



# The election's over. Here's how to navigate the next few weeks with grace

By AJ Willingham, CNN

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**(CNN)** — It's done. The election's over and in January, Donald Trump will become the 45th President of the United States. Roughly half of America is celebrating this fact, and the other half is mourning it.

However, the two halves of the country have to go back to living, loving and working alongside of each other.

Yes, civility is possible. Here's how to get through the next couple of weeks with at least a modicum of grace and sanity.

## 1. How to be a good winner



## Trump supporters cheer

**Be compassionate:** If you're sitting pretty this season, it's essential to remember one simple thing: It's over. There's nothing to debate anymore, says Dr. Deb Sandella, a psychotherapist and author of "Goodbye Hurt and Pain." So when you're dealing with the losing side, "what's really important is to love and care about their people enough, to let them talk about their feelings."

**Don't rush the process:** Tensions will definitely run high. You're talking about a historic election here. If you want to maintain your relationships, Sandella says, you should prepare to talk compassionately -- or not at all. In other words, now would not be the time to point out that you think Trump is the economic juggernaut of our time. "There is a bit of grieving going on," she says "And the people who have had a loss at this level don't want to hear that right now."

**Keep it schoolkid simple:** The Emily Post Institute bases its models of common winner/loser courtesy on basic childhood understandings of sportsmanship. It works like a charm, says [Daniel Post Senning](#), the great-grandson of the organization's namesake etiquette expert. "Your job as a winner is not to gloat, not to rub your opponent's face in the loss," he says.

## 2. How to be a good loser



## Clinton supporters watch incoming electoral projections

**Show respect for the game:** Remember all the uncomfortable conversations we had about who would concede the race and how? Senning says those tenets of sportsmanship should cover you here as well. "Show respect by not calling into question the game itself," he says. "Accept your defeat, and apply your energy to the places where it will do you the most good."

**Find ways to talk it out:** Sandella, the psychotherapist, adds that, if you're coping with a loss, you should find a healthy place to vent. "It's not with people who are debating you or gloating," she says. "Those are not the people you can safely express with." Sandella says negative thoughts, if left internalized or unarticulated, can really stick in your mind and get blown out of proportion. "Find like-minded people that you can vent with so you can get it over with."

**Be wary of social media:** So communication is important, but "social media may not be the place," says Sandella. Why? There are too many traps -- too many opportunities to escalate feelings or fall into destructive debates.

## 3. How to avoid a fight at parties or family gatherings





Residents in Melania Trump's hometown of Sevnica raise glasses

**Re-direct:** If the Thanksgiving table starts to get too heated with election talk, Senning suggests bringing up "Tier 1" topics: The weather, the drive over, the food on the table, pop culture, or football. "These are shared experiences," he explains, ones that carry little risk for heightened emotions.

**De-escalate:** Remember, just because someone tempts you with a war of words doesn't mean you have to take the bait. "It's not a license to respond in kind," Senning says. Remember: The only thing you can control is your reaction. "Take the high road," he says. "You'll feel best about it in the long run."

## 4. How to handle politics at work

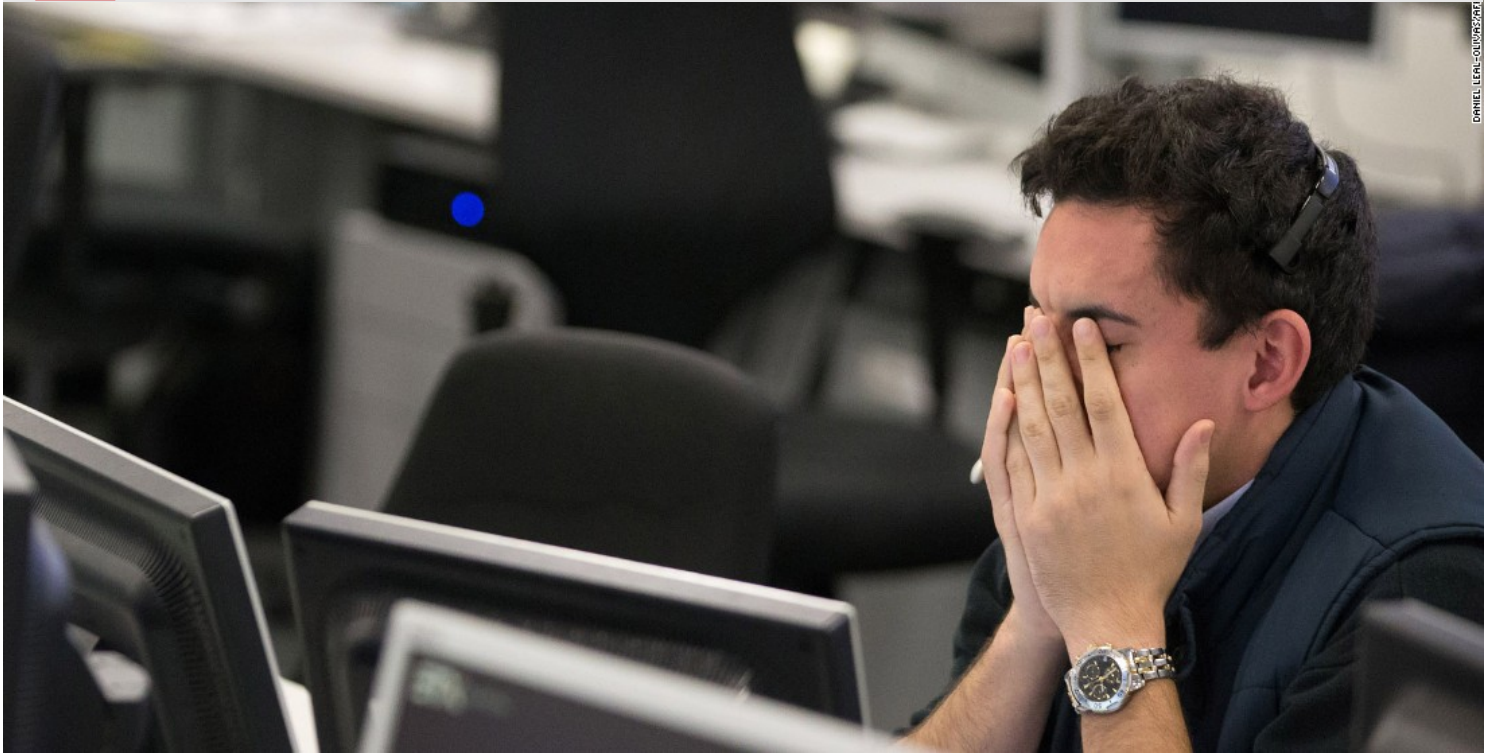


## Trump and Clinton supporters argue outside Times Square

**If you want to start a conversation:** Politics is what Senning calls a "Tier 2" conversation. Like religion or sex, it's a sensitive topic that inspires divergent and often combative opinions. "If you're going to talk about these things, you have to be willing to listen to someone that has a different opinion than you do," he says.

**If you want to end a conversation:** "You are also not obligated to have these conversations," Senning says. "If you are willing to cede the last word, or acknowledge that your opinions may differ, it's very hard to argue with that."

## 5. How to deal with social media overload



A trader from ETX Capital works in central London

**Unplug:** Even if you were pleased with the election results, the stress of the last two years of campaigning may still get to you. It's perfectly okay -- recommended, in fact -- to unplug and just stop thinking about it all. Sandella says when we witness stressful, high-pressure events, our brain identifies with it and even mimics the tone of whatever we're seeing. It's why you may feel physically drained and tired after watching election coverage, even if you were just sitting on the couch. "Media isn't bad," Sandella says, "But if you're empathetic, you really want to pay attention to your feelings. You need to stay tuned to your own brain and body, and it will tell you when you need to stand up, talk a walk, or remove yourself entirely."

**Get in touch with nature:** It seems so very Walden Pond-y, but Sandella says there are proven benefits to taking a stroll outside or just reconnecting with the world beyond your screen. "These things are very grounding," she says.

## 6. How to take care of yourself





## A Democratic supporter cries after Trump's victory is announced

**Breathe, with purpose:** The helplessness you feel after an election can lead you to circular thoughts -- notions that roll around and around in your head, picking up false momentum and meaning that you can't really shake. Sandella's suggestion is to look inward. "We need to turn on our internal resources," she says. "If you focus on your body and controlling your breath, you bring attention into the body and away from your thoughts." Once you calm down, Sandella suggests, revisit your thoughts. Writing them down even, so you can finally articulate, and then purge, the concerns that once plagued you.

## 7. How to wriggle out of your political faux pas

**Acknowledge your mistake:** The best you can do is just 'fess up. "Showing a return to self awareness is always a good way to start to regain some of the trust," Senning says. "How we handle our mistakes says as much, maybe more, about us than how we handle our success," he says. "Moments like that are opportunities to start to build some bridges."

## 8. How to maintain perspective



## New Jersey newspaper announces Trump victory

**Look within yourself:** You may think focusing on etiquette and self-care is spitting in the wind. There are real issues at stake, and staying calm and polite may fall pretty low on your list of things to worry about. Maybe that's true. But we'll leave you with a quote from CNN political commentator Van Jones, who, bereft on the night of the election, had this wisdom to share:

"Where's the grace going to come from? Where's the understanding, where's the empathy going to come from? It's going to have to come from ordinary people. Tomorrow at work, when we go and look at people who we don't agree with, this can't be the interaction. It's going to have to be ordinary people reaching out to one another. If we can't begin to treat each other in a human way, this thing will go from bad to worse."



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