

The Etiquette of Politics

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 09 October 2012 09:58 - Last Updated Wednesday, 10 October 2012 07:19



Dear L. A. Plume,

It's only X number of days until we go to the polls to elect the President for the next 4 years. I plan to vote; I've been voting for 44 years now. I even (gasp!) know for whom I'll cast my ballot. It's bad enough that I get umpteen calls at dinnertime with recordings of famous folk urging me to vote for their favorites, I just don't answer! My issue, however, is that I have friends who are involved in campaigns who, in social situations, at dinner parties etc., pressure me to say how I'll vote, and if I decline to reveal my preference, bend my ear endlessly to persuade me to vote their ticket.

Sarah

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Dear Sarah,

I've been to that dinner party and as the minority at the table I slipped out the back door. So I understand your dilemma and have, for the past four years, been trying to think of witty repartee for those faced with that situation. We who were raised to not discuss politics, sex and religion in public could perhaps mix our metaphors in this instance. When someone starts in on his/her politically favorite topic, we could launch a discussion of our new addiction to sitophilia, which is a sexual fetish involving food; with proper research, it could be a real conversation stopper at a dinner table. You would have to be brave, but I bet it would be worth it.

L.A.Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

How can I convince "friends" to stop sending me political emails, etc.? I don't read them, no matter what party they are supporting. I think inserting, or more often shoving, one's political views into someone else's life is invasive and offensive. I grew up in an age where we believed in God, Our Country, said prayer at school, saluted the American flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance. My political preferences are not anyone else's business, nor are theirs, mine. I don't want to listen in on their prayers at night, I don't want to know how many bowel movements they have in a day, and I certainly don't want to know if they prefer the missionary position.

It's one thing to have an informative, even spirited conversation, but there is just so much anger these days around politics that there seems to be no discussion, even among the seemingly like-minded, in which someone's intelligence, heritage, or mother is not going to get insulted.

Marshall

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Dear Marshall,

I think a zillion years ago when some of us started to vote, the situation was so entirely different. For one, the media wasn't so available or intrusive. But more than that, we felt privileged to be able to cast our vote, whether it was for the party or the candidate. But even more, I think that we had some belief that even if it wasn't our candidate, even if we didn't believe that the "best" man won, that we, our country, would still be in good hands. My military friends speak from their experience that many men and women have died to give us the right to vote, many of whom were their friends and family.

Now, it seems to me that so much of the buzz is con vs. pro; that no matter which side we're on - the "information" isn't about what we like about our candidate/party, but what is wrong with the other guy. I also personally feel that we have lost sight of the common goal to support our country, no matter what or who.

For the emails, simply delete them unread if asking for them not to be sent to you doesn't work. In public, try if you can, to change the subject; "Have you always been cross-eyed? I never noticed before" might get you a break, or you can always walk away.

L. A. Plume

Note from Reader:

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Dear Ms. Plume,

Please include the following in your next column if possible:

It's very important that we all exercise our freedom to vote.□ And if you can offer a ride to someone who would have difficulty getting to the polls, please do so.

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