

re-act

HOPES & FEARS
ELECTION DAY 2016



POST-CONVERSATION TRANSCRIPT

COMMUNITY
CONVERSATIONS
AN OMA/CPGC COLLABORATION

Hopes and Fears Election Day 2016

re.act: Community Conversation Series

Sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) and Center for Peace and Global Citizenship (CPGC)

Friday, Sept. 30, 2016 CPGC Cafe, Stokes 104

SESSION OVERVIEW

What opportunities does this election present us? What perils does it reveal? How do we dialogue about these concerns with our friends and loved ones? Ethan Lyne '19 and Simon Poser '19 of *No Labels*, and James Pabarue '72 of *MAAG* help us create an environment where we can discuss these ideas amongst people from all viewpoints.

[re]CC COMMITTEE

- Stephanie Zukerman, *CPGC Program Coordinator*
- Benjamin Hughes, *OMA Program Coordinator*
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- Ananya Kumar BMC '18, *CPGC Intern*
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FACILITATOR

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

- Ethan Lyne '19, *No Labels*
- Simon Poser '19, *No Labels*
- James Pabarue '72, *MAAG*

GUIDING QUESTION(S)

- What opportunities does this election present us? What perils does it reveal?
- How do we dialogue about these concerns with our friends and loved ones?

SESSION NOTES

- In order to create an environment that would make space for people entering this conversation from any political leaning, we use an activity called “Hopes & Fears.”
- Each person is given two notecards, one blue and one red, and asked to write something they are hopeful about on the red card, and something they are fearful of on the blue.
 - We intentionally chose these colors for the cards and also mixed the word/color association on purpose between blue/hope and fear/red.
 - It was noticeably difficult for people to write a hope on the red card without thinking about it intentionally, which further illustrates a point about paying attention and making deliberate choices when it comes to the election as a whole.
- We collected and shuffled the cards, redistributing them to make sure everyone had a new hope and fear. From there, each person read the cards they received aloud and talked about whether these were feelings they shared.
 - Framing the conversation around the personal experiences of hope and fear allowed people to speak to their beliefs about the election, the government, and the country without the burden of making blanket statements.
 - It also allowed the rest of us to receive these ideas with respect, instead judging the speaker, as what they were reading could have belonged to anyone in the space, but assuredly belonged to someone in the space.
 - Giving the speaker the opportunity to respond to physically holding someone else’s views allowed us to have honest discourse without the rhetoric of debate.
- Originally, we intended to have a second half to the conversation that was a more free flowing conversation about how to have these discussion with people outside the circle; however, as the hour closed we realized that what we just modeled is a means of having these conversations with or without the notecards.
 - It was a very literal exercise in listening to acknowledge, even when you cannot identify/understand, and speaking from personal experience.

Below are the collective hopes and fears of the seventeen people who held our space:

HOPES

- My hope is that, despite all this election has been, when the votes are tallied in November, this country demonstrates a clear message about what is acceptable, and what is not.
- Hope that the candidate who ends up winning the election does what's best for the country (keeping everyone safe)
- My hope is that I will have more faith in the values of the citizens of my country and also how those values drive our decisions
- I hope that Hillary's election will inspire change for the better even if she doesn't do so actively
- BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
- I REALLY hope Hillary Clinton is elected
- More citizens practice their right/responsibility to vote based on a thoughtful reflection about policy (not knee-jerk, unreflective reaction to candidates)
- Continuing the conversations that have begun that focus on addressing US History
- Hope is that the middle-class will be empowered & that the youth of the US will be encouraged by better higher education opportunities and that accessible employment will be made accessible to many
- My fear is that the sentiments proliferated during this election wil echo onwards, more openly hurting those that are not in the "mainstream" of the US
- That it opens up dialog on moving beyond a two-party political structure. The dissatisfaction people seem to have with Trump & Clinton warrants this conversation
- I hope that, ultimately, people check themselves and vote I for their conscious rather than their fears. I hold people to the standard of being able to do that.
- The president won't be too extreme about immigrant issues, knowing how to build economy well
- First Women President of the US! What a precedent!
- Hillary will be judged fairly (by the media and the public) in the coming months
- Consistency in policies
- That Hillary will become the first female president and hire advisors who will push her to address the right issues
- I hope this election proves we don't live in a post racial society
- People become more engaged in politics/social policy at the local level with their communities

- The next president can get gun control measures to pass
- I HOPE THAT ALL THOSE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE HAVE ACCESS TO THAT AND FEEL MOVED AND EMPOWERED TO TAKE ACTIVE PART IN THIS ELECTION
- Acknowledgment of the experience of the candidates = +empathy
- That the popularity of Trump serves as a wake up call to “liberals” to engage with “conservatives”
- I hope that the senate will switch from Republican to Democratic in November
- That there will be a movement of national reconciliation and the country will recover from the election
- Hillary wins
- Hillary will symbolize the need to come together as a community whether people are angry or not to realize that if we want change, it will have to be communal, rather than politicized. We won't have to fear each other anymore.

FEARS

- Well, simply, that Trump will win
- Social Security Disbandment
- If Trump loses, he contests the results and starts a civil war
- If Donald Trump's wall idea actually becomes true
- Social instability
- The president is very immigrant unfriendly
- Increased racism in popular rhetoric
- Apathy. Low voter turnout and increased disengagement from our democratic process
- I fear in the end, we will see fear and anger win over reason and justice. I am scared about what that will say for the state of our country
- I fear that another scandal will emerge from the Clintons and threaten the success of Democrats
- I fear that the election will begin a phase of regression or something almost as bad: stagnance
- The civil unrest that will take place pending the results of the winner
- VIOLENT RESPONSE IF TRUMP LOSES

- That my sister and mother will live in a world where the man representing us as a nation does not respect them as citizens
- This country will continue to be divided, continue to be plagued by violence, and minority gaps will be marginalized and continue to be the focus of violence and racism
- That no matter who wins, people will turn against each other, and nothing will change in Washington
- That even if good candidates win on a national level, candidates empowered by Trump will win locally
- The copious amounts of bigotry, racism, misogyny, sexism, and hatred/division will become normalised to the point where when we hear it we are no longer surprised and shocked by it
- Polarization
- That Democrats will lose
- Trump will win because people didn't vote
- Young people become disengaged no matter the nomination outcome, or that isolation occurs
- I FEAR THAT I'M ONLY LISTENING TO/HEARING THOSE WITH WHOM I ALREADY AGREE AND AM TOO EASILY DISMISSING THOSE WHO ARE COMING FROM A DIFFERENT PLACE-P.O.V.
- The media will continue to judge both candidates by different standards
- I REALLY fear that the same privileged people insisting that Clinton needs to be elected won't be willing to do the work that needs to be done after she is (hopefully) elected