This Is How We Win

by Danita Rountree Green

Last Tuesday night was a nail biter for me. Even knowing the Presidential election would not be called or decided that night, I was filled with nervous anticipation and anxiety. Too nervous to watch the results come in, I was grateful we planned a virtual watch party for our CTTT - RVA family, and was comforted to be in the company of friends and fellow freedom fighters who needed to be in communion with others as well.

After such a busy year of virtual planning, presentations, panel discussions, I needed to see the fruit of our labor. Right or wrong, the poll results represented a personal victory for me. I needed to WIN and win BIG! So, the huge turnout that boiled down to a 50/50 voter split, demonstrated in little red and blue blocks on a map, was not enough for me. In fact, I saw it as a defeat. I and my CTTT comrades worked so hard, giving 100% and we only see a 50% rate of return in social justice? Seriously? There were still people who were unsure or actually opposed to fair housing? Health equity? RACIAL HEALING??? Yes, I took this thing way too personally.

Hours after the last CTTTer came off the call, my sons and I remained, sharing our feelings about the possible outcomes. Long out of the nest, my young men have experienced life on their own, formulating opinions on social issues that make our conversations far more interesting. Now with two of them living on the west coast and the other experiencing his own cultural renaissance outside of DC, we have much to talk about. One thing is for sure - their experience as twenty- and thirty-somethings is not at all like mine was in the last century. Today's millennial is far more insightful than those of us who may be boomers now, and even though their world seems to move in light years, this generation seems much more introspective - very sure of who they are, what they want and what they don't want. In short - they want to win, but *inclusively* and not exclusively like their parents' generation.

This generation is envisioning a clean and safe planet above all for everyone, an affordable wage for everyone, a free quality education for everyone, affordable housing for everyone and the right to choose *anything* for everyone. This is how we win. And just as older generations have been segregated and sheltered, these younger folks have been integrated and exposed to the things that scared us the most. Through technology, their friends and as well as their information, come from all over the world. Millennials have had to be open and accommodating to the things they were taught to love and even those things (and people) they were expected to hate. And most are good with that. They have their own lexicon, digital language and information highways crossing all political lines and traditional orientations. Who needs Webster? And they are right in their assessments.

The bottom line: If we are to grow as a nation, those of us who claim to be open-minded, "we-are-the-world" liberal thinkers, must be prepared to love and accept those who we label and identify as close-minded conservatives. Otherwise, we are hypocrites

of our own making. As Biden echoed from the podium a few nights ago, “To make progress, we have to stop treating our opponents as enemies.” This statement is not original to our President-elect; many conceding presidential candidates have said the same. The difference is that this time, we have to mean it. Everyone has to be welcome and present at the table for *us* - the United States of American - to win.

Now more than ever, Coming To the Table, and other groups like it, has the opportunity to lead this nation into what is being called *The American Evolution*. I’m proud of that. Being a part of this organization gives me hope, and I am greatly encouraged and deeply aware that the left and right, the red and the blue and the black and the white all want to same things - (1) to be heard, recognized and acknowledged as stakeholders in the American Dream (2) to not become extinct through any form of genocide and (3) to leave a rich honorable legacy for the next generation. At the table, we can do this together. *We can bring love to the fight.* ***This is how we win.***