

Eskin Fundraising Training's Fourth of July Wish: Honor Independence and Interdependence

The best hope to overcome a barrage of serious challenges to a brighter, stronger and more socially just future is working together.

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"Americans are sticking together, carrying on the tradition of neighbor

helping neighbor that's made this country so great. And whether it's raising a barn on a neighboring farm or raising money for the neighborhood church, the history of America shows that the freest people on Earth are also the most generous." These uplifting words were spoken by President Ronald Reagan on September 11th, 1986.

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Time and time again, Americans have demonstrated to themselves and the world that by uniting they can do anything.”

Jim Eskin

Never voting for President Reagan placed us squarely in the minority but looking back he is missed more and more. Sure, the different political parties would fight like cats and dogs, but when it really counted, the American people knew how to rally together for the common good.

Consider the close friendship between President Reagan and former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill. There were

very few policies they agreed on but that didn't mean they couldn't be friends. In fact, they famously agreed that partisan differences disappeared at 5:00 p.m. when they enjoyed cocktails. When President Reagan was shot in 1981, Speaker O'Neill was the first non-family member to visit him.

So much in the temperament of our nation has changed since then. Let's not mince words: America is alarmingly polarized and divided. Unfortunately, this goes beyond parties, candidates and viewpoints. It has escalated to the point of disliking, mistrusting and being unwilling to work with or even listen to those who share different ideas. Sadly, the situation is only getting worse.



This is not the nation of our parents and grandparents. They would be disappointed. For 249 years there has been a proud tradition of being able to put aside whatever differences existed in the interest of a stronger America. Love of country topped all other affiliations, ideologies and interests. The country's greatness has never strayed from the inspiring motto: E pluribus unum, a Latin phrase meaning "Out of many, one." It is based on a cohesive single nation formed by 13 smaller colonies joining together.

American history has long been characterized by contentious debate. The founding of our nation on July 4, 1776, didn't come easily. There were a host of deep and serious tensions dividing the delegates to the Continental Congress, including emotions surrounding slavery, larger vs. smaller states, and others. But in a pattern that would follow for centuries to come, deals were struck, and compromises were reached to found a new nation.

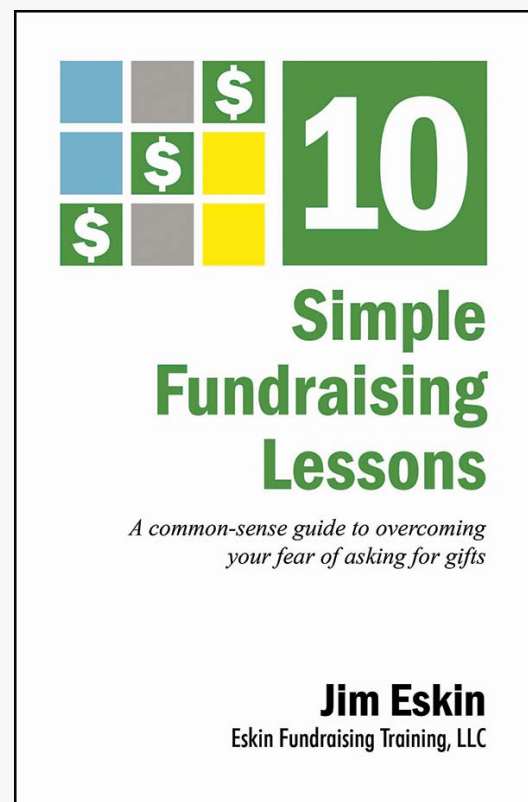
Today's acrimonious environment is far from healthy, and national interests suffer. People who disagree with each other view others as enemies. Mutual respect and civility have been forfeited.

For sure, debate can be healthy just like it was for ancestors and embraced to generate productive conversations — the best ideas from opposing sides ultimately culminating in decisions and outcomes benefiting the greatest number of people.

Those noble precepts have strengthened the United States through so many tests. Not that long ago the nation worked through profoundly competing schools of thought on civil rights, the Vietnam War and the 2000 Presidential election that was decided by 537 votes in Florida. In each instance, the democratic commitment to unity persevered.



Jim Eskin, Founder, Eskin Fundraising Training, LLC



10 Simple Fundraising Lessons

And citizens of all different backgrounds were there for each to face and overcome a devastating pandemic that claimed more than one million lives.

Eskin Fundraising Training firmly believes that Americans can and will rise to the challenge again.

Having served as a facilitator for numerous strategic planning sessions for non-profits in which emotions run incredibly high, we consistently find it productive to adhere to the following fundamentals of courtesy and mutual respect.

- The overarching goal is to tap the wisdom of the whole.
- Every voice is important. That welcomes everyone to participate to the fullest of his/her ability, freely expressing ideas, questions and concerns.
- No one has all the answers — and everyone has wisdom, experience and personal insights to enrich discussions.
- Disagree without being disagreeable. It's fine to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but there is no place for personal attacks. The focus is on ideas only.

The ideals of community have deep roots. Alexis De Tocqueville famously visited the U.S. and Canada from his native France in 1831. He then wrote "Democracy in America," about the uniquely American phenomenon of forming all types of professional, social, civil and political "associations" — non-profit, nongovernmental organizations that aim to serve the public good and lift the quality of human lives. Forebears fought and died for freedoms with the freedom of speech at the top of the list. Their sacrifices cannot be taken lightly. In a world changing at a dizzying pace and growing ever more

HOW TO SCORE
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Jim Eskin

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The easy-to-understand guide to seven-figure gifts.



The E Pluribus Unum motto

complex, citizens need each other more than ever. Practicing the “Golden Rule” and prioritizing fundamental decency is far more important than political beliefs and differences. As proud Americans, let us celebrate independence but let us always pay homage to interdependence.

About Eskin Fundraising Training

After a successful career leading advancement for three institutions of higher education, Jim Eskin’s consulting practice, Eskin Fundraising Training, launched in 2018, builds on the success of more than 250 fundraising workshops, webinars, webcasts, podcasts and board sessions, and provides the training, coaching and support services to equip non-profit leaders to replace fear of fundraising with comfort and confidence. He has authored more than 150 guest columns that have appeared in daily newspapers, business journals and blogs across the country. He publishes Stratagems, a monthly e-newsletter exploring timely issues and trends in philanthropy. [Sign up here for a free subscription.](#) You will also receive invitations to free virtual learning community programs. He is author of [10 Simple Fundraising Lessons](#), an 82-page common sense guide to understanding the art and science of fundraising, and [How to Score Your First or Next Million-Dollar Gift](#), 104 pages filled with strategies, best practices and homework assignments to unlock exciting opportunities that elevate organizational impact to the next level. Both are available in print and digital formats through Pathway, the book distributor, and Amazon. Quantity discounts are available to non-profits who want to share books with teams of management, development staff, board and volunteers. Eskin is also available for customized virtual training for boards, staff, and fundraising committees. His newest customized service, Fundraising Urgent Care, offers 48-hour turnaround in addressing general strategy and tactical challenges that require immediate responses.

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