# Disagree Better: Overcoming Political Polarization

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## Speakers:

Speaker A - 21.26%

Speaker B - 50.11%

Speaker C - 28.63%

## Notes:

- Sebastian Niles, Governor Spencer J. Cox and Rob Willer talk about their values. Niles grew up in a small town in central Utah. Utah leads the nation in volunteering and charitable giving. How did these influence his decision to run for governor?
  
- Today is Constitution day. The idea that community is breaking down across the United States. When you lose community, um, you lose those ties. And politics, as religious participation is declining, political participation is rising. The only way to fix it is to change what's driving it and causing it.
  
- About 70% of Americans hate what's happening in politics today. We have a perception gap that's 30% bigger than it actually is. The more that we connect with each other, the more we trust each other.
  
- Rob Bellini: The disagree better initiative was developed by the National Governors Association. People reported higher levels of openness to having conversations across political lines. Even strong partisans supported the governors that took part in them more after seeing them do this. The effects are not game changingly large, but that it made a difference is really meaningful.
  
- This is less about the high stakes political landscape and more about all of us. We found that serving other people and getting close, getting proximate with people who are different than us, it's really hard to hate up close. Turn off cable news and social media. Have the conversations.
  
- We do have a survey because we want feedback and perspectives. Thank you again for everyone and hope you have an incredible week here at dreamforce. Enjoy.

[00:00:05](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=5.0) **Speaker A**

Please welcome Sebastian Niles, Governor Spencer J. Cox and Rob Willer. Um, well, first, I just want to welcome you all and just thank you again for making the choice to spend this part of your day here with us. Really excited about this conversation, uh, today. Um, so, actually, look, governor, let's, uh, sort of start with you. Um, so how many of you have heard of pollinators or bees or beehives? Anyone? How many of you knew, actually, that Utah was the great beehive state?

[00:00:44](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=44.0) **Speaker B**

A couple of you. All right. All right. I like that we got a few out there.

[00:00:47](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=47.0) **Speaker A**

Um, but look on sort of this concept, talk to us a little bit about, uh, your values. What are the values, whether from your family, uh, community, growing up, meeting people not just across your great state, but really across the country. But tell us a little bit more about you.

[00:01:02](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=62.0) **Speaker B**

Yeah. Thank you, Sebastian. It's so good to be here with all of you. And, um, I grew up in a very small town, a town of about 1200 people in the mountains of central Utah. And it's on the same farm that my great, great great grandfather settled over 160 years ago when those pioneers kind of came across the plains. And, uh, we don't get out much, as you can tell. After six generations, we're all still there. And so I learned those kind of values of community, of giving back. So my cousins are volunteer firefighters and, uh, emts. And there was just this idea in our small community that everybody has to do their part and give back. And so that certainly influenced me, by the way. I don't think that's unique to Utah or unique to small towns. I think that that ethos exists in lots of different places. Um, but in Utah, we do lead the nation in volunteering and we lead the nation in charitable giving. And I do think those are two things that have played a very important role, uh, in my life. And some of the choices I made in ultimately running for governor.

[00:02:04](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=124.0) **Speaker A**

Well, I mean, those principles, community, giving back, togetherness, I think those are universal values. But tell us a little bit more, kind of, how did these influence your decision to run for office and decide to have kind of this broader.

[00:02:17](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=137.0) **Speaker B**

Yeah, so I actually decided. I went to, um, I married my high school sweetheart. We went to college, uh, and then I went to law school back in Virginia. We decided to come back home, and I went to work for a big law firm in salt lake city. And, uh, we just had this moment where we knew we needed to move back and raise our kids on the same farm where we grew up. And, uh, I just moved back, and there was a vacancy on the city council in our small town. Now, my dad had served on the city council when I was a kid. He had served as the mayor of our town, um, which is not that cool. Everybody's dad serves as mayor in this small town. And that's the point of this story. I just moved back and a friend came to me and said, hey, we have a vacancy on the city council. And, uh, we want you to fill the vacancy. We're appointing someone. We'd like you to apply. And I was flattered and said, why do you think I would be good? And he said, well, the truth is, we're having a hard time getting anyone else to do it. Uh, and most importantly, we have a big legal issue, and we can't afford attorney. And we're hoping you will do free legal work for us if you serve on the city council. So I got paid like $100, um, to be on the city council, and did about $20,000 worth of free legal work, uh, for the city, for the little town. And that's how I got involved. I got to be the mayor after that, and then a county commissioner. Then I was in the legislature. And, uh, then our lieutenant governor resigned, and Governor Herbert asked me to, uh, serve as his lieutenant governor for seven and a half years before I ran for governor.

[00:03:47](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=227.0) **Speaker A**

Wow. Well, sort of. We've got a series of elections here, right, that, you know, sort of the governor has gone through. Look, one area that's inherent, you know, sort of in elections and, you know, globally, I think we're heading nearly 100 significant elections this year. We have various things in the US, state, local, and the like. Um, the nature of an election, is that, right? Voters get to choose, but then you got someone wins and then sort of someone doesn't. So if I can take all of you back about four years ago, and, um, some of you may know this, but I bet many of you don't. I didn't. In 2020, the governor ran an ad, and the ad had not only the governor, but actually had his opponent in the same ad. Um, tell us a little bit about the idea behind that. This also became part of the seeds of this idea of, could we disagree better and sort of bring together some alignment, even when people do perhaps have to make choices? Talk to us a little about the ad, the why, the what, and kind of looking back on it, you know, would you do that again?

[00:04:50](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=290.0) **Speaker B**

Yeah. Well, I hope so. I hope the answer to the second part is yes. So it's 2020. In fact, um, it's almost exactly this time of year. I think it was the last week in September or third week in September. I was talking to a friend. I was running for governor and things. If I can take you back four years, you may want to forget it, but it was a little crazy. We're in the middle of COVID There was a summer of discontent in cities. There had been riots. It's happening. Uh, we already had candidates undermining the legitimacy of elections that hadn't happened yet. Um, and so, uh, it's in that kind of mindset where friends said to me, I'm really worried about our country right now. Um, I'm worried that if Donald Trump wins, um, that the left is going to riot and burn it down. And, uh, her words, if Joe Biden wins, I worry that the right is going to shoot it up. Um, those were her words. And she said, isn't there something you could do? What am I going to do? I'm running for the governor of Utah. I don't know what to do. Uh, but those words kind of haunted me, um, all weekend. And so I did something crazy. Um, I called my opponent who was running as a democrat, and I just said, um, Chris Peterson. Great guy. I said, chris, hey, I have this crazy idea. What if we did an ad together? And in this ad, um, I say, I'm governor. I'm m. Spencer Cox, and I think you should vote for me. And you say, I'm Chris Peterson. I think you should vote for me. And we say something like, well, we disagree on lots of different things. We both agree that, uh, Utah is a great place and that we want it to be better. We both agree that, uh, we'll accept the results of the election, whatever they are. Um, and, uh, I just wish I could have seen his face when I made that request. By the way, for those of you who have not run for office, you don't call your opponent ever. That's just not something that happens until the night of the election. Um, I guess we don't do that anymore in lots of places. Uh, but, um, he paused for a moment and he's like, what's the catch? And I'm like, there is no catch. Uh, and to his credit, he said, I'm in. Um, we got together a week later. We kind of wrote the script together. Um, we appeared on stage together, filmed us both, uh, doing that back and forth. And, uh, to our surprise, it went viral. Millions and millions and millions of hits. Ah, we did media all over the country, um, all over the world, actually. Um, together. And, uh, I think it was refreshing. People really appreciated it.

[00:07:15](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=435.0) **Speaker A**

M. You heard from the governor, too, this concept of, hey, we may disagree on some items, but there are also areas that we agree on on which we're aligned. So let's go to the professor here. And by the way, before, uh, you may not know this, the governor and I were talking about all these academic papers that we each had read and actually thought were practically relevant, which may be a surprise or nothing, but what was your reaction to this idea of a disagree a better initiative?

[00:07:40](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=460.0) **Speaker C**

Well, when I first learned about it, I got excited about it precisely because it seemed to fit the problem really well. So the United States has a lot of disagreement. Uh, people disagree on the issues, people disagree on policies, candidates, and there's some evidence that, that disagreement's been increasing, especially amongst more politically knowledgeable and engaged folks. Uh, but what's much more clearly increasing is animosity across political lines. Uh, so the extent to which Democrats and Republicans say that they dislike each other has been increasing steadily for, uh, really about a half century now. Uh, and there's not really any evidence that it's going to abate, except just that it'll hit the limits of what we can measure. Uh, and it's not just dislike, there's hate. We find dehumanization across political lines concerning stuff. And it should be possible for us, in a well functioning democracy with solid institutions, good leadership, to have disagreement, which is inevitable, and manage that productively somehow, and turn it into policy, turn into governance leadership. And that's really the test. It's like, can you disagree in a functional way without, uh, so much animosity breaking out that it divides communities, destabilizes democracy and so on. Uh, so for me, it seemed like an initiative, uh, and just a tagline like a vision that fit the problem really well, because we're gonna disagree, but can we do it in a productive way?

[00:09:09](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=549.0) **Speaker A**

Yes, again, so thank you, everyone, for joining this very uplifting, positive kind of discussion here. Um, so one thing that you said is very important, rob of you thought that this potential solution, or a step towards solution disagree better initiative addressed the problem. Well, tell us a little bit more. How are you viewing the problem? I think by that you mean the problem is polarization.

[00:09:33](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=573.0) **Speaker B**

Right.

[00:09:33](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=573.0) **Speaker A**

But talk to us a little bit more about that.

[00:09:35](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=575.0) **Speaker C**

Sure, sure.

[00:09:36](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=576.0) **Speaker B**

Yeah.

[00:09:36](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=576.0) **Speaker C**

So, uh, polarization is something that we use in academic research a bit differently than people use it in the mass public. So, uh, everyday folks, when they think about polarization, I think they just kind of have this raw sense that divisions are increasing, uh, in the country. And that's not wrong. Uh, but we make this kind of critical distinction between the extent to which people disagree on the issues and policies, uh, and so on. That's attitudinal polarization, which I was saying, that's increasing some, and the extent to which people really dislike each other, that they dislike people that they perceive that they disagree with, and potentially even hate, or, uh, dehumanize them, or want to use violence against them, or what have you. And that's the thing that's more clearly increasing. And I would think that we should be able to get a super majority of folks together on that problem. The attitudinal polarization one is tough. That's why we have elections. Maybe you and I agree there's too much division. People need to agree more. Otherwise we can't get the supermajorities necessary to get things through the us government and make policy. Uh, but then your idea might be to solve it one direction and my idea is to solve it another. And so we don't, you know, it's hard to get consensus, uh, on that, but we should, you would think, be able to get an actual super majority of Americans to agree that we need to have civil discourse, and we need to be able to turn the temperature down on our divisions. So this is this big distinction, uh, that we draw in the polarization literature.

[00:11:01](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=661.0) **Speaker A**

Well, I mean, it's interesting because you could say we can align on and agree on the priorities or the problems or the solutions and so on, any of those, the priorities of problems, solutions, we could also disagree. But I mean, turning to you, governor, what do you see as some of the kind of drivers or causes of this reality of increased polarization, or is it actually a belief in polarization that may not actually be there as much as people think?

[00:11:31](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=691.0) **Speaker B**

Yeah. So there's been a tremendous amount of work done by rob at the depolarization lab at Stanford and other places on m. What's driving this? What's causing this? Um, you and I were talking backstage about this a little bit. Um, I want to go back to kind of the 1830s, um, when Alexis de Tocqueville comes here to the United States. And, um, I totally recognize that this group came to see Matthew McConaughey, not to hear the governor of Utah talk about Alexis de Tocqueville. I'm in, but stay with me because it matters. And by the way, today is Constitution day, so happy constitution day to all of you. Um, so, Alexis de. Tocqueville gets here and he sees something very unique, that these Americans are doing something different, um, that they form associations, that community really matters. When they need something done, they don't just wait for government to do it. They actually form an association. Now, some of these were religious associations, volunteer, um, associations. And there was something in the ethos that community really mattered, uh, to get things done. And that's who we are now. Fast forward a couple hundred years. Um, 24 years ago, I guess, uh, Robert Putnam writes a book called bowling alone. Some of you have read it and discovering this idea that community is breaking down across the United States. The institutions that historically had held us together, whether they be religious, um, familial, uh, these volunteer associations, um, think rotary clubs. Um, how many Rotarians do we have here today? Please raise your hands. Thank you. To the one Rotarian. 50 years ago, if I had asked this group how many Rotarians we had, half the hands would have gone up. These volunteer clubs that bring people together to do good things. And so we're now, the idea behind bowling alone was more people were bowling than ever before, but bowling leagues were disappearing, so people were literally bowling alone. And when you lose community, um, you lose those ties. We are built for connection as human beings. And if we don't find them in healthy places, we will seek them out in unhealthy places. So if I don't have any real friends or close associates and get to know my neighbors, um, at least we can hate the same people together on Facebook. Right? So we do this, we find our tribes. And politics, as religious participation is declining, um, political participation is rising. So we are finding our tribes there. And I think that's dangerous for sure. Right. Um, and it just makes it so that every election becomes the most important election of our lifetimes. And I'm here to tell you, this is not the most important election of our lifetime. But if we all believe that, then this kind of winner take all, it's life or death. I have to win. And then people can use that against us. So this is something that's been happening for a long time. The animosity. For 50 years, it's been rising, and people are starting to figure out how to take advantage of that. Uh, sorry, it's a long explanation, but I think it's really important to understand how we got here, because the only way to fix it is to change what's driving it and causing it. Mhm.

[00:14:42](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=882.0) **Speaker A**

Well, and even what prompted you to put together that ad? Having a beginner's mind around these topics and also feeling maybe we are empowered to take things in a more positive, sort of constructive direction.

[00:14:54](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=894.0) **Speaker B**

Sebastian, if I could. Uh, I just want to. Because you asked something that I didn't quite address, and I just want to check, uh, that box really quickly. You asked, are we. You kind of hinted that maybe we're not as divided as we think we are. And, um, the studies will say that's exactly true. If you actually interview a big group of Republicans and Democrats on an issue, um, and then kind of chart where their response is like, you'll find out we're about this far apartheid. Um, but if you ask Republicans what they think Democrats believe on that issue, and you ask Democrats what they think Republicans believe on that issue, the perception gap is that we're this far apart, and that perception gap is real. It's about 30%, uh, and it's dangerous. About 70% of Americans hate what's happening in politics today. We have a perception gap that's 30% bigger than it actually is. Um, and so we could solve some of these issues if we were talking to each other. But the worst part is not just that we're yelling at each other, but it's when we stop talking to each other, uh, that things get really dangerous, because we won't be able to solve any of those problems.

[00:16:01](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=961.0) **Speaker A**

And the point, the more that we connect with each other, the more we actually trust each other. And the less that we connect with each other, the more we distrust each other. So, Rob, coming to you. So, Rob actually analyzed this disagree better initiative. Right. And you had some findings and conclusions. Can you share with us a bit that evaluation of it? What were your findings, and by the way? You know, great question. Sorry. Raise your hand if you actually feel you really understand what this disagree better initiative is about. We had a couple. Okay, a lot of hands, but not everyone. Maybe also explain it a little bit.

[00:16:33](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=993.0) **Speaker B**

Well, and I should just note that when I became chair of the National Governors Association, I took that ad that we did in 2020, and I convinced a bunch of other governors to film ads like it with someone on the other side. And, uh, then Rob studied these ads.

[00:16:49](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1009.0) **Speaker C**

Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly. So, uh, when I saw these ads, I was excited, because I was like, oh, this seems like the kind of content that could potentially make a difference in terms of how much animosity we see across political lines in the US, amongst everyday folks like ourselves. And, uh, so I designed with Hagia Weiss, who's a, uh, brilliant postdoctoral scholar in my lab, we designed a large scale RCT, or experiment, where we were going to test when people see this content, when they see these governors actually communicating that you can break bread across political lines, that, uh, you can disagree on the issues and care about those issues a lot, but still talk it out, talk through those disagreements in a civil way at a table, uh, does that change people's attitudes? And what we found was that when we randomly assigned a diverse group of Americans to view a bunch of these public service announcements that the governor, uh, had made, that they reported higher levels of openness to having conversations across political lines, more, uh, openness to bipartisan cooperation, even if it meant, uh, sacrificing a little bit of what they want government to do, and also less animosity towards their partisan rivals, whoever's on the other side for them. So that's like pretty good effects. They're not like game changingly large effects. These are big problems. You're not going to change them in 330 2nd ads. Uh, but that it made a difference is really meaningful. And one thing that we found that I think was surprising and really interesting, which uh, Hagai and I are working on investigating more now, is that when we ask people, what do you think about these governors that are in these ads? Do you view them favorably? Would you vote for them if you could? And so on. Uh, we threw this in to kind of track. How does this pay off for politicians if they did something like this? Great, you can make a difference. But they might say, well, I'll just lose support in my base. I'll get primaried. I'm, um, out of there. I get replaced with somebody who would never do something like this. So, Governor Gox, I'd love to do this, but I can't do it. Uh, but we were like, well, what are people's responses to seeing people participate, uh, in these public service announcements? And we found they were positive, you know, that people, uh, even strong partisans, uh, the kind of people who vote in primaries and might be a threat to vote out somebody who participates in a public service announcement like this, supported the governors that took part in them more after seeing them do this. And to me that suggests that, uh, we haven't really tested this path out like the way of grace, if you will. And that when people see that, they maybe didn't even know they wanted to see it ahead of time, but they see it, they see the leadership it reflects, and they say, like, okay, that's a better way to go forward.

[00:19:34](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1174.0) **Speaker A**

Let's, uh, take this in a slightly different direction. So we're talking about areas that either have high stakes, or you may say sometimes low, medium stakes, but feels like very high stakes. Right. The outcome of an election, uh, who should be our political leaders, formal leaders, as opposed to the many different kinds of leaders who we have who may not be elected but have a very significant impact on all of us. But on this topic of agreeing and disagreeing and agreeing well or disagreeing, uh, well, and liking people who we may not totally say, yeah, I think you're exactly right. Are there any insights or lessons for our day to day lives? Like our everyday engagements with each other, with groups in any sort of set of contexts from this type of work? Or is this really only about the political high stakes landscape?

[00:20:20](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1220.0) **Speaker B**

Yeah. No, in fact, it's less about the high stakes political landscape and more about all of us. If we're waiting for our leaders in DC or in our state capitals to fix this problem, um, it's never going to happen. It really is about all of us and what we expect and what we demand, but it's about us. The first ad I did, um, as chair of the national governors association was with Governor Polis, Jared Polis, um, the governor of Colorado, a Democrat. And, uh, it was disagreeing better around the dinner table. And, uh, we talked about, um, can you get your maga uncle and your woke niece together and not hate each other? Right. And, uh, it's powerful. The lessons we've learned, again, from academics, from studies and from everyday engagement. Um, there are a couple things that all of us can do better. One is service. We, um, found that serving other people and getting close, getting proximate with people who are different than us, it's really hard to hate up close. It's a way to bridge those gaps and find we're not as far apart as we thought we were. Um, turning off cable news, uh, and social media. By the way, I'm eleven years sober. Um, I'm very proud. I stopped watching cable news a long time ago is really important because again, they're designed to give us anxiety and to divide us. They make money off dividing us. They do. Social media, same thing. The less we're doing that and the more we're getting closer to people. The last thing I will just say on this is when you do find yourself having a discussion with someone different than you, where it may be a little hostile. There's kind of a magic phrase that I've learned that works and it's, um. Tell me more about why you believe that way. Um, tell me more. Shows you're interested in the other person that you really care. It gives me an opportunity to calm down a little bit because I'm usually a little fired up. Um, it makes them articulate why they believe what they believe. Uh, and it makes them much more open to listening to you. So there's some persuasion and conversation that can happen, and you might just discover you're not as far apart as you thought you were.

[00:22:19](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1339.0) **Speaker A**

M and the tell me more for some might be better than the why. Why do you believe that?

[00:22:23](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1343.0) **Speaker B**

Yes, it's much better. Much better. I promise.

[00:22:26](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1346.0) **Speaker A**

Tell me more. That's interesting. What are your thoughts, Rob?

[00:22:28](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1348.0) **Speaker C**

Well, it's actually striking how much that lines up with the data that we've collected I, uh, probably got from you. No, I think you probably figured it out. It takes us years to figure this stuff out. So, uh, yeah, the data really lines up really well with the governor's description, uh, of what we found works. Uh, one thing is definitely have the conversations. I think a lot of times the problem is the conversations we're not having. And we make these assumptions about what everybody on the other side is thinking, uh, and run towards the fire. Because those conversations, in our research, anyway, they're better than people think they are. They think they're going to end in, you know, horrible arguments and they don't as much. And then entering those conversations with some kind of sincere curiosity, ideally, and trying to figure out like, where's the person coming from. Like, how did they come to have the view that they did? Uh, and then I think also when you go to share out your view, uh, embedding it in some story or narrative of how you came to that view, uh, that allows the person to understand it's a human being that has this view. And if they traded places with them, they probably would too. And so this person's not unreasonable, immoral, terrible person. If I'm to get down to it, I have a view on gun control that's shaped by an experience with violence that I had and the inferences I've made from that.

[00:23:51](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1431.0) **Speaker B**

And I have a view on gun control that comes from growing up in a very rural area where we hunted when we were eleven years old. That's the idea. Not unreasonable.

[00:24:02](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1442.0) **Speaker C**

We can begin to understand why we disagree on that issue while being reasonable people. Uh, and also, like the governor's saying, when you really like, listen to somebody and where they're coming from, you can pick up information too, about what they care most about. And that if you did want to be persuasive, is the beginnings of being persuasive. It's knowing what it is they value most. What are their moral values, identities, or, uh, what faith, community, if any, they come from whatever. What are their interests? How do I connect this issue to those things? Because when you ask somebody to change their mind on an issue and you don't connect it to what they care a lot about, you're essentially asking them to be a different person, and it's just not going to happen.

[00:24:43](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1483.0) **Speaker A**

So many things to unpack there. Now you have a plan for your Thanksgiving or friendsgiving dinner tables. Your mileage may vary.

[00:24:50](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1490.0) **Speaker C**

Indeed.

[00:24:51](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1491.0) **Speaker B**

So.

[00:24:51](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1491.0) **Speaker A**

But wait, let's actually though, uh, so two questions. One, is there a more sort of formal or specific kind of role that institutions or governments can play in facilitating either productive discussion, productive disagreement, or. Not really?

[00:25:09](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1509.0) **Speaker B**

Yeah, no, for sure. And that curiosity piece is so important, and it applies to individuals, but it also applies to institutions, and it's one of the things that we're encouraging. So, yes, of course, elected leaders have a role to play, but so do business leaders. Um, you know, I talk to a lot of CEO's. I come from the business world where our slack channels are being torn apart by divisive issues. And encouraging this, all of these concepts we've talked about, and facilitating them as well, giving people opportunities, inviting in, you know, groups like, like us who can come and speak on these issues can really make a difference. And then finding productive ways to understand that half the people you work with are probably voting for someone, someone else, somebody you disagree with. And, uh, getting to know them better and understanding them will help the culture, not just at work, and not just in our homes, but all across our country.

[00:25:58](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1558.0) **Speaker C**

Mhm. I mean, it's a larger issue, but I think that one of the difficult things about the american system is the winner take all electoral system, which is kind of at every single level, which research shows tends to push us into two parties. Two parties is not a lot. That's not a lot of parties for such a diverse country. You know, we have regional diversity, social class diversity. We have really high levels of racial and ethnic diversity, religious diversity. We're trying to manage all that with just two groups. It's a lot. And I do think ideally we would have something more like a parliamentary system, proportional representation. It's a whole other academic thing to get into.

[00:26:34](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1594.0) **Speaker A**

So there's a lot to unpack here. Yeah, no, this is very important. Okay, so, governor, different question. Wasn't really into prep or aligned, but. Okay. How many of you have been to the National Governors association? Look at that. We had a couple. Okay, so not just the disagree, better initiative, and you chaired it, but just bring us into the room. Like, what really happens when you get a bunch of governors or a bunch of very important states? What do you guys do?

[00:26:59](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1619.0) **Speaker B**

Well, I know we're about out of time, so I'll be brief, but I wish all of you could be in the room to watch governors discuss the biggest issues. Um, housing is a great example. So in our meetings in February, we're all together and we're all trying to figure out, um, how to solve the housing crisis in our country. Housing prices are too high. We've got to build more. How do we do this? And, um, it would have been very hard for you to tell who were the Republicans and who were the democrats in that room. Um, the idea behind, again, on Constitution day, I'll just give a shout out behind federalism, this idea that, um, the states would be co equal partners with the federal government. Uh, and we need more of that. These regional differences are really important. Um, it's okay that every state's not the same. That's a good thing, but we're stealing ideas. The states are supposed to be laboratories of democracy, and we actually work very closely together. Uh, just, uh, I'll finish here. But, um, Frank Luntz, the pollster, said that the governors are the last adults in the room when it comes to politics. That's mostly true. There are a few at the kids table. Um, but, um, we work very closely together, and we steal ideas to solve real problems. Potholes aren't partisan. We actually have to get stuff done, unlike congress sometimes. So, um, it's really cool to be part of one of the last bastions of bipartisanship left in our country.

[00:28:23](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1703.0) **Speaker A**

Well, on an uplifting note, we do have a survey because we want feedback and perspectives. And you're like, why couldn't this have gone for 2 hours instead of only 30 minutes? Uh, but also just a very big thank you. Thank you again for everyone and hope you have an incredible week here at dreamforce.

[00:28:38](https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/ihCMeOxgHmRSuD60kwFNdzT8K_X3lBG7?seek=1718.0) **Speaker B**

Thanks, everyone. Enjoy.