Twitter Thread by Boarding Soon



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[THREAD] There's a lot of talk about divisiveness and unity right now. The country is at a low point and if you take the politics out of it, it is an opportunity for each of us to take a hard look at how we contribute to both divisiveness and unity. I've been thinking about /1

all the times that I retweeted something snarky, posted a meme that reinforced stereotypes about 'the other side', used words that I would never say in front of my mother or my child, and generally just gave into visceral, knee-jerk reactions to things I disagreed with. /2

That's not to say there wasn't plenty of crap that deserved strong pushback and loud protesting. It's our role as citizens to not only elect our representatives but also hold them accountable. The vitriol is optional, and I chose it more often than not. I don't know if I can /3

really change, but it's clear to me that I should at least try not to make things worse. I am a very different person now compared to 2016, capable of a sort of hatred I'd reserved for very few people I personally knew who did things I considered unforgivable. Not this. /4

Not hatred for a group of strangers who oppose what I believe in, just as I oppose what they believe in. Some may be vile, despicable, truly dangerous people. Most are probably not. I have led a privileged life. Born in comfort from parents who encouraged critical thinking, /5

educated in top schools, empowered to make choices unimpeded by cultural or religious traditions, able to travel the world and learn about other cultures. I grew up in large diverse cities and had access to different points of view. Not everyone is so lucky. If I'd grown up in /6

a small town and never left, if I were surrounded by people driven by the same ideology, maybe I would never understand or accept anything else. A smart friend of mine once compared politics to sports. From a young age you support a team - probably because your parents do. /7

You grow up surrounded by people who support that same team. You are taught to support that team even when they play badly, even when they lose. You may rant and complain, but you don't switch teams. You also embrace the rivalries your team has with other teams. I saw that /8

very clearly when violent fights broke out in soccer stadiums in Brazil. I never understood that. Why would you punch and kick people you don't even know just because they support the team your team is playing against? If your team loses or wins, does your life change at all? /9

I know that tribalism is a human imperative. It's our natural setup. But we also have intelligence and free will to balance it out. We can choose how to behave, we can learn from what we see. I will continue to disagree vehemently with anyone who is anti-choice, anti-gay, /10

racist, pro-trickledown economics, xenophobic, you name it. I have my beliefs and I stand by them. But I am not picking up a gun and killing someone who disagrees with me. I am not going to set someone's house on fire or threaten their family. Most people wouldn't. Just as we /11

condemn the inflammatory and hateful rhetoric of the other team, we should condemn it in our own team. We must not be hypocrites. The behavior we condemn in others cannot be an excuse to engage in the same behavior ourselves. The divisiveness will never end, because we will /12

never all believe in the exact same things. Our teams will always play against each other, and we may always stand firmly behind our own team, but we don't need to beat each other up in the stadium. If I learned anything after 4 years of Trump, is that words matter. /13

If we are to hold him accountable for what their words unleashed (and we should) why don't we also hold ourselves accountable? I'm not POTUS. My posts will never convince someone to burn a house down or invade the Capitol. But if you add my post to millions of other people's /14

posts about how awful, stupid, ignorant, evil, etc. the other team's supporters are, and at some point I have to think it adds up to nothing good. It's 2021, I'm fucking exhausted by politics, pandemic, and years without peaceful sleep. If I want better, I should do better. /x