

A CHECKLIST FOR CHANGING YOURSELF AND OUR COUNTRY (A SUMMARY OF THE KEY POINTS IN THIS BOOK)

“Nothing good happens by accident.”—Ken Blanchard

Below we summarize the key ideas and suggestions in this book in the form of a checklist. Please go through and pick what seems most relevant to you and where you think you can make a difference. Initially, think broadly: check areas where you are comfortable, but also consider stretching to learn and try new things that could be impactful.

You can put a question mark next to an idea if you are not sure, use double X's for highest priorities, rate items from 1 to 3—whatever works best for you!

We divided this checklist into categories under two major headings: Looking Inward and Acting Outward.

First, prioritize the Looking Inward areas where you think you can best develop and improve yourself. Consider one to three areas you think are most important to work on first, and perhaps mark other items that could be in your phase 2 plan. We realize that there is some overlap across the listed items so feel free to combine or edit if this feels helpful for you.

Second, try to prioritize three to five areas in the Acting Outward categories. Maybe mark others for the future.

While it might be tempting to do all the Inward items before taking on the Outward list, we believe you can work on both at the same time. Just resist getting in too far on the more challenging second list items until you are confident you have a good grasp on the most relevant items in the first list. Good luck!

LOOKING INWARD

Thinking and Seeing Differently

- _____ Consider how you might be more kind in daily life, including avoiding making assumptions about other people.
- _____ Review how often you think in terms of “us versus them” or find yourself speaking with disdain toward those on the other side of the political divide. How might you see others differently?
- _____ Consider situations when you may have criticized others without a heart to help and how you might want to act differently in the future.
- _____ Take proactive steps to expand your recognition of the positive work of others.
- _____ Internalize a mindset of dignity and respect for those with different political beliefs.
- _____ Embrace more openness and curiosity about those who have different ideas and opinions.
- _____ Consider how you can separate advocating for policy positions from disparaging people who have contrary opinions.
- _____ Identify your top values, reflect on how consistently you apply them, and consider what you might do differently to narrow any gap.
- _____ Consider ways to increase empathy, authenticity, vulnerability, and gratitude in your daily life.

Increase Your Knowledge and Understanding of the Forces Driving Polarization

- _____ Clearly understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy conflict.
- _____ Increase your awareness of factors creating unhealthy conflict and division, and especially how they may be influencing you.
- _____ Consider where you might fit on the Hidden Tribes spectrum, focusing on whether you are in a wing group or the exhausted majority and whether you might want to change.
- _____ Review how social change happens and consider how your talents might apply.

Reflect on How You Are Being Influenced in Unhealthy Ways

- _____ Identify forces driving division that are most influential in your daily life.
- _____ Consider whether you may be contributing to the polarization problem and, if so, what might you do differently.
- _____ Reflect on your use of media and social media, how these are influencing you, and whether you might want to make changes.
- _____ Consider the extent to which you may be influenced by misinformation or disinformation and if you are experiencing barriers to critical thinking.
- _____ Consider whether you fall into behavior of shaming others or encouraging/admiring those who shame others.
- _____ Reflect on whether the political divide is negatively impacting your health and what steps you could take to become healthier.
- _____ Consider whether politics is negatively impacting your relationships with family, friends, or others, and what steps you could take to improve these relationships.

Build on Your Life History

- _____ Reflect on the decisions that shaped who you are today and actions you took that impacted others.
- _____ Reviewing your personal history and life experiences, identify future steps where you might contribute to positive change.
- _____ Consider the needs of your community and how you could promote citizen-led solutions and perhaps become a civic entrepreneur.
- _____ Decide to invest more time and energy in personal self-development.
- _____ Review the forces (both positive and negative) impacting our country and identify areas where you might best build on past life experiences to help reduce polarization.

Embrace the Courage to Change and Grow

- _____ Consider how you could contribute to a moral reawakening in our country.
- _____ Identify why and how you might want to change, and what would help you get started.
- _____ Examine how your willingness to change aligns with your personal goals and values.
- _____ Consider how you can be more courageous and resilient when there may be risk or setbacks.
- _____ Identify and implement steps to embrace more moral courage when facing popular opposition, indignity, or risk to personal reputation.

ACTING OUTWARD

Develop Key Skills

- _____ Raise up your self-leadership skills and model positive behaviors that can influence others.
- _____ Improve your ability to engage in courageous conversations using LAPP skills: listening, acknowledgment, pivot, and perspective.
- _____ Strengthen your critical thinking skills to address the polarization challenge.
- _____ Develop your capacity and skills for effectively leading others.
- _____ Develop confidence and practice in standing up to people on your own political side when facing pushback for engaging with those with different political viewpoints.

Apply New Skills for Both Impact and Self-Improvement

- _____ Seek opportunities to connect rather than engaging in fight, flight, or avoidance when facing difficult conversations.
- _____ Apply the braver conversation skills in interactions with family, friends, neighbors, and strangers.
- _____ Seek out and engage with people who have political opinions different from yours.
- _____ Positively engage with work colleagues whose political views are different from your own.
- _____ Think global and act local to develop a personal path to help address the polarization challenge.
- _____ If you are inclined toward political activism, integrate a bridge-building component.

Offer Your Leadership Talents

- _____ Consider how you might apply vision, relationship building, and persistence to build a positive result in your community or state.
- _____ Model behavior as a change leader that will inspire others to act in ways that will better our country.
- _____ Make a plan to develop trust, promote a climate of purpose and connection, and attract others to the cause.
- _____ Listen and empathize with both allies and adversaries, giving voice to grievances and concerns.
- _____ Lead change by communicating emotional, visceral messages to move hearts and minds, offering more enticing appeals than those of conflict entrepreneurs.
- _____ Proactively reach out to individuals and organizations, advocating in a positive way in the face of potential obstacles.
- _____ Work with businesses to elicit their support to actively help bridge the national divide.
- _____ Publicly challenge the messages of conflict entrepreneurs or apply their methods in a more positive way to become a civic entrepreneur.

Join Organizations and Groups Addressing the Polarization Challenge

- _____ Embrace the concept that people who join organizations can foster a moral reawakening in our country.
- _____ Educate yourself about Braver Angels and other organizations that are addressing the polarization challenge.
- _____ Find your niche within an organization. For example, in Braver Angels, there are countless opportunities, including being an ambassador, organizer, workshop moderator, leader of a local alliance, and more.