

## POLITICS AS UNUSUAL

"Politics is our system. It orders our lives. It determines who wins and losses when governments make decisions. It determines whether the future will be brighter or bleaker for our children," according to Ann M. Delaney, in "Politics for Dummies"<sup>(5)</sup>.

The people we elect are supposed to solve our problems. Yet, when we ask a politician a question we expect that they will not answer it directly and that, instead, they will tell you what they want you to hear, which may or may not answer your question. I really don't understand why we give politicians such latitude. They work for us, don't they?

What we get now from our elected representatives, is partisanship, fact-fudging, distorting the other side's record, lying, we don't believe anything that we hear from Washington and we know that politics is dominated by the 1% and they're all out for themselves.

Some of us remember when we elected people who could be called statesmen. These were people who acted to do what was right regardless of the political risk involved. A statesman put the public good ahead of partisan politics. (Politics for Dummies, P. 17)

We base our view of ourselves, human beings, on the idea that we are rational; that we take in information and analyze it without emotion. Unfortunately, we aren't.

"Whenever someone makes a decision, the brain is awash in feeling, driven by its inexplicable passions. Even when a person tries to be reasonable and restrained, these emotional impulses secretly influence judgment." (16, p. XV)

So, while we delude ourselves, our emotions drive us to fight harder and harder for our special issue.

We have to put a stop to the idea that whoever collects the most money wins. All the money does is wind up our anger and emotions to get us involved. Debate, advertising and political rhetoric are the tools of the trade.

Political campaigns have turned into a circus: very entertaining, but not informative. We can change the process in order to get what we need to make better, more objective decisions.

What we need is answers to our questions and a less warlike atmosphere in which to receive the information.

Better Outcomes assists our Sponsors, the Candidates and other Participants in suggesting questions. We prepare people based direct, unambiguous questions for discussion in the Candidate Conversation.

In addition to the questions suggested, we ask job interview type questions which give the candidates the opportunity to talk about their experience, character and skills so the audience can determine if they are the kind of people for whom they want to cast their vote.

Better Outcomes provides the ground rules for civil discourse. Then we help candidates demonstrate civil discourse and give our audiences clear, understandable statements of their thoughts on the issues being addressed.

Better Outcomes provides easily accessible, inexpensive, on-demand Internet access which Voters and Candidates can trust. Better Outcomes provides live internet streaming and complete and uncut videos of the Conversation. Better Outcomes can provide verbatim transcripts of the questions asked and the answers given, so that there can be no arguments over what was said.

We cut through political rhetoric to give people the information they need. Questions will be presented by a mediator, who will help the candidates and the audience communicate. This person will be responsible for assuring that the candidates answer's the questions asked and explains appropriately, so that audience can understand the answer rationally, not emotionally. Open-ended questions and a mediator will make sure that both parties understand each other.

We create a context appropriate for decision-making in an appropriately calm, objective and rational manner. Forum sessions will not be a debate. The candidates will be helped to focus on the audience, not on each other, by a trained mediator.

3. Give people the ability to see what questions were asked and what answers the candidates gave them during our forums.