



Partisanship, selfishness among America's greatest threats

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We have become an incredibly selfish and increasingly partisan society.

Sure, we occasionally come together and support each other during times of tragedy; just witness the outpouring of compassion and assistance when a natural disaster strikes.

But how we treat each other during trying times is not what truly defines who we are; it's how we treat each other on a daily basis that really counts. And my sense is, both as individuals and as a society, we are much more self-centered and insensitive to the plight of our fellow citizens than previous generations.

My grandparents, who were not perfect, nonetheless routinely made sacrifices for people they didn't even know. They rightly believed it meant more to be an American than it did to be a Republican or a Democrat.

Maybe it had something to do with living through the Great Depression. I'm old enough to have heard the stories of their hardship firsthand. People took care of each other, regardless of their political affiliation, religious alignment or where they were born.

Dichotomous thinking seems to be a distinguishing characteristic of low intelligence and lack of empathy.

The Founding Fathers obviously understood the importance of individual rights and personal responsibility. At the same time, they also had a profound respect for the "common good," and incorporated this guiding principle into the fabric of our nation.

As for those myopic, finger-pointing readers who care more about assessing blame than actually solving problems, neither side of the aisle seems immune from the current epidemic of self-indulgence and narrow-minded narcissism.

Conservatives can be just as misguided as liberals.

The real danger to our collective future is not from terrorists, global economic competition or illegal immigration. Rather, our greatest threat is from within.

Left unchecked, our unbridled preoccupation with ourselves will be our ultimate undoing.

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