



# Better Angels



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The United States is disuniting. The last presidential election only made clear what many have feared – that we’re becoming two Americas, each angry with the other, and neither trusting the other’s basic humanity and good intentions. Today Americans increasingly view their political opponents not only as misguided, but also as bad people whose ways of

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citizen’s movement to unify our divided nation. By bringing red and blue Americans together into a working alliance, we’re building new ways to talk to one another, participate together in public life, and influence the direction of the nation.

GET INVOLVED

## What is Better Angels?

Better Angels is a national citizens' movement to reduce political polarization in the United States by bringing liberals and conservatives together to understand each other beyond stereotypes, forming red/blue community alliances, teaching practical skills for communicating across political differences, and making a strong public argument for depolarization.

[Read our official principles and program](#)

We've designed several workshops that successfully help red and blue Americans rebuild trust and better understand each others' perspectives. Our signature

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thinking, and begin building the relationships needed to find common ground. Our "Skills Workshop" teaches practical skills for having better conversations with friends and family members with whom you have strong political disagreements.

To further the work of depolarization nationwide, we're building a grassroots movement of local "red-blue alliances" that work together to continue the trust-building and mutual understanding begun in the workshops, reach out to others in the community with the Better Angels message, and look for ways to work together on issues connected to polarization. Each year, we bring together local red and blue leaders from across the country to democratically determine our national priorities for the coming year – and build a national alliance that can influence the direction of our nation.

We're also bringing together leading scholars, writers, and ordinary citizens from across the political spectrum to model the “Better Angels Way” of public debate: constructively engaging with opposing points of view rather than name-calling and partisan posturing. [Better Angels Media](#) is for anyone who's sick and tired of partisan talking points – and wants to make their voice heard.

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Better Angels is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit. From our board of directors to our staff, workshop participants, and funding sources, we are evenly split between liberals and conservatives. We call it the Better Angels Rule: At every level of leadership we are half red and half blue. Our leaders and members range from working class to affluent, and come from many backgrounds, so that our organization can reflect the country we seek to serve.

[Read more about our leadership and staff](#)

Better Angels Alliances are local members of a community – evenly split between red and blue – that meet on an ongoing basis to organize workshops and democratically take up issues on which they agree.

[Read more about Better Angels Alliances](#)

[Click here for financial and legal information](#)

# Our Approach

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Instead of asking people to change their minds about issues, we give Americans a chance to better understand each other, to absorb the values and experiences that inform our political philosophies, and to ultimately recognize our common humanity.

Our approach is informed by the Better Angels Pledge:

- As individuals, we try to understand the other side’s point of view, even if we don’t agree with it.
- In our communities, we engage those we disagree with, looking for common ground and ways to work together.
- In politics, we support principles that bring us together rather than divide us.

Read more:

[The Disunion Crisis](#)

[The Better Angels Approach to Conflict](#)

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*Union, when again touched, as surely they will be,  
by the better angels of our nature.”*

*–Abraham Lincoln, 1861*

The idea of recognizing something that’s shared with the other – even in moments of fierce conflict – is beautifully reflected in Abraham Lincoln’s use of the term “better angels” in his First Inaugural Address in 1861, on the eve of the Civil War. William Seward, who would serve as Lincoln’s Secretary of State, had suggested that Lincoln close his speech by calling upon the “the guardian angel of the nation.” Lincoln changed it to “the better angels of our nature.” In Seward’s version, what was needed would come from outside us. In Lincoln’s version, it would come from within us, something “better” in the “nature” of both Northerners and Southerners.

In America today we haven’t reached the point of violence and chaos – yet. But surely in our increasingly and dangerously fractured nation, we all need to be touched by something “better” within us and within the institutions that we build together.

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Please [click here](#) to learn more about organizing with Better Angels.

Let’s go out there and depolarize America!



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