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We're a divided nation when it comes to politics and voting and nothing is going to change that anytime soon. Supporters and voters on both sides of the political fence think they have it all figured out and are steadfast in their political and voting choices. Some will be quick to tell you how you should vote if you let them, especially on social media or in academia. At some point in time, you will hear it from someone, somewhere, but don't be compelled to support the political party or vote for the candidate of THEIR choice--support and vote in accordance with YOUR choice!

If, over the past handful of years, you haven't yet gravitated toward one side of the political fence or the other, then it's time to figure out what you stand for in regards to politics and voting. Maybe you already know, and if so, then register to vote if you haven't yet done so and then actually vote. If you've been skipping through life without much thought toward politics and voting but are now ready to get in the game, then it's time to get the ball rolling with some research.

Start by obtaining reliable data to determine which political party's ideologies are most in line with yours. Learn about the candidates--what each one has previously done, is doing now, and intends to do in the future. Also evaluate each candidate's values and beliefs and compare them to your own. This screening will give you some clarity in your mind, making it evident to you which political party and candidate you should support.

So how do you really know whether the information presented to you is

Think for yourself and vote

accurate? First, verify only official reports that reveal statistics from trusted sources. Second, view all other information, regardless of its source, with a common-sense lens. Even if a source is one-sided in its view or narrative, applying common sense to the story you viewed or read about can help you determine a sensible picture of its truth.

When watching a news channel or reading a newspaper or magazine, realize that it may be influenced by one of the political parties. Therefore, look for messages that reveal information and ideologies in which with you agree and don't agree. If you find yourself agreeing more than disagreeing, then there are hints you may be in sync with the political ideologies supported by the news network or printed source. Do the same with a rival network or printed source and see if you have more disagreements than agreements. If that turns out to be the case, then you're showing consistency--and consistency will reveal your true stance on issues. Also apply this same tactic to radio talk shows, podcasts, and other forms of media or sources.

If possible watch, listen to, and attend as many live events as possible as this prevents an editor or director from splicing out key pieces of information in an effort to form a message or story that accommodates a politically-driven narrative. And NEVER treat anything you read or watch on social media as a reliable or truthful news source. Very little vetting occurs and the fact checkers have agendas in accordance with the political ideologies of their corporate leaders or elite who are influencing them.

When you have done your due diligence in this process, you will have

taken great strides in becoming an independent thinker and informed voter. Knowing why you make such choices and why you agree or disagree with issues enhances your sense of purpose in life. You don't have to be a political activist but you can demonstrate that you are not someone who aimlessly follows others.

When watching a political debate, pay attention to the type and nature of questions being asked by the debate moderators. Doing so will allow you to sense whether or not bias exists. Quite often, a news network and their moderators are out to make one candidate look good and the other one look bad. Don't fall for it--apply common sense to what you see and hear and make up your own mind about the outcome.

So that's it in a nutshell. No need to get into arguments with anyone. No need to be lectured. No need to be bullied into voting for a particular candidate. No need to avoid voting to avoid the bully. No need to tell anyone who you're voting for unless you want to. No need to make excuses, explain, justify, or be embarrassed about your political or voting preferences. No need to convince others on what they should do unless they ask for your advice. People's voting choices are private issues and should remain that way if they so choose.

In life there are those who wish things would happen, those who watch things happen, those who make things happen, and those who wonder what happened. Don't be a wisher, watcher, or wonderer. Be an independent thinker and voter who contributes to making things happen!

~ The End ~