An open letter to the politically aware public,

Hey guys, how’s it going?

My feelings on the election were best summed up by John Oliver a couple weeks ago on his show “Last Week Tonight,” which airs on HBO. “Remember I said that we hit rock bottom last week?” said Oliver. “Look up, and you can see where we were standing.” This election ranks among the most despicable and unpopular in the history of the country. It’s sort of like a really bad wrestling match—good vs. evil, cheesy acting—hell, Donald Trump was even in some wrestling specials.

But, the debate yielded record numbers! More people are participating in the process now more than ever before, right? Well, even if voter turnout will be higher than normal, it won’t be a record—2008’s turnout was 30.4%, 2016 was at 28.5%, according to the Pew Research Center—assuming the state primaries will reflect general election numbers.

It’s not really about the turnout, is it? It’s not really about the amount of people who turn out to participate. It’s kind of hard to look at that when much of the debate rhetoric revolves around petty insults and scandal rather than actual policy. Hell, if one were to get lost in the rhetoric, it would be pretty easy to think the world were coming to an end. But, it’s worth noting one thing: it’s not. The world is not going to end, and we’ll all be here afterwards.

Fight for your beliefs. Defend them. Get involved in the process to its fullest capacity. Remember that we are all in this together. Just because you don’t see eye to eye with the person on the other side of the picket line, it’s important to see the pain and happiness in their eyes.

That may be simplistic, but I promise it’s not naïve. That’s how a wedge is driven through the middle of a nation; when differences become the main focus and animosity breeds contempt.

It’s worth noting that even though voting is a given personal right, it’s a public function. Easy as it may be to envision yourself as the sole liberator of a cause, there are thousands of other causes. Let’s just all do our part to get through this election as civilly as possible. Because once the political dust settles, it will be essential to move on from a political process that feels like it’s getting in the way of progress.

Keep your heads up, folks.

Best wishes,

Brayden Mann.