

Christie, thank you for your thoughtful comments. So many thoughts go through my head. This will be very long, but hopefully relevant.

Thank you for doing a very difficult thing, voting for someone outside of your party and someone who has positions on issues that you don't agree with, even big ones. That was very hard to do as I know firsthand. If more had done as you, we could have moved on from Trump, and the GOP could have rebooted, starting with decency and building a conservative platform on that.

The Red Wave most definitely tells us that party and policy are very important to voters. In this case, I strongly felt and still do that no matter what positions Harris had on issues, enough people should have declared Trump unfit for office and voted against him. But there are several reasons why not enough of them did:

- 1) The Democratic Party is terrible at politics. I've always felt this way. As I've gotten to know more Democrats in recent years, I've asked them about this, and most agree. The Republicans run circles around them in the game of politics. And in recent years, since the leading Republican politicians have not been constrained by telling the truth, they've got even more effective. There are no referees throwing penalty flags in politics. Trump says whatever he wants and people believe him. Trump exaggerated or outright lied about the policies of Harris, and it was very effective.
- 2) Party loyalty is so strong. Do you remember Marion Barry? Numerous times he was caught doing something unethical or illegal, yet he kept winning elections because he was the Democratic candidate in a heavily Democratic city. I found it so frustrating. Well, the same thing has happened with Trump even though Trump is guilty of far more ethical and legal transgressions.
- 3) Joe Biden deserves a lot of blame. Biden should have done what he originally said he would do, be a one-term president. He waited FAR too long to drop out. Harris didn't have nearly enough time to win people over. I thought she did a great job considering, but it was a no-win situation. If Biden had not run at all, the Democrats could have had a normal primary election season featuring several qualified candidates including Harris. The party could have unified around the winner, and they would have had a far greater chance.
- 4) I hate to say it, but I believe there were too many men who would not allow themselves to vote for a woman, especially a woman of color. The data suggests that this was a big obstacle for men of certain racial/ethnicity groups in particular. I thought we were beyond this, but the data says we aren't.
- 5) This relates to my first bullet point about the Democrats not being good at politics. Let's take just one issue: immigration. Firstly, let's agree that this is a challenging problem. Most of these people are desperate. They are just trying to survive and take care of their families. We don't know why they were born into the circumstances that they were born into while you and I were born into, well...privilege. So I want to be compassionate toward them. But I also understand that we can't take them all in. So there has to be some kind of compromise.

The Democrats waited for far too long to confront this issue. They finally realized it would be used against them politically. So they gave the Republicans everything they wanted in a bipartisan deal. It was nearly signed by the Republicans. But then Trump intervened and told the Republicans to vote against it. He wanted to use it as a campaign issue. And he sure did. It was wrong of him to do, but it was very effective. It was probably his #1 campaign issue.

He portrayed immigrants as criminals, rapists, and drug dealers and said they were “poisoning the blood of this country.” I would have thought people would have rejected those narratives. But he made it convenient for them to not deal with a tough problem. Remember the story of the Good Samaritan? The first two people, both religious leaders, just passed by the man who had been beaten. After Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, he asked the lawyer, “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The lawyer answered, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus then tells him, “Go and do likewise.” Jesus told this story and it’s in the Bible today for the very reason that it’s hard to do. Yet we are called to do it.

Regarding your question about having friends who vote differently. Prior to Trump, the issue of voting differently was no big deal at all. Of course, I had many friends who voted differently, and it was never an issue. But things are different in the case of Trump. I could list at least 25 distinct things he has done or said that should have individually caused people to consider him disqualified or unfit. While I can be friends to a degree with people who voted for Trump, if they are politically oriented or if they are strongly MAGA, true friendship with them doesn’t feel right.

Let’s take just one issue, his treatment of women. Trump was found liable in a court of law for sexual battery. And about 30 other women have accused him of sexual abuse. He has 5 children from 3 different women. And around the time #3 (Melania) was pregnant, he had an affair with Stormy Daniels and paid her hush money. Note that in a court of law, his lawyers admitted he made the payment. The question was whether it was legal how they accounted for the payment. And as we now know, he was found guilty of 34 felony counts for how it was accounted for. It was a unanimous decision by a jury that included several Republicans, even Republicans who supported him.

We recently learned that Jeffrey Epstein, a notorious and convicted sex offender of underage girls, considered Trump to be his best friend for 10 years. And don’t forget the audio recording about “grabbing them by the p****.” Republicans claim to be the party of family values and morality, but they ignore Trump’s sexual immorality. That’s called hypocrisy. And if there was one thing Jesus spoke most strongly about, it was the issue of hypocrisy.

I have a lot of women in my life. I have my wife, my sisters, my daughter-in-law, and several young singing partners who have become like daughters to me. Several of them are minorities. Part of why I am so distraught by the outcome of the election is because of them. By electing someone with Trump’s record of treating women the way he has, we are telling these women that we don’t value

them and their safety. And we are telling American boys that they can get away with treating women badly. Not sure if you know, but since the election, lots of boys are saying to girls, "Your body; my choice." They are doing this to exert power of these girls; it's just awful.

Now let me cover one last point that I think is most important and telling. Let's say that you and I are in agreement that party and policy were the two main reasons/excuses people used for disregarding all of Trump's flaws and voting for him anyway. Here is my two-word response: "Nikki Haley." Unlike the Democrats, the Republicans had a choice. They could have stayed loyal to their party. They could have voted for a conservative who had the same positions on issues they had. But they didn't. They chose Trump over Haley...in a landslide. It wasn't close. So, I just can't give the Republicans a pass here. They didn't just vote on the basis of party or policy; they voted specifically for Trump. And given everything he has done and said over the last 8 years, I can't excuse it.

If you made it this far, thank you for reading and considering. I really appreciate your good heart.