Twitter Thread by David Rothkopf



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Pretending that voting for Trump or denying climate change or suggesting the solution to every problem is more guns is a legitimate point of view, worthy of respect is not "how America works." It is how it dies.

People in a free society are entitled to any point of view no matter how obviously wrong or outlandish or destructive provided they do not impose their views on others.

But suggesting that something ignorant or divorced from reality warrants the same kind of treatment in public debate as something based in fact or at least credible is absurd and when done on behalf of a society in public media or academic settings it is self-destructive.

We would not grant media coverage or much bandwidth at all to a group that argued that unicorns exist or that there was a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Yet views like denying climate change or basing policy decisions on sweeping, obvious lies, are just as unsound.

Somewhere, somehow, judgments must be made. Some behaviors are wrong and must be condemned. Someone must challenge lies and demand facts. Coddling people who embrace idiocies does not help them no matter how loudly they demand to be coddled.

I was at a dinner party last night when a woman argued that Midwestern conservatives who supported Trump should not be disrespected. Oh no? This is the ultimate consequences of the dumbing down of America. It is granting everyone who shows up a participation trophy in democracy.

It is grossly irresponsible to vote for someone or back an idea that is founded in lies, immorality, or criminal behavior. It is just as irresponsible to treat such candidates or ideas as though they were deserving of even a fleeting moment of consideration.

That's not "fairness." That is a proven path to catastrophe. There were no witches in Salem. The Jews did not poison the wells. One racial group is not superior to another. Trickle down economics does not work.

Somewhere some among us must exercise judgement and stand up for what is. There is plenty of room for reality-based, intelligent debate. But that debate is undermined when anyone can wander in and assert "their truth."

When campuses invite on charlatans selling inflammatory theories contradicted by all evidence, they are not serving freedom of ideas, they're abusing it. When experts on TV shows proffer unfounded, indefensible opinions they weaken all of us & destroy their hosts' credibility.

With our president waging a war against truth and with a party apparatus, the media and many in "expert" communities abetting him, our entire system of government which depends on a thoughtful, engaged, informed electorate, is put at risk.

They do more damage to us than volleys of missiles could ever achieve. We have to demand better. We have to challenge lies when we hear them. We have to directly condemn and opposed the perniciousness of faux-fairness.

We have to be able to call out the intellectually dishonest and lazy and work to stop them from doing further damage because in the end it helps them too and because it is our duty as citizens to do so, to demand more, to seek the truth.

We are faltering right now because we are too ready to give nonsense and deceit a place in our national conversation. Relaxing our standards as we have is the surest way to guarantee a tragic end to America's fragile experiment in democracy.