

I Dare You to Try This Exercise

This may be too scary for you. You may choose to opt out. If so, no problem. I understand. Or it might just be too distasteful. But I want to challenge you to put yourself in the shoes of those with whom you passionately differ. The people whose ideologies you find intolerable.

See if you can view the world through their eyes. See if you can understand what makes them tick. See if you can articulate their position in a way that's acceptable to them, proving you understand, even while you reject.

Will you give it a try? I'll help you think it through, step by step.

The reason, though, that I say it can be scary is simple. It might cause you to modify your perspective. Or it might threaten your confidence. What if there's some merit to the other position?

Someone once told me that, metaphorically speaking, it's easier to shoot a person with a long-range rifle than to shoot them up close with a pistol, when you can look in their eyes and feel their breath. The more human they become to you, the harder it is to pull the trigger.

And getting into someone else's shoes can be distasteful because some of their viewpoints are so abhorrent to us that we don't want to give them the time of day. Why would we want to see the world through their eyes? We despise their worldview to the core of our being. Why should we even try to be sympathetic?

The reason is simple, and in the end, it's worth it. Not only will you sharpen your own viewpoint, but you'll be able to

respond to (and effectively rebut) the positions of those you oppose.

I've engaged in many public debates over the years, and I can only rebut my opponent's position to the extent I understand it. And if I can feel the weight of my opponent's objections, all the better. My rebuttal will be that much more sensitive. That much more accurate. That much more powerful.

And in the process, I might also learn something about the humanity of the person I differ with. How can that be bad?

So, let's try this exercise with one of the most volatile issues of the hour: the assumed guilt or innocence of Justice Brett Kavanaugh.

I'm personally glad he was nominated (although he wasn't my favorite candidate for the job). And, although I can't guarantee he is not guilty, I advocated voting for him based on his record, since his guilt was never proved.

So, in that regard, I'm clearly on the pro-Trump, pro-Republican, pro-Kavanaugh side. That also means I have no tolerance for the shrieking crowds demonstrating in Washington, D.C., against his confirmation or for the Hollywood stars condemning him.

Allow, me, then, to present their side of the story. And as I do, make an effort to see the world through their eyes. Surely you can see some aspects of truth and concern from their side of things. (Imagine your spouse or best friend held to this view. Don't just argue with them. Listen to them for a minute.)

There is an epidemic of sexual abuse against women. Bill Cosby is finally getting his due. Harvey Weinstein is finally getting his due.

Millions of rape victims now have a voice. At last, justice is

being served. Finally, the tide is turning. And remember. These abused women could very well be your daughter or sister or mother (or, if you're a man, your wife).

Unfortunately, President Trump has his own history of using women as sexual objects. At the least he talked the talk. (Imagine how you'd feel if this was Bill Clinton we were talking about, except that he was married three times, boasted in writing about his affairs, was caught on tape talking about [obscene phrase] and had numerous women claiming he abused them.)

And now, the president of the United States, the most powerful man on the planet, is mocking a respected female professor who has hundreds of people vouching for her character. (This woman did not want the limelight.)

He is also dismissing two other women who have publicly accused Kavanaugh of sexual assault, claiming it's all a lie. And he is ignoring all the witnesses who attest to Kavanaugh's drinking problems. (Why didn't the FBI interview them?)

This has completely undermined the entire #MeToo movement. "You can't believe what these women have to say! The men are the real victims."

Plus, we saw how surly Kavanaugh got before the Judiciary Committee, even if we can understand why he was so passionate in his lengthy opening speech. But did he have to be so belligerent in responding to fair questions? He even apologized for some of his words in *The Wall Street Journal*.

Is that the kind of man we want on the highest court of the land for life? Can you really imagine him being impartial?

Once again, this is not my own evaluation of the matter (most specifically, in terms of Kavanaugh's fitness for the job). But I do understand why some people see things like this. And when you add in the frenzied attempt to preserve *Roe v. Wade*,

you can better understand the wrath and the fear.

For those who are not in the pro-Kavanaugh camp, I can explain this side easily and quickly.

First, the man is incredibly qualified. He is a brilliant jurist, quite mainstream in many ways, with an impeccable track record going back decades.

Second, there is not one single corroborating eyewitness to any of the accusations. Not one. Either the alleged witnesses have no recollection of any such behavior, or they categorically deny it. These charges would not stand for a second in a court of law.

Third, the sex-crimes prosecutor brought in by the Republicans to question the professor said she wouldn't even issue a search warrant after hearing the testimony. There was nothing to it. And it was riddled by contradictions upon closer examination.

Fourth, the whole thing was one of the ugliest, political hit jobs in our nation's history—a gory attempt at character assassination—and anyone who can't see this is blind.

Fifth, the president merely called attention to Ford's lack of clarity and memory, shouting to the nation what we all saw—and what the liberal media ignored.

Sixth, it's totally understandable that Kavanaugh responded the way he did. His whole life had just been destroyed—a fine man was accused of being a serial gang rapist and was pronounced guilty by millions—and if he didn't stand tall, we could have questioned his innocence.

Seventh, you don't bow down to mobs. The Republicans are to be commended for holding their ground.

Having said all this, my goal here was not to convince you of anything. My goal was to challenge you to see the world

through the eyes of others.

It can't hurt, but it can help.

If you're right, your argument only gets stronger. If you're wrong, then you've just saved yourself from embarrassment and error.