Twitter Thread by Dr. but not the useful kind Susan Schorn



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In trying to assess what I'm feeling in this final month before the election, I come back to the difference between fear and anger, and how today's GOP fundamentally fails to appreciate the distinction.

All their insults about "triggering," all the delight they express in making vulnerable people upset, betrays this misunderstanding. I was seeing it from the gun nutters for years before Trump came into the picture. Here's their mistake:

They think "triggered" people are simply terrfiied. Which can happen. But the instinct triggered by trauma isn't necessarily fear. Remember? It's FIGHT or flight.

Much of the time, people who are threatened, abused, or assaulted become very, very, very angry.

Looking at the small number of people in power who are now giddily forcing through policy and law that run counter to the values of the majority of Americans, you have to ask, are we any different from other societies that have succumbed to authoritarianism or fascism?

Fascism takes a certain amount of buy-in, but it also relies on fear. Autocracies use fear and force to control the greater numbers of people that are harmed by the small number of powerful people. They need their subjects frightened and impotent at all times.

The GOP has tried this, but has--notably--failed spectacularly so far. They have tried with ICE, which is terrorizing migrant communities but inspired vigorous opposition from individual and group protesters, from local governments, and from the courts.

They have tried with their idiotic Nazi brownshirt wannabes, the Proud Boys with tiki torches, who have caused local mayhem but inevitably collapse in slapstick-level trailer park brawls, lawsuits, and infighting.

I see lots of people who are triggered by what's going on. I see some people, usually the most vulnerable, who are legitimately frightened. But overall, what I see is anger, and determination. And a growing realization that the norms we've upheld do not serve us.

Americans are flawed people. We are lazy, we are easily bored, we hate having to think and we are far too readily manipulated into blaming others for our woes. But we are not easily cowed. And we don't like bullies.

The GOP has accrued its current power by making a minority of Americans dumber and meaner, fixing the game and then finally throwing it entirely to acheive their goals. I think they've lost their ability to gauge how angry, and how active, ALL Americans can be.

Moreoever, those of us who DON'T swallow the shit spooned out by FOX News, who DON'T demonize people who look different from us, who DO read books, who DO privilege facts, who DO believe in science--we have weapons they've utterly forgotten how to wield.

They are betting that in our fear we will stop fighting. That we will feel our anger as impotence. They seem to think that nationally outrage can be checked by procedural means and calls for "respect." I think they are very wrong about this.

I don't know what will happen on November 6th. But I am confident that the rage today's GOP has engendered is going to consume them, sooner rather than later. They had better hope the end comes at the ballot box, because the alternatives are much more stark.