



A word about representing all people, not just the ones who agree with you

Description

I've been reflecting recently on what principles should guide me in my role as a politician. I still regard myself as relatively new to this, and I want to continue to learn and grow in what I'm doing.

I think that leaders should hold themselves to the discipline of sitting down regularly, not only with people they agree with, but with their most withering critics. Even with people who might perceive themselves as your enemy — not that I regard anyone in that way.

It's always struck me as obvious that this is an essential part of the job. In politics, we contend and we argue; and we must expose our ideas to both affirmation, and to scorn.

It's been said that an overlooked evil of censorship is that it denies weak arguments the opportunity to publicly humiliate themselves in a fair fight. Nothing is easier than becoming jaded and to withdraw to an echo chamber where that refining fire has been extinguished. I'm too aware of my own ignorance to think that my own views must always be right. I refuse to take myself so seriously that if a three-year-old hands me a toy phone, I can't take the call with a glint in my eye.

I recall my Aristotle, and warn you that you should not make the mistake of thinking that me entertaining your idea, is the same thing as me agreeing with you. But if I disagree with you, I'll always try to offer you the courtesy of remaining civil, saying why, and then continuing the conversation because, who knows, I might be wrong. Maybe we're both wrong!

Leadership is about sifting through contending views and trying honestly to serve the greater good. Making tough calls is bruising, and frankly, sometimes it leaves me exhausted. I have enormous respect for people who do this daily, and at much higher levels than a humble Councillor. Still, I've never, ever been happier than in trying to fulfil this calling. Please take my enjoyment as a gesture of respect for the challenge of representing you.

Category

1. Uncategorized

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