

The Letters Project: Reaching Across the Political Divide

In the days leading up to the election, writer and activist Sara Sharpe LaMance urges voters to reach across the political divide.

CHATTANOOGA, TN, UNITED STATES, October 30, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Whether you

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Sara Sharpe LaMance

consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent, it's gotten increasingly hard to talk about politics. But for writer and political bridge-builder Sara [Sharpe LaMance](#), reaching across the ideological divide has never been more important.

“I have done the work of [political bridge-building](#) for many years,” says Sara, “and it's always been challenging on some level. But it's much harder now that we're no longer working with a shared set of facts in this country.” And while it may be hard, Sharpe LaMance argues it's vital. “The

issues we face in this country are deeply important and deserve serious discussion. The problem is that political discourse has gotten so toxic we've stopped discussing politics with anyone outside our bubble.” This is problematic, she argues, because no one “side” has all the answers. “We've forgotten that we need each other. We need the push and pull of ideas and beliefs that directly oppose one another.”

Political bridge-building efforts remind us that if we engage in healthy and respectful discourse about controversial issues, we might not agree in the end, but we'll have considered countless things we wouldn't have had we talked only to those with whom we agree. “Every time I participate in a well-facilitated, issues-oriented discussion, I watch as folks rediscover the fact that they are much closer on any given issue than they thought they were.”

Sharpe LaMance is no stranger to issues-oriented art. Along with singer-songwriter Steve Earle, she was the founder of Nashville's most political theatre, BroadAxe Theatre. “It was at BroadAxe, many years ago now, that I really came to inhabit the 'all art is political' camp,” says Sharpe LaMance. “Whether art is explicitly political or not, stories either seek to improve the human condition or they don't. Stories are the most powerful tool in our chest,” she continues. “They are personal, but also, always, universal. They help us to connect and to heal.”

THE LETTERS PROJECT is Sara's attempt to reopen the lines of communication in a safe way. "I don't shy away from my strongly held beliefs," she says. "But I express them kindly, and I go out of my way to consider the opposing point of view."

"People are sick of politics and news fatigue is real," says Sharpe LaMance. "But there is a way to engage in political discourse that is constructive as opposed to destructive. And the stakes are high. None of us can afford to be apolitical now."

Sara Sharpe LaMance

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Artist and activist Sara Sharpe LaMance, author of The Letters Project: Letters from Across the Political Divide

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