



# We might lose the election (This is why)

BY JOEY GARCIA / [@AskJoeyGarcia](https://twitter.com/AskJoeyGarcia)

**Sorry to be the bearer of common sense,** but if we “just vote” we may lose our democracy. The “Just Vote” campaign doesn’t acknowledge the real work that must happen alongside voting—such as learning to have civil conversations with people whose views oppose ours. Here’s what must happen before Nov. 3:

**Revive civil dialogue:** Reach out to 10 friends in swing states and have a conversation about politics. Be civil or, better yet, be vulnerable. As author Brenda Salter McNeil (*Becoming Brave: Finding the Courage to Pursue Racial Justice Now*), notes: “Partisanship is about what party you choose. Politics is about the policy that impacts people’s lives and we should all be talking about that.”

Honest conversation can heal our divided country—and convert conservatives. In 2016, when a friend announced his support for Donald Trump, I nearly ended our friendship. Instead, after Trump boasted he could grab women “by the pussy,” I called my friend to say: “I’ve been sexually harassed, and it feels like being punched in the face on the job. It’s painful to hear Trump behaving as though women are property.”

When Trump slammed immigrants, I called again: “I’m a person of color and an immigrant. Trump supports the Klu Klux Klan. That’s disturbing. I don’t see you aligning with white supremacists.” I kept a heart-centered dialogue going with him and with other Trump-supporting acquaintances because studies show people vote based on feelings, not rational thought. On election day, my friend called: “I was in the voting booth and heard your voice in my head. I voted for Hillary.” Days later, several Republican acquaintances told me the same thing. Imagine that action sweeping the country.

**School yourself on tech:** Social media is a behavior modification system. Its algorithms increase engagement by

stoking negativity toward views that oppose our own. As digital philosopher and author Jaron Lanier said recently in GQ magazine: “In exchange for likes and retweets and public photos of your kids, you are basically signing up to be a data serf for companies that can make money only by addicting and then manipulating you.” Voter, heal thyself! Slash your screen time. Practice compassion and curiosity while listening to others in real life. Free yourself from serfdom by protecting your brain’s neural network.

## Secure your digital footprint:

Hackers have interfered in previous U.S. elections; don’t

help them. Set your online privacy settings to limit data collection and sharing. Delete unused email addresses. Type your name into social media platforms to see whether your account is spoofed.

If so, report it. Stop forwarding viral videos in apps such as Messenger.

Most have AI embedded and are collecting data. Stop using social accounts to sign into other sites. Get a subscription to *Wired* magazine, too. “The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all,” said President John F. Kennedy in 1963. It’s still true.

Election night may trump Halloween as the scariest night of the year—unless Democrats start talking to Republicans and undecided voters. Evidence doesn’t matter. Positive emotions do. So, speak up. Tell memorable, values-based personal stories that illustrate the danger of another four years with President Trump. □



Email Joey at [askjoey@newsreview.com](mailto:askjoey@newsreview.com). Give your name, telephone number (for verification purposes only) and question—all correspondence will be kept strictly confidential



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