



TOP STORIES

POLITICS

I'm Not Interested in Finding a Truce in the Culture War. I'm Interested in Winning It.

Lindy West

There's this prevailing attitude that the "culture war" is some kind of *discussion* that we're all having. But you know what? Fuuuuuuck that. I know this is divisive and counterproductive and inflammatory or whatever, but *not all ideas are created equal*. Some ideas are shitty, and I'm sick of coddling people with shitty ideas just because this country has a weird backwards boner for old-timey puritanical rhetoric. No.

In an [interview with Scientific American this month](#), author Jonathan Haidt discusses his new book *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*, in which he seeks to nail down precisely why the right and left in this country are locked in this endless, grumpy impasse—and what we can possibly do to fix it so we can actually get some shit done. Now, I'm all for getting some shit done, but, in this particular war, "peace" isn't at all what I'm looking for. I'm looking to win. Because I'm right.

Haidt lays out some of the ways that both sides, left and right, carelessly **foment divisiveness by pushing each other's buttons**.

OCT 8, 2012 1:40 PM

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MONDAY, OCT 8, 2012

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POLITICS

1:40 PM

I'm Not Interested in Finding a Truce in the Culture War. I'm Interested in Winning It.



FEMINISM

1:15 PM

Laughably Idiotic 'Sorry, Feminists!' Retort Prompts Awesome Twitter Hashtag, So It's All Good

Joran van der Sloot, who's currently serving a 28-year prison sentence for murder, is reportedly going to be a **daddy**.



GOOD/BAD/UGLY

12:30 PM

This Is What You Wear to a Polo Match in Hellay



RAPE

12:00 PM

Scotland's New Rape Prevention PSAs are Pretty Awesome



KONY 2012

11:40 AM

The Return of Kony 2012 Mastermind Jason Russell, Now With 80% Less Psychosis



WEED

11:10 AM

Federal Officials Aim to Harsh L.A.'s Mellow By Shutting Down Medical Marijuana Dispensaries



ART

10:50 AM

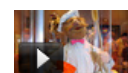
Pretentious Idiot Defaces Rothko, Would Be Horrible Boyfriend



FREE BIRD

10:25 AM

Big Sad Emu Disrupts Florida Traffic Because He Wants a Girlfriend



FOOD

10:00 AM

Real Life Swedish Chef Told to Scale Back on School Lunch Deliciousness

And he offers some advice:

Once you start thinking about what each side holds sacred and you know the moral foundations that underpin their policy positions, you can do a better job of targeting your moral appeals. And most importantly, you can do a better job of avoiding land mines. For example, it was foolish of the Obama administration to insist that religious schools, hospitals, and other institutions must pay for birth control for all employees. This was extremism in defense of one of their sacralized issues—women's rights—and it led them to pass a rule that would have forced many Christians to violate some of their sacred values. But it's not as if those institutions were stopping women from using birth control. The issue was just whether religious institutions should pay for birth control in health insurance policies. It's like forcing synagogues to buy pork lunches for their non-jewish employees. It triggered outrage, and fed into the long-simmering idea that the Democrats are conducting a "war on religion."

Conversely, the various Republican bills forcing women who want abortions to get a medically unnecessary transvaginal ultrasound—same thing in reverse. In defense of their sacred value (right to life, protect every fetus), they legislated that doctors would have to harm and degrade their own patients. This triggered outrage and fed into the long-simmering idea that the Republicans are conducting a "war on women." So I think my book will help both sides avoid committing "sacrilege" by stepping on sacred values so often, and I think it could help them think more clearly about how to reach the other side.

 Like  180,873 people like this.

Nope. Sorry.

Conservatives ARE waging a "war on women." Liberals, by contrast, are certainly not waging a "war on religion." I don't give a one shit about your religion. I'm not saying your religion is bad, I'm not saying it's good, I just don't care. It's annoying, but you can go yell about your religion on the street, you can beg people for wig-money on TV, and you can even come knock on my door (if you like throwing time and energy in the garbage). You can believe *literally whatever you want*, as long as your beliefs don't actively restrict the rights of other human beings.


Haidt's two examples are not parallel. In the first, the birth control example, religious conservatives are fighting for the right to make women's *basic healthcare* contingent upon adherence to an arbitrary, conservative moral code. The implication is that a woman's vagina (and concomitant reproductive organs) is not a part of her body—it's a separate entity that, because of puritanical religious attitudes toward female sexuality, does not warrant the same medical care as every other fucking (or, rather, non-fucking) part of her body. The specific medical care that a woman needs is between her and her doctor, and if human beings are covered by a medical plan, then human bodies should be covered by that medical plan, regardless of what we do with those bodies. Full stop. Also, kindly stop thinking so much about what I do with my body. It's creepy.

So the liberal objection, in that example, is to the *inhumane restriction of women's rights*. It's not some awkward "sacrilege," and it is certainly not "extremism." Women are humans (surprise!), and it is objectively correct to stand up for human rights. I am not "oppressing" you by trying to stop you from oppressing me.


Also, "religious liberty" is bullshit in this context. There are all sorts of things in the Bible that we legislate against, but you don't hear religious conservatives pitching a fit about their "rights" in those cases. As long as we're not stoning unclean women to death, then LET THE LADIES HAVE OUR FUCKING MEDICINE.


In the second example, regarding trans-vaginal ultrasounds, the liberal argument is *also* firmly in the corner of civil rights. The conservative argument is...elsewhere (bananaland!). This one is


 **I THEE DREAD** 9:30 AM
Massive Wedding Brawl Leaves One Dead, Three Arrested

 **DIRT BAG** 9:00 AM
Amber Tamblyn and David Cross's Wedding Was Basically an Alt-Music Festival

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2012

 **SCIENCE** 11:50 PM
Redness Enhances Attractiveness, or Why You Have the Hots for Bill Clinton

 **SNAP JUDGEMENT** 11:00 PM
It's Too Late for You to Win the North American Wife Carrying Contest. This Year.

 **YELLOWFACE** 10:00 PM
Yellowface Alive and Well in Wachowski Starship's *Cloud Atlas*

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so ludicrous I can't believe it made it past the pitch meeting, but here's the gist. Pro tip: *Do not stick stuff in people's vaginas if they don't want you to.* Conservatives aren't raising liberal hackles because they're "stepping on sacred values" (as though those values sprang up fully-formed out of nowhere, as though we defend them blindly)—liberals are pissed because conservative lawmakers, in Haidt's own words, "legislated that doctors would have to harm and degrade their own patients." Um, YEAH. REASONABLE OBJECTION. A woman is a person. A clump of cells is not.

To debate this is unacceptable and I will not do it.

I believe in right and wrong—just not the opportunistic, politically-driven kind that's been dredged up out of some old fantasy book and used to subjugate whomever it's most profitable to subjugate that season. I believe in the kind of right and wrong where you can see people actually get hurt. Where you see people's rights negated and lives torn up. Where a clump of cells is worth more than a human being, and one abusive garbage straight parent is worth more than two loving, stable gay parents. That's *real*. The other shit is not. Fucking up my life is not covered by your "religious freedom."

Honestly, I'm all for trying to understand where the other side is coming from, for being an open and accepting person, but too often in the debate between left and right in this country, it comes down to a conflict between rationality and irrationality. And I'm sorry, if you **deliberately shun evidence** and call me an elitist for adhering to facts, then this is no longer a discussion. We don't have to debate, say, whether or not women should be allowed to work outside of the home. Or whether or not black people should be allowed to vote. Or whether NAMBLA should have a seat at the UN or whatever. This isn't some subjective circumstance that we need to discuss and consult literally all sides—it's not up for discussion. People just get to have the rights. They just do.

If the "culture war" were an actual war, it wouldn't be one of those sad, ambiguous wars where you're not sure which side is the "good guys"—it would be the fucking war at the end of *Lord of the Rings*. And I'm sorry, but Sauron ran Mordor into the ground (seriously, dude, just NO infrastructure??), he would have made a terrible president, and I'm not interested in sparing his feelings just because he, personally, *likes* living in the middle of a stanky volcano waste. The rest of us don't, because it's dangerous and scary and there's no furniture and no sunlight and all our clothes smell like brimstone. This is not something we need to discuss. All non-orcs who don't want to live in Mordor say, "Yaaaaaaaayah!"

So, yeah, fuck your "debate."

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" it was foolish of the Obama administration to insist that religious schools, hospitals, and other institutions must pay for birth control for all employees. "

Except they didn't. Birth Control will be paid for out of the employee's contribution, which is why a court recently threw out an religious objection, pointing out that employers don't get to tell employees what they can spend their pay cheques on. It's only a "sacred issue" for people who are willfully ignoring the facts.

Reminds me of someone posting to Facebook not too long about, claiming that the municipal government in some Californian city was trying to make house churches illegal. [More »](#)



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Thanks, Lindy, for the validation and reminder that it's not necessary or helpful to debate with or try to understand the views of those who just want us to get back in the kitchen. They can't be won over with reason or logic, and the expectation of hearing both sides out is really unfair. To pull an out-of-context quote from that awesome Chick-Fellatio article that I assume everybody has read (and if not, go read it now: <http://www.owldolatrous.com/?p=288>): "Asking for "mutual tolerance" on this like running up to a bully beating a kid to death on the playground and scolding them both for not getting along. [More »](#)



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it absolutely blows me away that the religious right in america has the FUCKING BALLS to claim they're persecuted because of their religion (happens every god damn year when the "war on christmas" bullshit flares up again). it's the craziest thing i can think of, and it's a real attitude that people have...

"we're not even allowed to celebrate the birth of jesus in schools"

GOD DAMN FUCKING RIGHT YOU'RE NOT, I'M A JEW AND THAT SHIT MAKES ME UNCOMFORTABLE... FREEDOM OF RELIGION ACTUALLY MEANS I *DON'T* HAVE TO LISTEN TO OR AGREE WITH YOUR BULLSHIT.

<

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN REALLY TOUGH FOR YOU WHEN THOSE TWO GAY DIVORCE LAWYERS BROKE INTO YOUR HOUSE AND MADE YOU SIGN AN ANNULMENT. [More »](#)



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"Some ideas are shitty, and I'm sick of coddling people with shitty ideas just because this country has a weird backwards boner for old-timey puritanical rhetoric. No."

Thank you! I'm so tired of "you should respect everyone's beliefs". Not if they're dumb, damaging to progress, and fucking with the civil rights of people.



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Ugh. Look this country is a representative democracy. Every single person adult citizen can have their own opinion and vote for what they believe. The fact is many people do not believe what you do because they live a different life than you have. I do not believe this makes them terrible human beings. And I think it is good that everyone has a vote even if I often disagree with the outcome. As long as this is true we need to treat those who disagree with us with respect or no good will ever come of politics.



You are following WillaCatheters comments

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A-fucking-men!

I'm sick of the false equivalencies and of morons who claim to be "moderate" saying things like, "There are just as many "crazies" on the left as on the right," when, in truth, the base of the Republican party (and, sadly that's a lot of people) lost what was left of its goddamn mind when a black man became President.

Show me these crazy lefties! I want to sit at their lunch table.



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Some ideas are shitty, and I'm sick of coddling people with shitty ideas just because this country has a weird backwards boner for old-timey puritanical rhetoric.



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The next politician who wants to shove trans-vaginal ultrasound into an extraordinarily restrictive already abortion bill is going to get a little field trip. If he is a man(as usual) he and his wife will be transported/dragged to the nearest clinic/hospital and wife shall submit to one of these little "simple procedures" right in front of the man. No looking away, Mr. Squeamish. Then we shall discuss this further.



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[Lynx](#) [Reply](#) [52 minutes ago](#)

"...my book will help both sides avoid committing "sacrilege" by stepping on *sacred values*..."

Forbidding birth control is not a sacred value. It's not. This dude is barking up the wrong tree.



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[Jackie_Jormp_Jomp and 4 more](#) [Reply](#) [2 hours ago](#)

Oh, Lindy, thank you for this. I work for the state of FL, and just found out that every morning, the most religious people in our office have a prayer circle outside in the parking lot, with the only guy who attends acting as "preacher." This is state property! A bunch of people here think the prayer circle is ridiculous, especially seeing as how it consists of the worst gossips and liars in the office, but have told me not to make an issue out of it. Whatever happened to at least pretending like there's a separation between church and state?! Phew, rant over.

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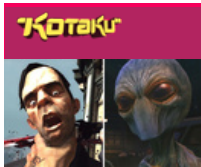
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