



November 10th, 2020

Unity

COMMON GROUND

Written by: Jesse LaDousa, Chief Operating Officer

In light of last week's election and the corresponding aftermath that ensued (and likely will for weeks if not months to come), I have been thinking a lot about the fractured nature of the citizens of this country. Regardless of your political affiliation, we can likely all agree, that as a nation, we are deeply divided. Each side is digging in their heels more and more, leaving a great chasm in the middle where common ground used to be found.

Common ground and compromise are how things get done in government. Turns out it's also how things get done in business, and with your spouse and your children too. We've somehow come to believe that all our decisions are part of some zero-sum game. I must be right; therefore, they must be wrong. My opinion is valid; therefore, their opinion is faulty.

The world has always existed with shades of grey, not pure black and white. It's part of what makes us human and provides the opportunity to learn from each other. My

personal experience navigating life isn't comparable to anyone else. So how could I expect someone else to have the exact same viewpoints as I do?

We work with team members all over the world; with different cultures, languages, backgrounds, and experiences. Imagine how much less successful we would be if we approached our projects by telling those team members how to think, how to act, and how to do the most minute aspects of their jobs. We'd end up with sub-optimal output, unhappy team members, and unsatisfied clients.

Instead, we embrace those differences. We listen to our teams. We learn from them and work together to modify process, drive continuous improvement, and all align on the notion that what's best for the project is the most important thing.

There is a lot of anger, frustration, and division in our country right now. Unity won't be easy and certainly won't

be quick. We have swung the pendulum too far to one side and bringing it back will take work, empathy, and listening to begin rebuilding trust in each other.

The first step on that journey is to put down the defenses, seek out someone with a different opinion and listen to them....really listen to them and hear why they feel the way they do. You don't have to come away agreeing with their position, but you will be much better off because you'll have gained some insight.

Take these skills and translate them to your teams as well. Teach your employees to actively listen to their teams and solicit input, feedback, and ideas on a daily basis. Gain insight into why a certain team member is so passionate about a subject. Take away new ideas outside of your current thinking. Find common ground, compromise, and be more successful.



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