



AMERICA AT A CROSSROADS: CAN WE SAVE OUR UNION?

New Study Shows Americans Disagree On Issues, But Share The Same Core Values



“ Are we divided? Yes. Do we share core values? Absolutely. Are we proud to be Americans? For the most part. Do we think our great experiment will weather this storm? We’re somewhat hopeful, but concerned. ”

—Dr. Don Levy, Director, Siena College Research Institute

We live in a profoundly divided, some say fractured, nation in which an overwhelmingly high percentage of Americans share a set of core values including equality, liberty and progress. Most of us say that we are proud to be an American, but many today worry that some sort of civil war looms on our horizon. Most matter-of-factly describe our country as the land of opportunity while many simultaneously decry deep divisions rooted in racial and ethnic differences, a lack of empathy and insufficient dedication to the common good.

Most are at least somewhat hopeful about our future, some with conditions since after all we believe that tomorrow always holds the possibility of being a better day but Americans across our nation see our political leaders more dedicated to their own power and contributing to dividing us rather than bringing us together.

We surveyed 6,077 Americans in order to measure their dedication to elements of our central principles and followed up with open-ended interviews with 20 citizens from 18-82 across our country.

Sample of Words Americans Live By

All survey respondents reviewed 34 statements indicating the degree to which they not only believe but live by those words every day.

1. All people are equal, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, physical appearance, or any other personal characteristic.
2. Each of us is free to follow our own unique path in life.
3. Tomorrow always holds the possibility of being a better day.
4. Treat others as you would like them to treat you.
5. Protecting every American’s right to vote is important.
6. We are all, all of us, in this life together and we should look out for the well-being of everyone else.
7. Stand on your own two feet without reliance on other people, organizations or the government.
8. Success comes to those that dedicate themselves to making the most of their abilities.
9. Everyone can speak their mind in public regardless of the viewpoint without fear of punishment.

Open-ended Interview Questions

1. Would you say that you are proud to be an American, or not?
2. If you were speaking to someone not from the United States and you were asked to describe what America is like, what are some of the things you would say?
3. How would you describe Americans to someone that is not from the United States?
4. Although there is much talk about how divided our country is now, what do you think are the beliefs that hold us together?
5. What is it that divides us these days?
6. How hopeful are you about the future of our country?
7. And finally, how, if at all, do you think our country, we as Americans, our government and our way of life will change over the next 10 or twenty years?