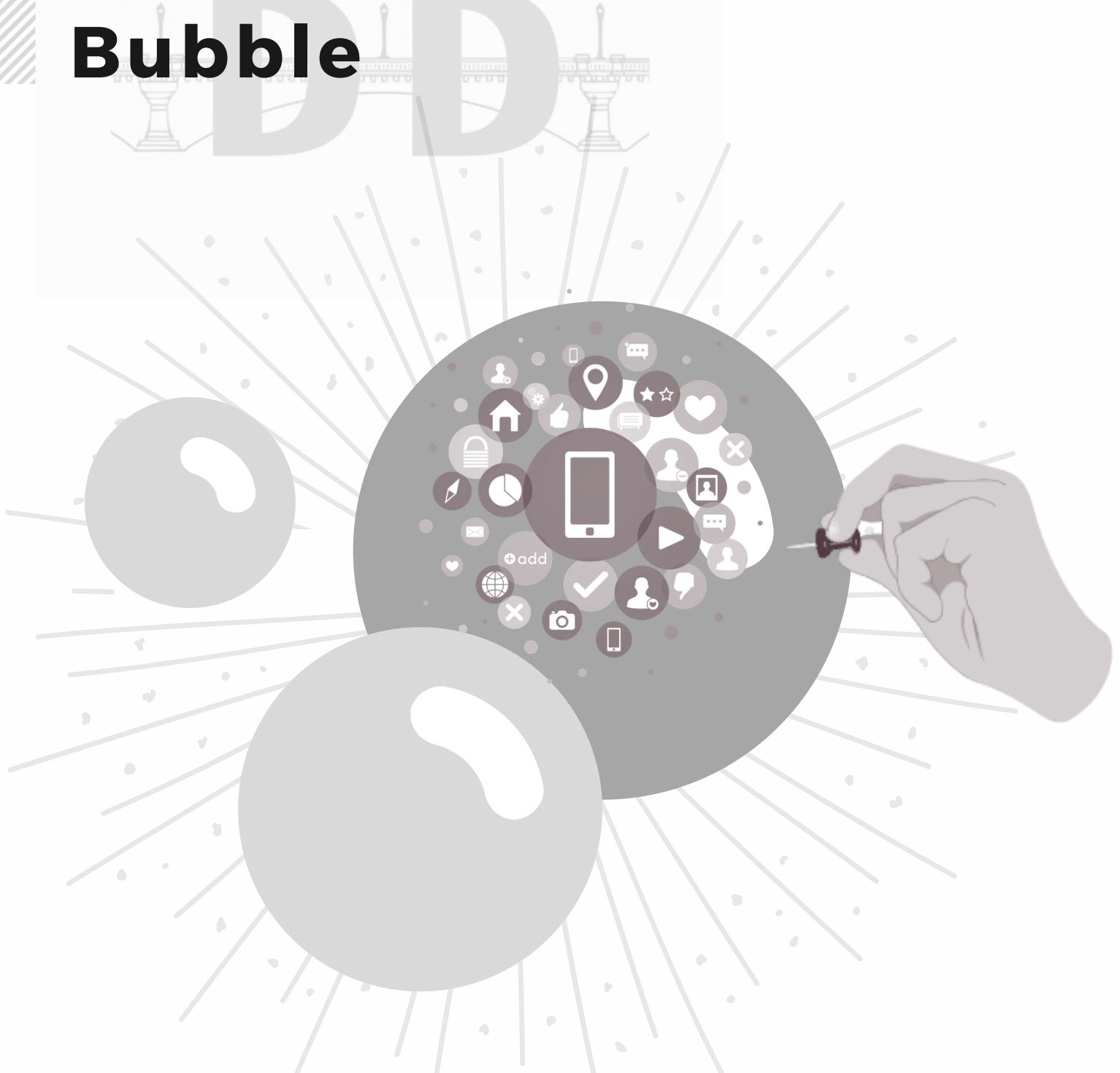


BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

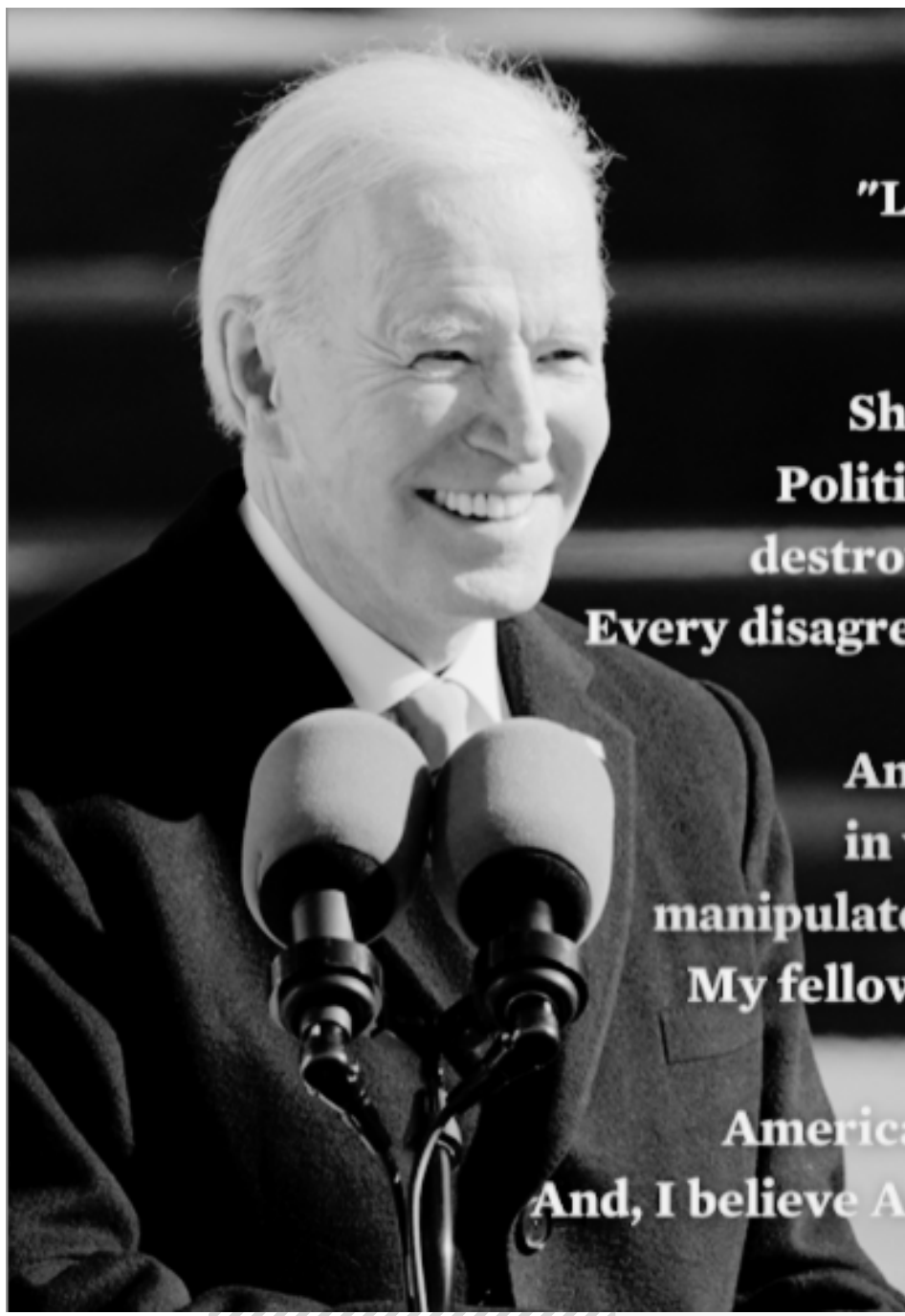


Pop the Disinformation Bubble



Why is this important?

In his inaugural address on January 20, 2021, President Joe Biden challenged America to fight disinformation.



**"Let us listen to one another.
Hear one another.
See one another.
Show respect to one another.
Politics need not be a raging fire
destroying everything in its path.
Every disagreement doesn't have to be a
cause for total war.
And, we must reject a culture
in which facts themselves are
manipulated and even manufactured.
My fellow Americans, we have to be
different than this.
America has to be better than this.
And, I believe America is better than this."**

- President Biden



**BUILDING BRIDGES
FOR
AMERICA**



How do we do it?

We will follow President Biden's advice to hear one another and see one another by expanding our understanding of how people can believe the lies. First, we will learn about disinformation, why it is happening, and what you can do to help stop its spread.

Be Informed



**Inform with
Empathy**

Handbook Goals

IDENTIFY DISINFORMATION AND KNOW HOW IT BECAME PREVALENT

LEARN HOW TO NAVIGATE MODERN MEDIA.

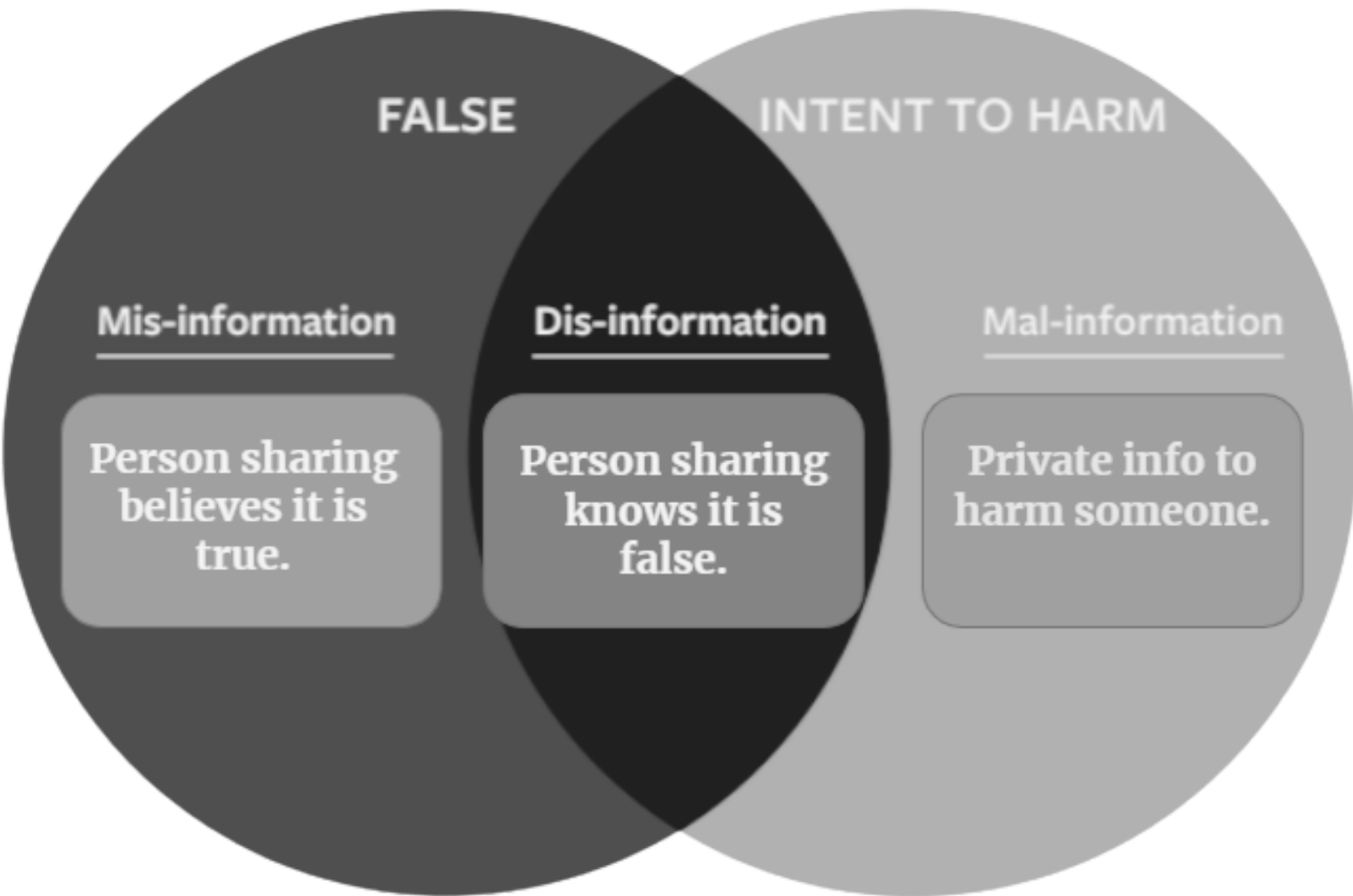
UNDERSTAND HOW PEOPLE CAN BELIEVE THE LIES.

LEARN PRACTICAL WAYS YOU WILL HELP PEOPLE SEEK THE TRUTH.

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What is disinformation?



FOR MORE INFORMATION: RECOMMENDED READING
UNESCO "JOURNALISM, FAKE NEWS, AND
DISINFORMATION"
[HTTPS://EN.UNESCO.ORG/FIGHTFAKENEWS](https://en.unesco.org/fightfakenews)



CATEGORIES OF MIS/DISINFORMATION



SATIRE OR PARODY

No intention to cause harm but has potential to fool



MISLEADING CONTENT

Misleading use of information to frame an issue or individual



IMPOSTER CONTENT

When genuine sources are impersonated



FABRICATED CONTENT

New content is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm



FALSE CONNECTION

When headlines, visuals or captions don't support the content



FALSE CONTEXT

When genuine content is shared with false contextual information



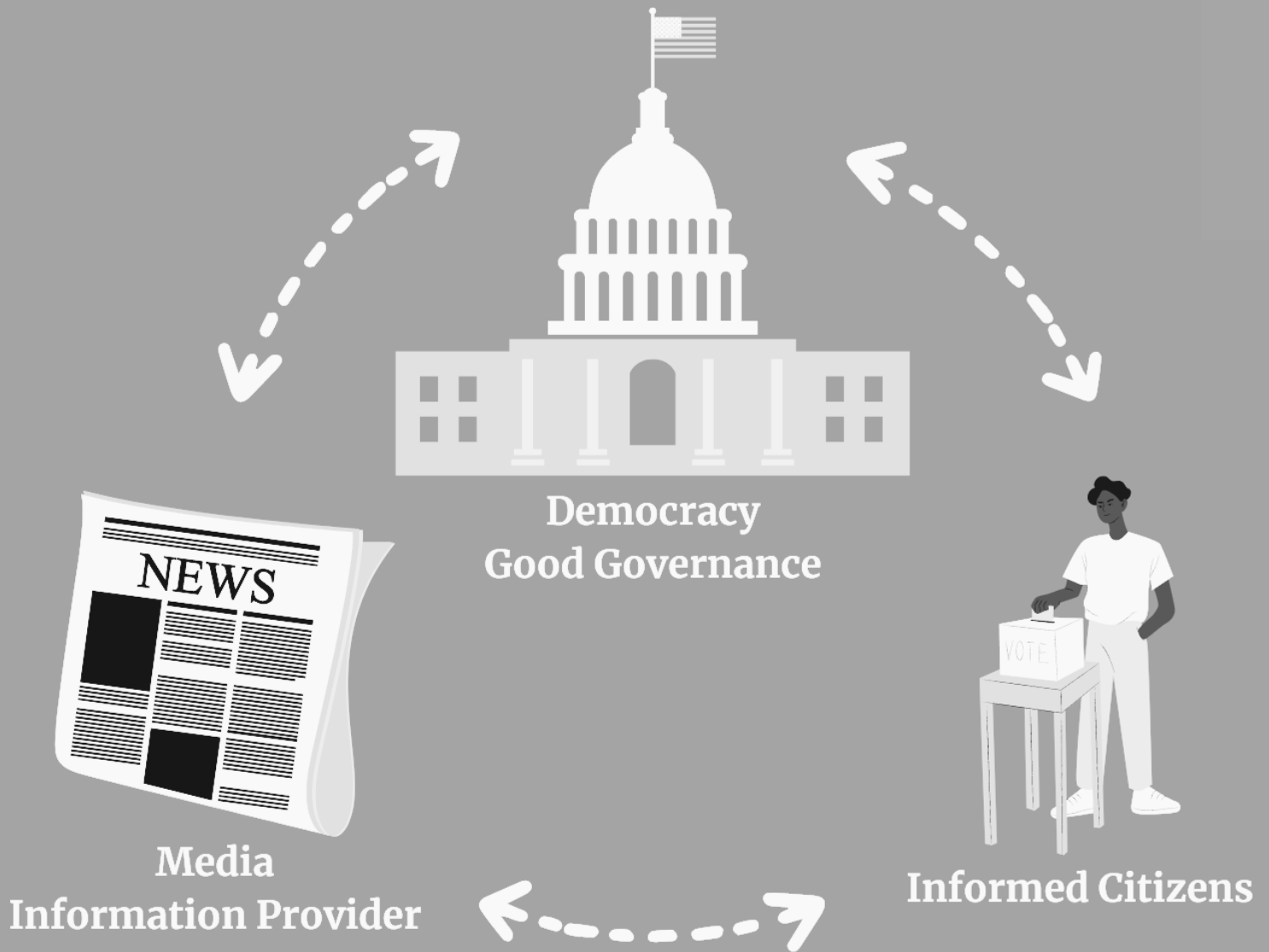
MANIPULATED CONTENT

When genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive

Above, the categories further to the left are more misinformation. Like satire is not intended to be taken seriously, but it is false. Another is the false connection between the headline and the content of the story, aka clickbait. Then to the right is disinformation from bad actors whose intent is to deceive and cause harm.

NEXT TIME YOU SCROLL THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA, CAN YOU IDENTIFY EXAMPLES THAT FIT INTO EACH OF THESE CATEGORIES?

HOW DID WE GET HERE?



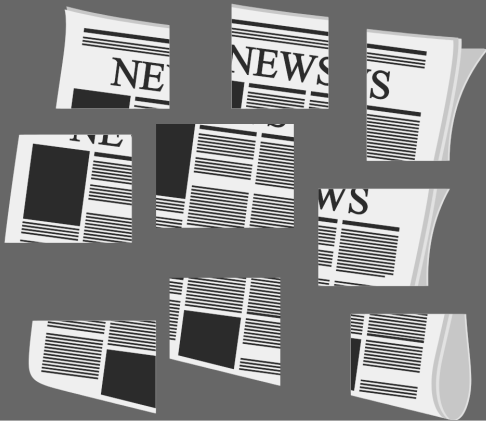
Democratic systems have relied on journalism to inform citizens with the truth so they can make sound democratic decisions. But what happens when the media fundamentally changes?



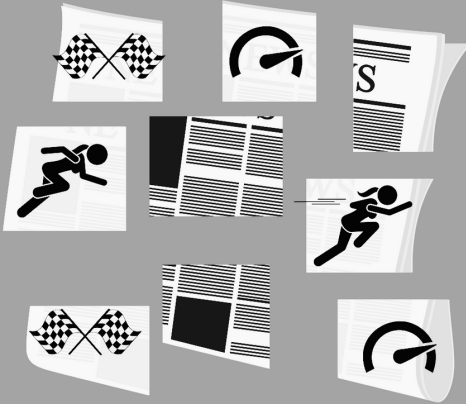
WHAT HAPPENED?



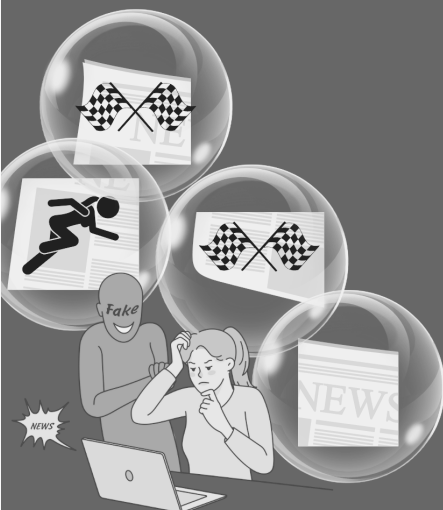
Prior to the 1980's, news was seen as a public service. Media providers used a gatekeeper model where information was fact-checked before it was published. Media outlets saw news as a public service.



In the 1980's and 1990's news shifted to a commodity. Advertising went from a national audience where everyone got the same information to being into divided niche markets where people were marketed to differently. The news followed suit to offer many media outlets where people got to pick their news.



The cable news that was growing in the 1990's favored speed over accuracy. Some news sources were no longer a reliable gatekeeper providing the truth. And this began to erode trust in the news.



Starting in the late 1990's with the rise of online news, trust was further eroded as news became unchecked and instant with no penalty for being wrong. The algorithms invited bad actors to flood media with false information. And the explosion in the number of news outlets put each one of us in our own media bubble.

MICHAEL GRIFFIN'S COURSE AT MACALESTER COLLEGE

[HTTPS://WWW.MACALESTER.EDU/NEWS/2017/04/HOW-NEWS-HAS-CHANGED/](https://www.maclester.edu/news/2017/04/how-news-has-changed/)

WHAT HAPPENED?



To recap, there used to be few sources of news. Those sources used the gatekeeper model- Journalistic practice fact checked before publishing.

There was a shared experience of the news.

This allowed for a sense of trust and community.

Now we swim in a soup of information.

We are our own gatekeepers.

We create our own media bubbles, our own reality, even our own truth.

This creates a sense of loneliness, fear, and it makes us seek community.



Add to this the bad actors with their intentionally misleading content.

Their harmful intent further lowers trust and further isolates us into our own realities.

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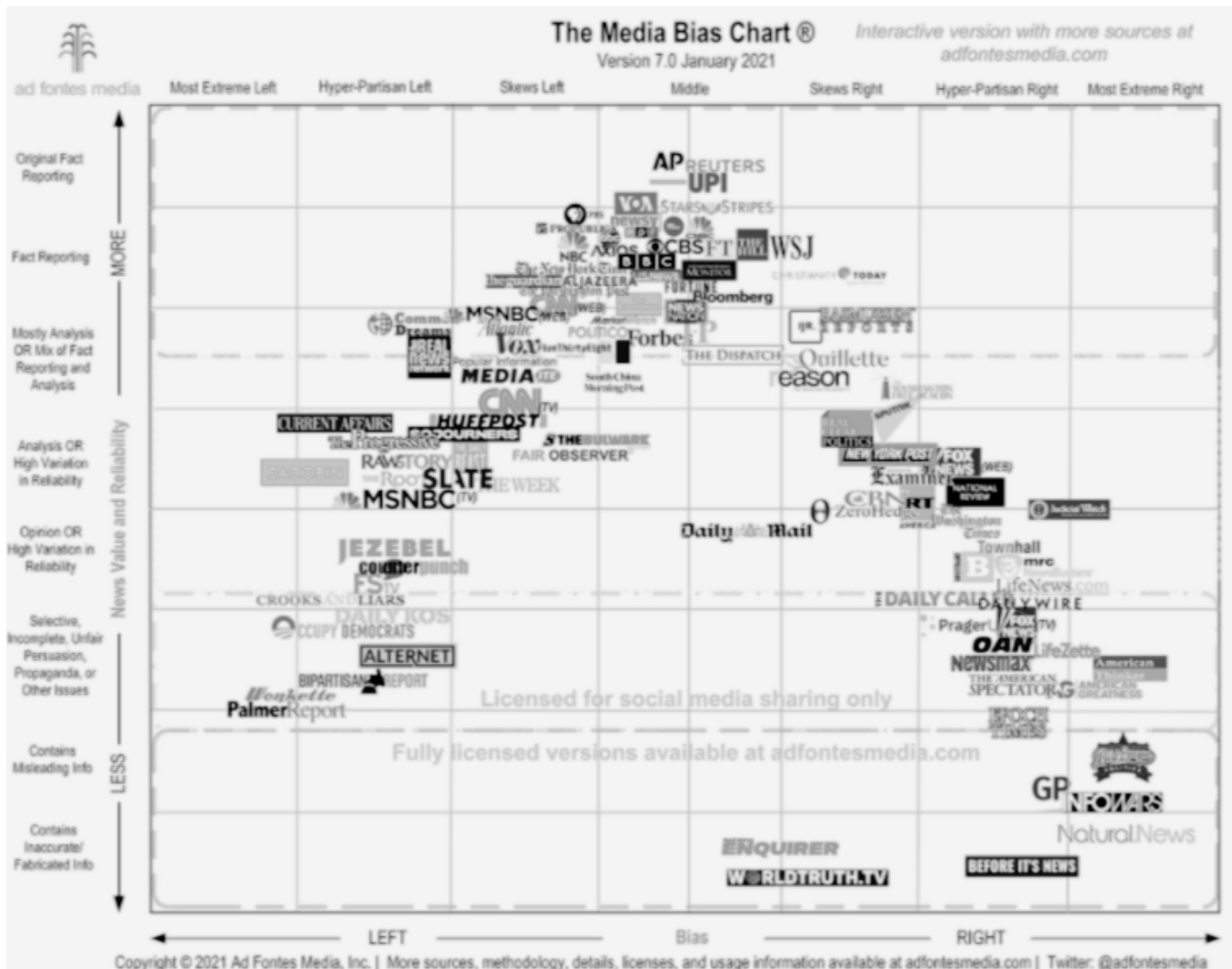


SO WHAT CAN YOU DO?

TAKE CONTROL

CURATE YOUR SOURCES

ADFONTES MEDIA BIAS CHART

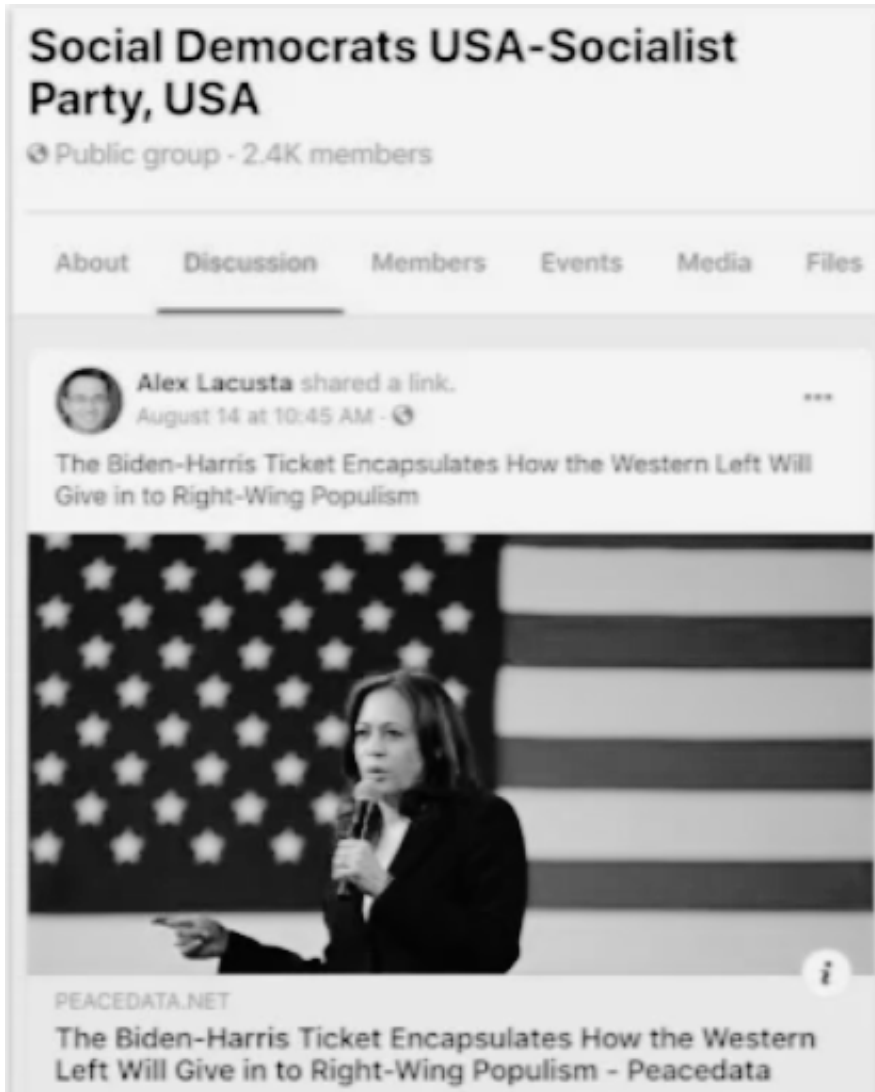


WE ALL HAVE BIASES. AND SO DO A LOT OF NEWS SOURCES. CHECK YOUR BIAS AND THOSE OF MEDIA OUTLETS WITH ADFONTES' TOOL OF OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS. ALSO CHECK WHICH SOURCES RELIABLY SHARE FACTS AS OPPOSED TO OPINION OR FABRICATED CONTENT.

GO TO ADFONTES MEDIA AND USE THEIR INTERACTIVE MEDIA BIAS CHART TO LOOK UP SOURCES AND FIND RELIABLE NEWS.
WWW.ADFONTESMEDIA.COM

IDENTIFY DISINFORMATION

IS THIS LEGIT?



THIS POST IS FALSE. IT IS DISINFORMATION. THIS POST WAS PART OF RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IN OUR ELECTION CAUGHT BY THE FBI. THE INTENT WAS TO ANGER FAR-LEFT LEANING VOTERS INTO NOT VOTING.

**CHECK
THE
SOURCE**

THE POST'S SOURCE IS PEACEDATA.NET. LOOK THEM UP ON ADFONTES. (HINT- THEY DON'T EXIST)

**CHECK
WHERE IT IS
POSTED**

THIS IS POSTED TO A FAR-LEFT GROUP ON FACEBOOK. BAD ACTORS TARGET GROUPS THAT APPEAL MORE TO EXTREME IDEOLOGY, SO POSTS IN THOSE GROUPS HAVE A HIGHER RISK OF BEING FALSE.

**SMELL
TEST**

DOES THE WORDING OF THE HEADLINE SOUND LIKE A LEGIT NEWS STORY?

Get more practice spotting disinformation with online quizzes. Spot Fake News with the University of British Columbia's quiz:

<https://digitaltattoo.ubc.ca/quizzes/quiz-how-good-are-you-at-spotting-fake-news/>

And learn to Spot the Troll with Clemson University's

<https://spotthetroll.org/>

HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



READ BEYOND

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



SUPPORTING SOURCES?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.



ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

This poster is from the most trusted source- Librarians. Use this poster as a reminder for yourself and your friends for how to check the news.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU FIND DISINFORMATION ONLINE

STOP. DROP. GO.



Do not click on it! Any click tells the algorithm you like it and spreads it further. Ignore it and walk away. You can report it to the platform. Otherwise leave the angst in your drafts.

HELP A FRIEND

Put your arm around them and share the best practices.



AMPLIFY THE GOOD STUFF



GOOD:
Retweet
Like

BETTER:
Retweet with your own comment
Reply

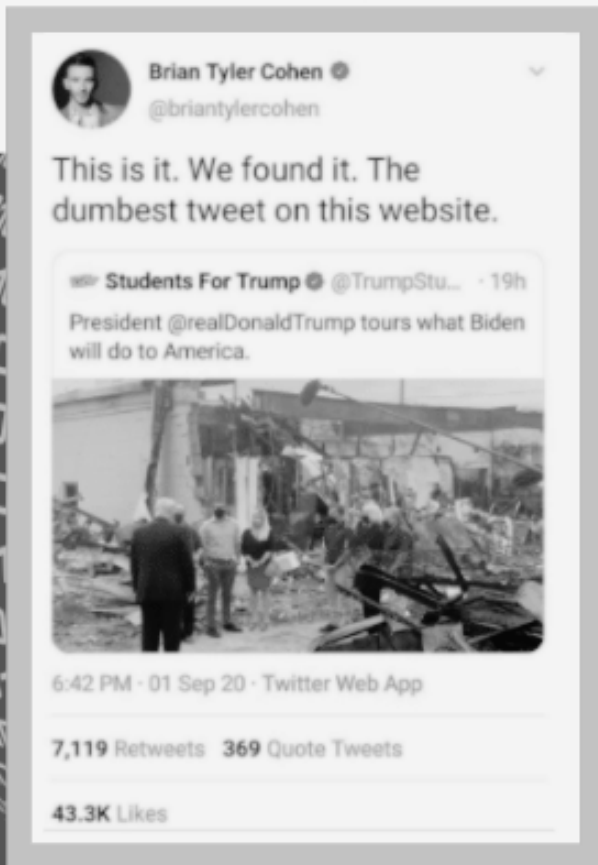
BEST:
Add original posts
Post about a mix of topics that interest you

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IF YOU MUST... THEN TAKE A SCREENSHOT

DO NOT RETWEET
bad content,
even to say it is bad.



DO TAKE A SCREENSHOT
and post and comment
on the picture.



HOW CAN ANYONE BELIEVE THIS STUFF?!?



WHEN WE ENCOUNTER NEW INFORMATION, WE SUBCONSCIOUSLY ASK OURSELVES THESE FIVE QUESTIONS. IF WE ANSWER YES TO MOST OR ALL OF THESE, WE CONSIDER IT TRUE. IF WE ANSWER NO, THE INFORMATION BOUNCES OFF OUR HEADS AND IS EITHER DISMISSED OR SEEN AS UNTRUE.

MOST OF THESE QUESTIONS FAVOR INFORMATION THAT IS FAMILIAR.

THE STUDY, LINKED BELOW, SHOWED THAT PEOPLE WHO WERE TOLD THREE TIMES THAT A STATEMENT WAS FALSE WERE MORE LIKELY TO BELIEVE IT IS TRUE THAN THE PEOPLE WHO WERE TOLD ONLY ONCE.

CONCLUSION: OUR BRAINS WILL PROCESS FAMILIAR INFORMATION AS TRUE.

Trust yourself and your ability to think critically.

Challenge yourself to investigate new information. Resist the instinct to gauge whether others believe something, be your own judge. Be open to new ideas. Embrace fresh voices. And be willing to take a moment to look up the information in unbiased, factual new sources.

READ "MAKING THE TRUTH STICK AND MYTHS FADE"
[HTTPS://BEHAVIORALPOLICY.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2017/05/BSP_VOL1IS1_SCHWARZ.PDF](https://behavioralpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/BSP_VOL1IS1_SCHWARZ.PDF)

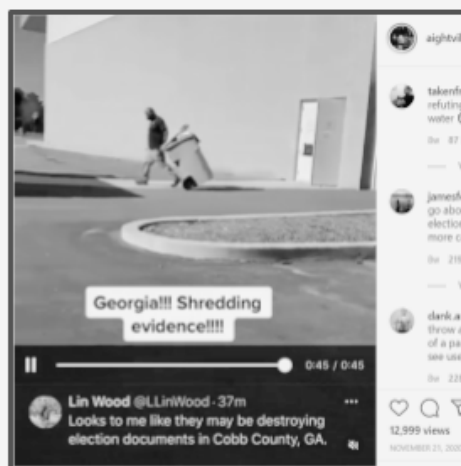
REPEATED LIES BECOME TRUTH

Bad actors know that our brains will be tricked into seeing lies as the truth if the lies are repeated.

For instance, disinformation about the 2020 election is repeated over and over.



October 8, 2020
Picture of a trailer of print production scraps is used for completely false story of shredding Trump ballots in PA.



November 21, 2020
Same thing, unrelated video used as false story of shredding in GA.



January 5, 2021
Same thing, unrelated photos used as false story of shredding in GA.

Perhaps the first time someone saw one of these fabricated posts they didn't believe it. Maybe the second time they still did not believe it. But after seeing these posts again and again and again, their brains may start to process the posts as true.

Use the way our brains naturally work to spread the truth. Pick your words and put them on repeat. When introducing something new to someone, tell it as a story. And tie it back to something familiar. And for those people to whom you have a familiar, trusted voice- use it.

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POLITICAL GASLIGHTING

Since the path to the truth is to trust yourself to think critically, bad actors also make it hard for you to trust yourself.

Extremist leaders will erode and wear down your self-trust.

- **Giving outlandish counter narratives to make you distracted, confused, or disoriented.**
- **Denial of plain fact that makes you question your senses and ability to read tone and interpret words. When extremist messages and acts are dismissed as “Oh, he doesn’t really mean that” it makes you feel that you are unable to navigate the nuances.**
- **Discrediting authorities to cut you off from the ability to think critically and build self-trust, making you dependent.**



When someone whispers “Trust no one,” they are inevitably also saying, “Trust me.”

If you suspect that a loved one has been gaslit by a politician or extremist group, be intentional to build up their self-trust in their senses and in their intuition. Ask them “What does your gut say?” Also, they may not have the words to describe what they are going through. So introduce the concept of gaslighting as an idea. And most importantly, remove them from the source. Encourage them to take a break from their phone.

POST-TRUTH POLITICS AND COLLECTIVE GASLIGHTING BY NATASCHA RIETDIJK [HTTPS://WWW.CAMBRIDGE.ORG/CORE/JOURNALS/EPISTEME/ARTICLE/POSTTRUTH-POLITICS-AND-COLLECTIVE-GASLIGHTING/88BDC6B5D1540817086E1027A0FF1B5A](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/episteme/article/posttruth-politics-and-collective-gaslighting/88BDC6B5D1540817086E1027A0FF1B5A)

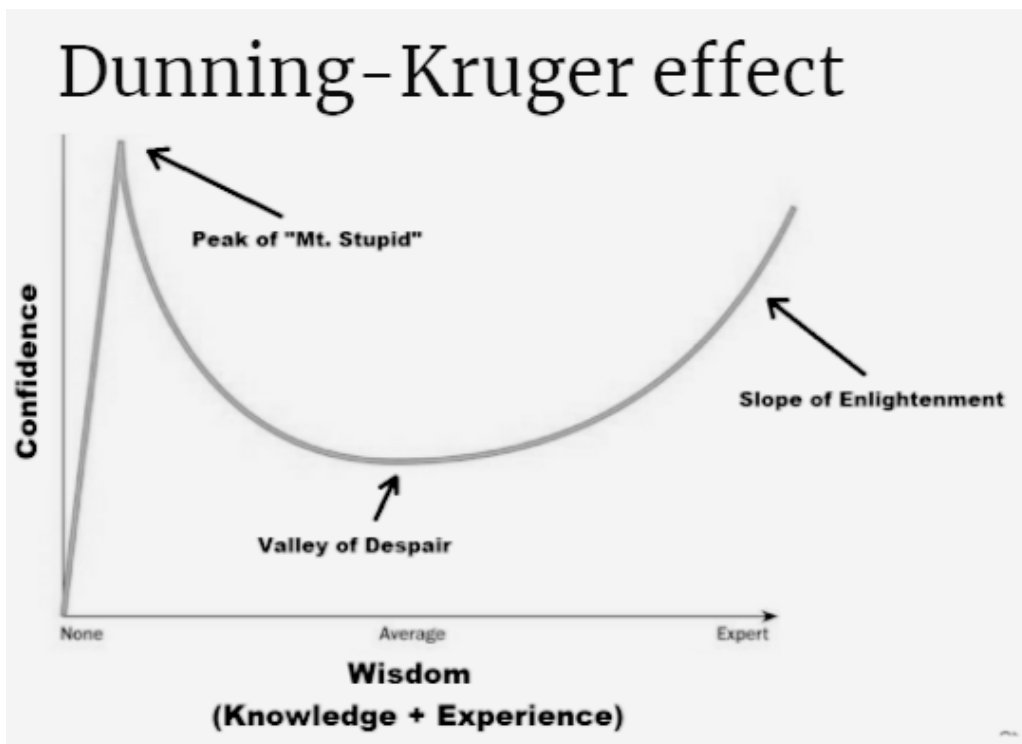
LIES ARE SHOUTED THE LOUDEST

WHEN YOU LACK CONFIDENCE TO CRITICALLY THINK,
AND WHEN AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN DISCREDITED,
THERE IS NO WISDOM TO BE GAINED.

People with little expertise or ability assume they have superior expertise or ability.

They don't have enough knowledge to know they don't have enough knowledge.

The loudest person, the most confident, is also the least informed.



Use this to your advantage by pushing people off of "Mt. Stupid" by asking them to teach you. This is called the Illusion of Explanatory Depth. We think we understand complex systems better than we do, until we are confronted with having to teach it to someone else. So ask them to "Explain that to me." Explaining what they think they understand will make them more humble, curious, nuanced, more moderate and less extreme.

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY BASICS ON DUNNING-KRUGER EFFECT
[HTTPS://WWW.PSYCHOLOGYTODAY.COM/US/BASICS/DUNNING-KRUGER-EFFECT](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/dunning-kruger-effect)

HIDDEN BRAIN PODCAST WITH ADAM GRANT
[HTTPS://HIDDENBRAIN.ORG/PODCAST/THE-EASIEST-PERSON-TO-FOOL/](https://hiddenbrain.org/podcast/the-easiest-person-to-fool/)

USE THIS UNDERSTANDING TO GET THE TRUTH TO BREAK THROUGH

THERE IS GROWING DISTRUST AND ISOLATION. PEOPLE ARE FEELING SCARED AND ALONE AND EMOTIONS ARE HIGH. THE BASE OF TRUST IS VULNERABILITY. WE ARE CALMED WHEN OTHERS CALMLY SHOW THEIR VULNERABILITY ALONG WITH THEIR STRENGTH,

START WITH EMPATHY AND BE VULNERABLE.

“I’M SCARED, TOO. I WAS AFRAID OF SIDE EFFECTS. I DON’T KNOW THE LONG TERM EFFECTS. BUT I DO KNOW THE LONG TERM EFFECTS OF COVID. I AM SO RELIEVED TO BE VACCINATED AND TO NOT WORRY SO MUCH ABOUT GETTING COVID.”

PRACTICE OPENING UP AND SHARING HOW YOU FEEL, ADMIT TO WHAT YOU DO NOT KNOW, AND SHOW CONFIDENCE IN YOUR DECISIONS.

USE THIS UNDERSTANDING TO GET THE TRUTH TO BREAK THROUGH

REPEAT THE TRUTH OVER AND OVER. MAKE IT STICK! IT MIGHT FEEL INSULTING TO SAY THE SAME THING EVERY TIME, OR TO FEEL IT IS NOT WORKING. BUT IT ISN'T EVEN PROCESSED UNTIL THEY HEAR IT ENOUGH TIMES.

PICK YOUR ONE BATTLE AND REPEAT THE ONE SIMPLIFIED TRUTH. "JOE BIDEN HAS GOTTEN A LOT DONE."

USE IMAGES AND STORY AND RHYME WHEN REPEATING THE TRUTH. "THANKS TO JOE THERE ARE SHOVELS IN THE GROUND IN OUR COUNTY."

TALK TO PEOPLE YOU KNOW. YOU ARE FAMILIAR AND THEY WILL LISTEN AND TRUST YOU.

PRACTICE SAYING THE SAME LINE WITH THE SAME WORDS OVER AND OVER, BUT TRY TO MAKE IT SOUNDS FRESH EVERY TIME.

USE THIS UNDERSTANDING TO GET THE TRUTH TO BREAK THROUGH

“EXPLAIN THAT TO ME”

EXPLAINING WHAT THEY THINK THEY UNDERSTAND WILL MAKE THEM MORE HUMBLE, CURIOUS, NUANCED, AND LESS EXTREME.

WHEN SOMEONE TELLS YOU A LIE, DO NOT REACT. BE CURIOUS. ASK THEM TO TELL YOU MORE ABOUT IT. THIS IS NOT CONDONING, THEY ARE LIKELY OVERCONFIDENT BECAUSE THEY DO NOT DEEPLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY ARE SAYING. GET THEM TO EXPLAIN IT AND REALIZE FOR THEMSELVES WHAT THEY DO NOT KNOW.

MAKE A HABIT OF NOT REACTING. AND INSTEAD BEING OPEN AND CURIOUS AND HAVE YOUR GO-TO RESPONSE BE "TELL ME MORE."

USE THIS UNDERSTANDING TO GET THE TRUTH TO BREAK THROUGH

IS THERE TENSION IN THE ROOM? TAKE A STEP BACK AND CONNECT AS PEOPLE.

- **IGNORE THEIR POLITICS. AND DO NOT SAY YOURS.**
- **STAY CALM, DO NOT MAKE AN EMOTIONAL APPEAL.**
- **BE VULNERABLE. TELL THEM YOUR TRUTH. DO NOT FRIGHTEN. WE'RE ALREADY EMOTIONALLY RAW, SO BE CALM.**
- **FOCUS ON POSITIVE, A DESIRE TO BE FREE OF WORRY AND TO BE RELIEVED.**
- **IF THEY ASK A QUESTION YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW TO ANSWER, SAY THAT, SAY "I DON'T KNOW, BUT LET'S LOOK IT UP" AND PULL OUT YOUR PHONE AND GOOGLE IT.**

OTHER AVAILABLE TOOLS

AVAILABLE AT
WWW.BUILDINGBRIDGESFORAMERICA.COM

TEAM SERIES

Build your grassroots team with Grassroots Organizing for Change.. And learn effective messaging with Say This, Not That, And take it to the next level and organizing the people around you with our Local Leaders and Precinct Chair training.

CIVICS SERIES

Know the system to fix the system. Get the basics with Civics 101, then learn to use civics for effective organizing with Civics for Change.

POWER SERIES

Your political superpower is talking with people you know. Put that power to use with our courses to get organized and having effective conversations that empower you, your community, and the campaigns and causes that are important to you.

TEAM RESOURCES

Links and tools of the trade to run a successful grassroots group or campaign.

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA LEADERSHIP TEAM



JENNY OKAMOTO

Director Leadership Development, Building Bridges for America

CAZ MARGENAU

Director Leadership Development, Building Bridges for America

TERRY MUMFORD

Associate, Leadership Development, Building Bridges for America