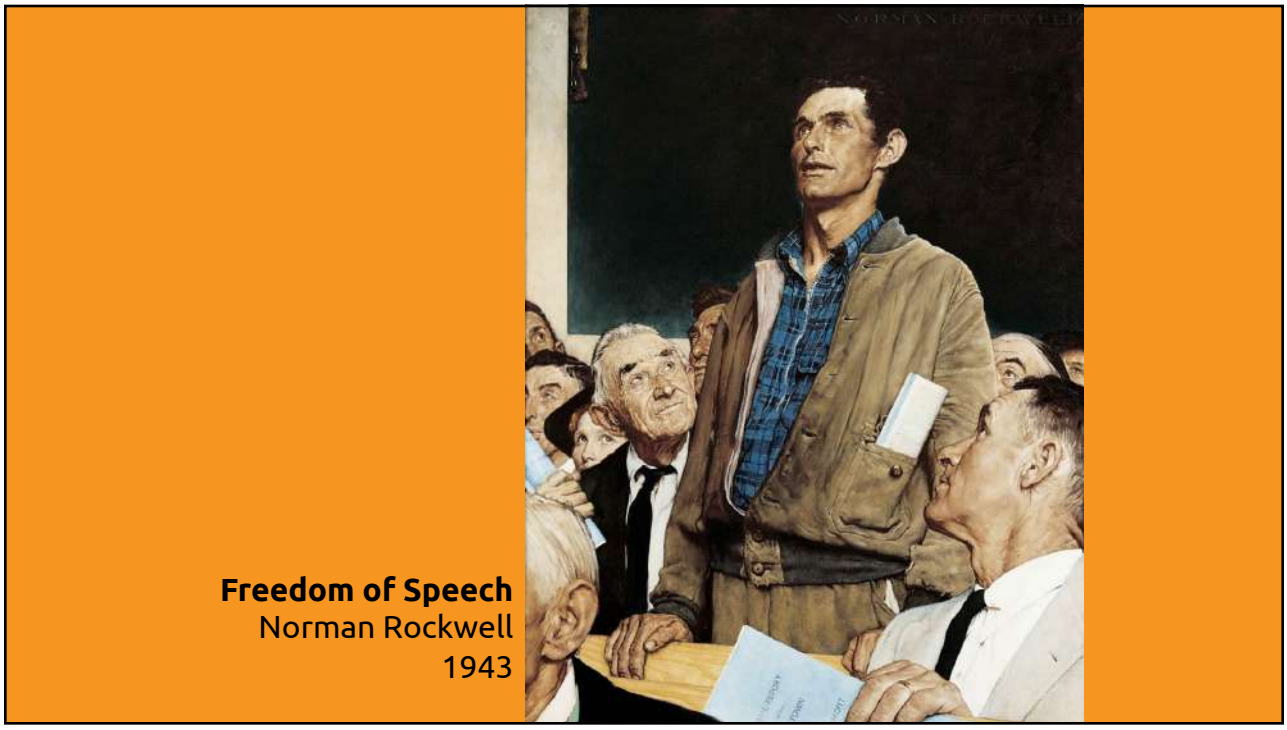
*16 V.S.A. § 561*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Uphold the values and processes of our system of government. | Decide with honesty, objectivity, and fairness; free from favoritism, bias, or self-interest. | Serve with diligence, integrity, and openness to learning. |

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North Dakota League of Cities

## Cavalier, North Dakota

**Cavalier** is the largest city in Pembina County, North Dakota, United States. It is the county seat of Pembina County.[5] The population was 1,246 at the 2020 census.[3] Cavalier was founded in 1875 and became the county seat in 1911.

*"What do we do about council members who* ***refuse to open an official email account?"***




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North Dakota League of Cities

## Cavalier, North Dakota

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**Faithful** {

**Our Core Values**

- Teamwork
- Communication
- Stewardship
- Community engagement
- Safety and well-being
- Responsive
- Respect

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2

# So, where do we begin to find **common ground**?



FROM CONFLICT TO CONVERSATION

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## TO WHAT COMMUNITY VALUES DO (OR SHOULD) WE ASPIRE?




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# What do our community members **really want**?



FROM CONFLICT TO CONVERSATION

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- Opinions
- Ideas
- Needs
- Stresses
- Beliefs
- Ambitions
- Hopes
- Perspectives
- Experiences
- Values
- Personalities
- Expectations
- Histories
- Fears
- Quirks
- Demands
- Suspicions
- Judgements
- Thoughts
- Attitudes




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## HOW SHOULD PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT THEIR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?



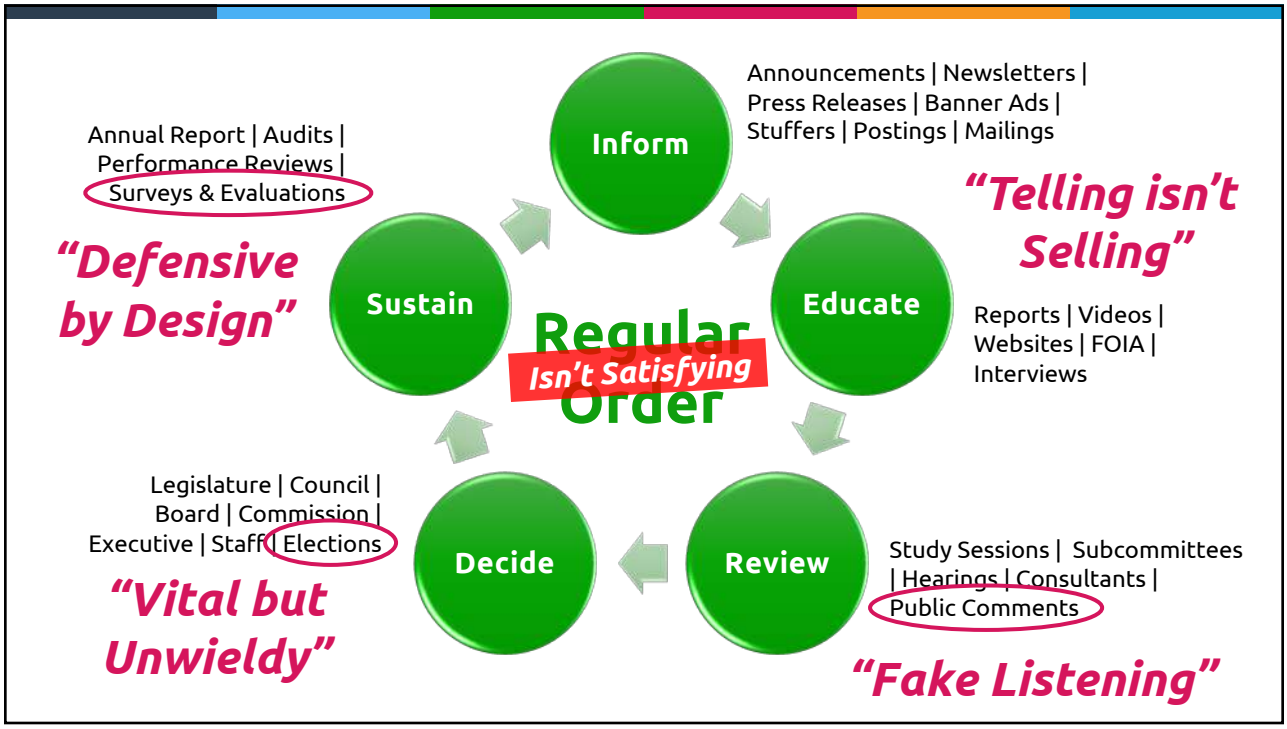

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Disagreement isn't just Natural, it's Necessary.
"The purpose of local government is to enable individuals to join together in recognizing and solving community problems."

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Inform
Announcements | Newsletters | Press Releases | Banner Ads | Stuffers | Postings | Mailings
"Telling isn't Selling"
Educate
Reports | Videos | Websites | FOIA | Interviews
Review
Study Sessions | Subcommittees | Hearings | Consultants | Public Comments
"Fake Listening"
Decide
Legislature | Council | Board | Commission | Executive | Staff | Elections
"Vital but Unwieldy"
Sustain
Annual Report | Audits | Performance Reviews | Surveys & Evaluations
"Defensive by Design"
Regular Order
Isn't Satisfying

52

**As stewards of your district's governing process, you possess the power to help people join together.**

***"Courageous Conversations"***

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mobile info & feedback
#GoodyearTOM
TOPICS ON MOVE
mobile info & feedback
See you around!
TELL US WHAT YOU THINK
Follow me on: #GoodyearTOM
"Courageous Conversations"

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Fire & Emergency Services Options Presentation
"Courageous Conversations"

56




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4

What is a **useful & specific skill** for gathering agreement?

FROM CONFLICT TO CONVERSATION



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## Avoid Binary Choices

**Courageous Conversations** need **never** be a win/lose proposition.



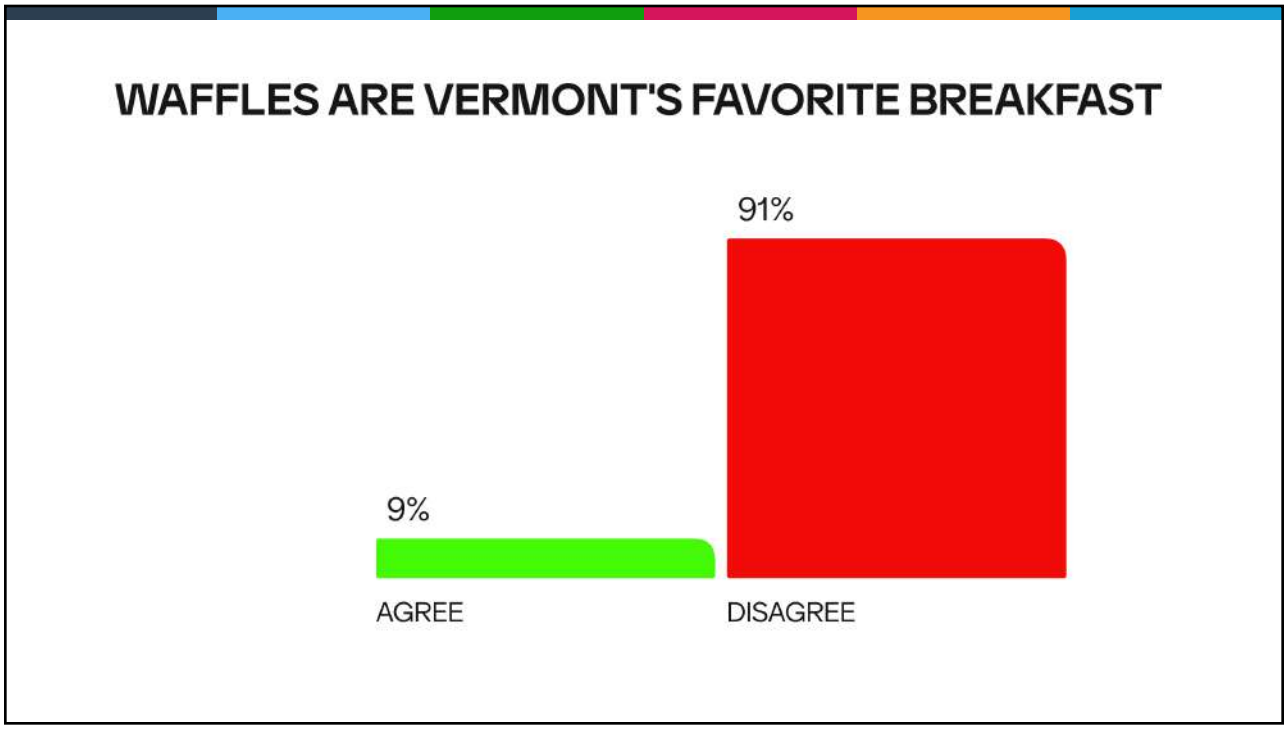
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**Waffles** are Vermont's favorite breakfast.

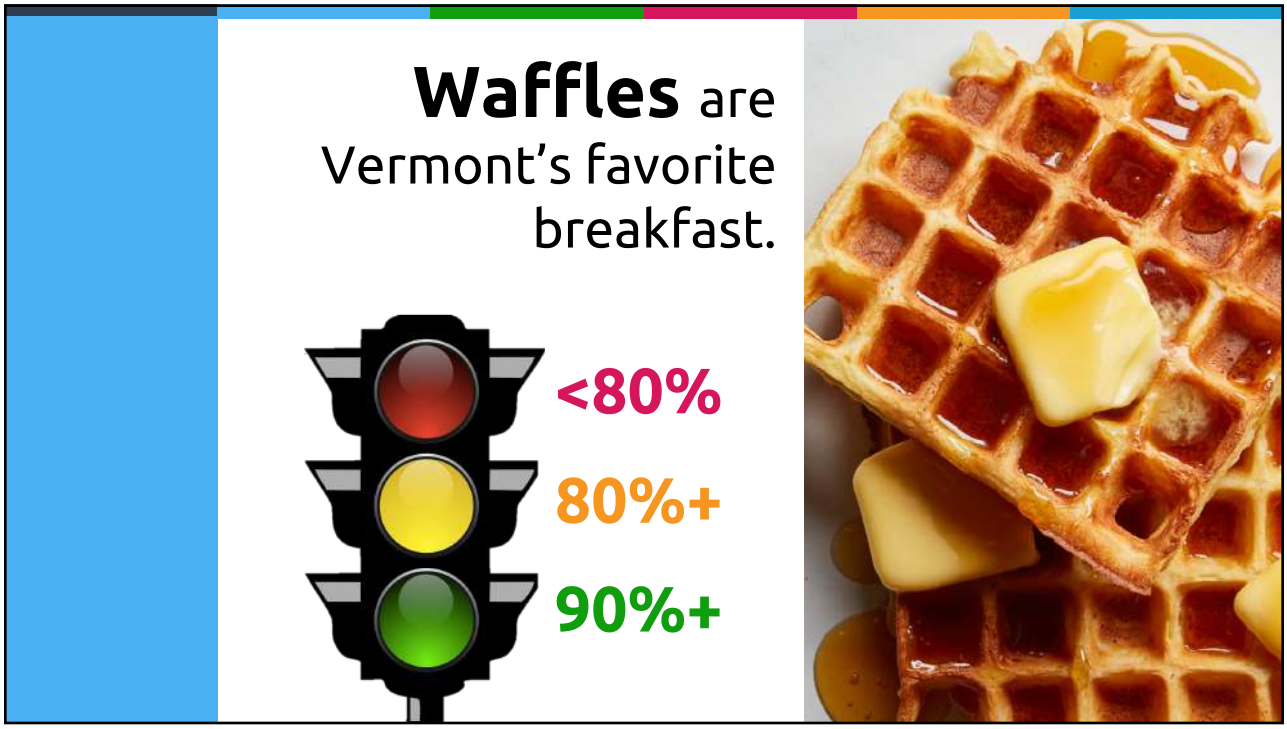




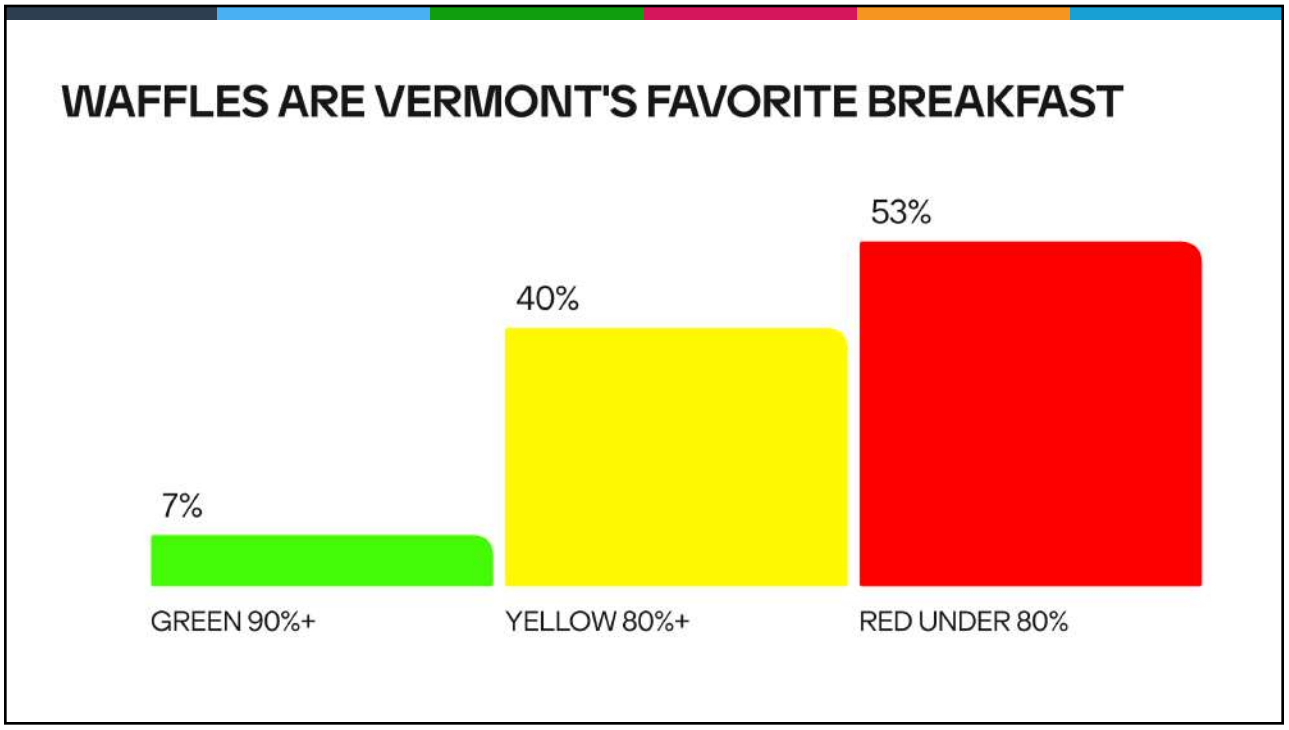

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WAFFLES ARE VERMONT'S FAVORITE BREAKFAST
91%
9%
AGREE
DISAGREE

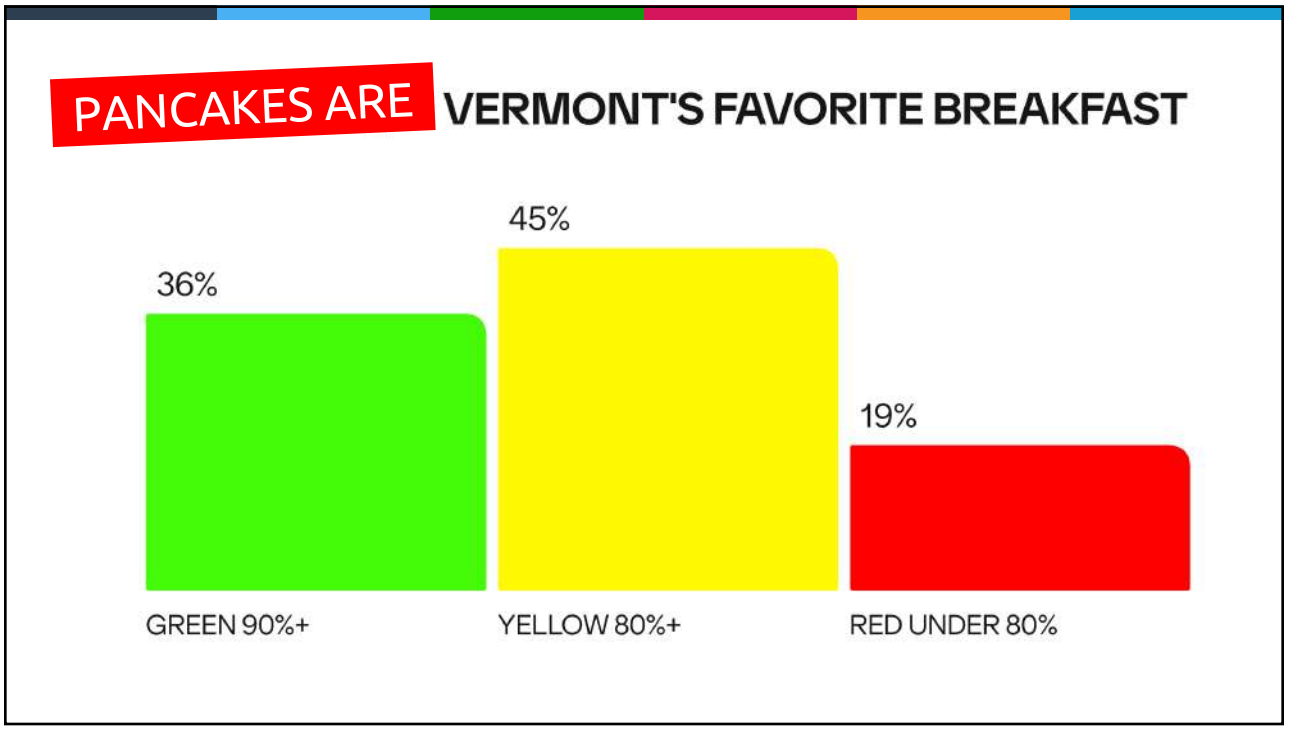
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Waffles are Vermont's favorite breakfast.
<80%
80%+
90%+

62




63




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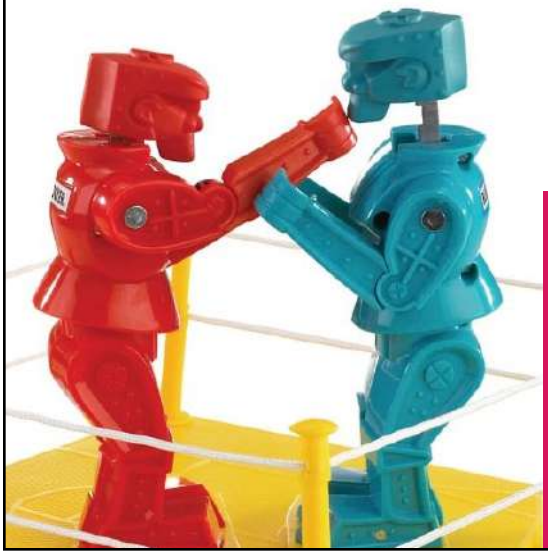



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**1.** *Is it natural to feel personally* ***stressed out*** *by* ***dysfunction, disagreement,*** *and* ***division****?*



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**2.** *Is there a proven way to conduct **meaningful and productive** civic dialogue via **social media?***

Not all dialogue is "**courageous conversation**"

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**3.** *How can we address those **unwilling to engage** in **reasoned dialogue**?*

*Polarized* **OBSTINANT**

**INCENDIARY** **CLOSED-MINDED**

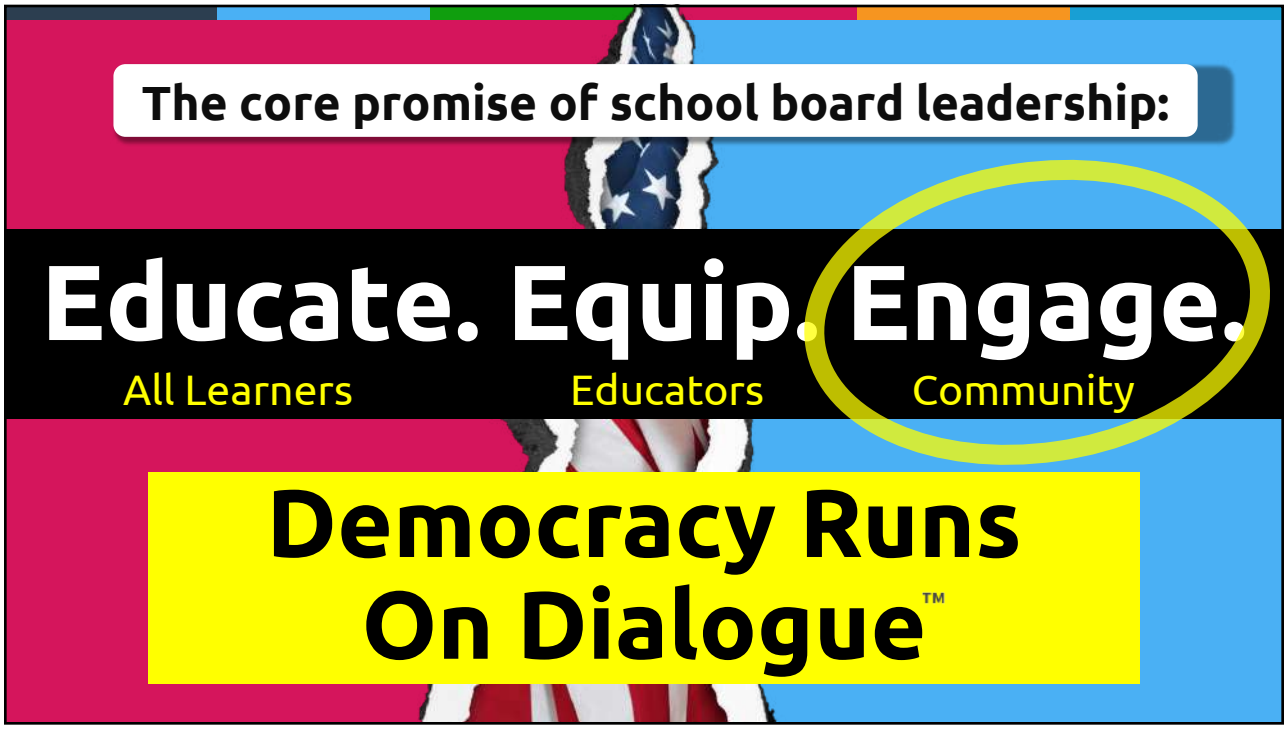
**DISAGREABLE** *"CAVE People"*

**ANGRY** **DOGMATIC**

**INFLEXIBLE** **STUBBORN**

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The core promise of school board leadership:
Educate. Equip. Engage.
All Learners
Educators
Community
Democracy Runs On Dialogue™

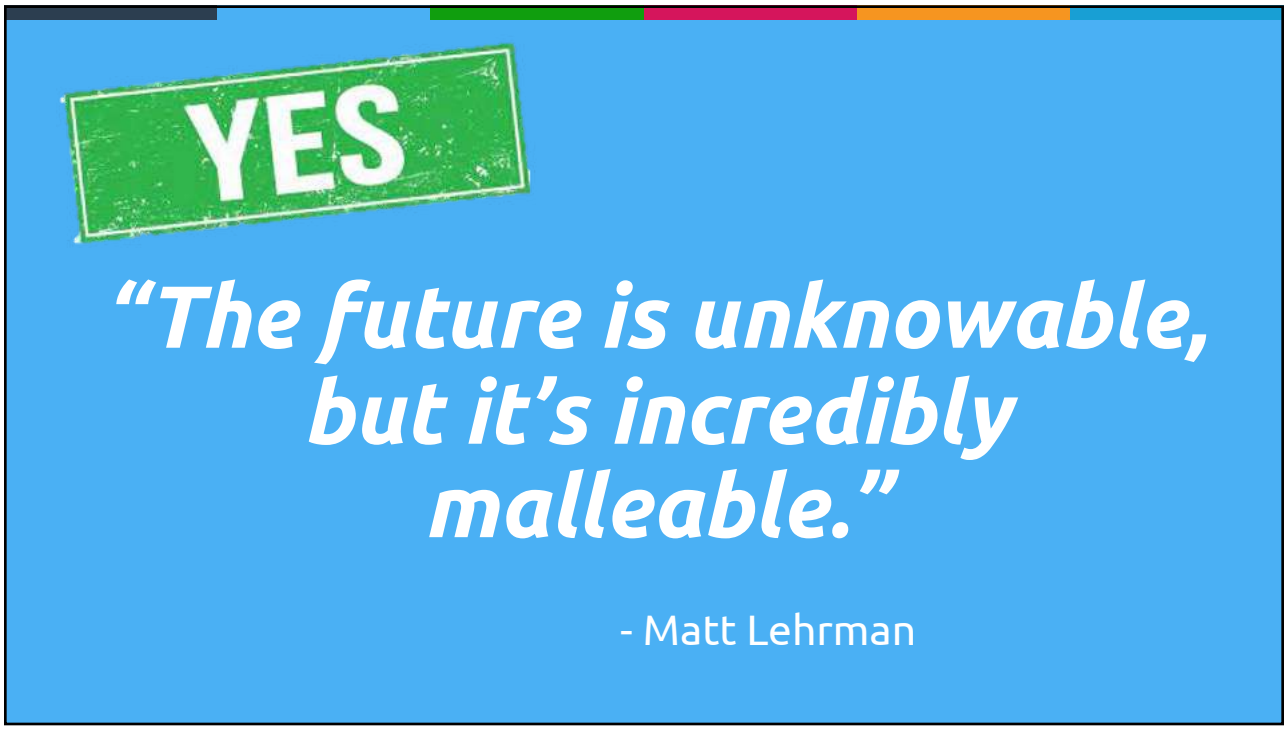
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What kind of public official do you work hard to be?
DEMOCRACY RUNS ON
DIALOGUE™
MATT LEHRMAN • SOCIAL PROSPERITY PARTNERS
substack
What Kind of Public Official Do You Work Hard to Be?
What Alabama's municipal leaders taught me about character, disagreement, and the responsibility to govern.
MATT LEHRMAN
OCT 22
remarkable
innovative
accountable
inspirational
competent
integrity
respectful
the best
appreciated
transparent
impactful
caring
honorable
trustworthy
fair and honest
dependable
hard working
reliable
honest
fair
open
trusting
diligent
ethical
helpful
available
humble
leader
truthful
kind
approachable
team player
consistent
compassionate
respected
christlike
hardworking
confident
relatable

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COMMUNITY
CATALYSTS
THE PODCAST ABOUT
LOCAL LEADERSHIP
WITH MATT LEHRMAN
Candid conversations. Hard-earned insights. Streaming everywhere.
KEEP CALM I'M THE MAYOR

71


YES
"The future is unknowable, but it's incredibly malleable."
- Matt Lehrman

72

# THANK YOU

for the **difficult, stressful,**
and **incredibly** important
work that you do.

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Faithfully
Do Equal Right and Justice
To the Best of Your Judgement and Ability

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✓ Connected
✓ Respected
✓ Heard
Social Prosperity Partners

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