

Bursting the right bubbles

[cross-post from Medium]

First, understand the bubble

It's hard to argue with people if you don't know where they're coming from. One way is to ask: engage with people who are vehemently disagreeing with you, find out more about them as people, about their environments and motives. Which definitely should be done, but it also helps to do some background reading...

The Guardian's started in on this: a [round-up of 5 non-liberal articles](#) every week, complete with backgrounder on each author and why the article is important. It doesn't hurt that some of these authors are friends of friends and therefore maybe approachable with some questions. It's also worth checking out things like [BlueFeed RedFeed](#).

I've taken some flack lately for trying to understand Trump supporters. I'm slowly coming round to amending that to trying to understand Trump voters — especially the ones who voted with their noses held.

Us vs Them

I still can't be pulled into "them vs us". God it would be easier sometimes to build barricades and see 'them' as evil people supporting an evil leader, but truth is we're all human, and unless we get out of this together, it's going to be way beyond hard to get out at all.

I spent the lead-up to the election in a house in Trump country (neighbours with guns and banners about them having guns and I don't mean in a jolly countryside lets bag some pheasants kinda way; Trump signs and flags everywhere including my local pub; that damned hat on people I'd spend time at the bar with) and whilst I wouldn't necessarily ask for empathy (those flags were on some damn nice houses), I would ask for understanding the narratives and doing some deep soul-searching to see if any of them might be true, because that's where we start the honest conversations about where we are today.

And yes, I'm going to fight by every nonviolent means possible too — I have much less to lose than others around me (older, no children, nobody who depends on me); I'm hoping that if enough of us fight that way, we'll never have to fight in the alternative.

Could Ring Theory help?

I've been thinking a lot today about people, their interactions, margins, fairness and how to be a better ally, friend and compatriot (thank you Barnaby for making me think hard about this). We

humans are complex beasts: en masse it's hard to apply things like [Ring Theory](#) (the “comfort in, dump out” theory for comforting individuals and the layers of people around them that we often talked about in the Crisismappers' Cancer Survival Chat — yes, there was such a thing, yes there were many people you wouldn't expect in it, no I didn't — I was there as an admin/ friend...) because everyone has different pain from different things, especially when that pain is being deliberately seeded in many areas at once. I'm not sure what the answer is, but mutual compassion, respect and walking in the other guys' shoes have definitely got to be in there somewhere.

Bottom line: understand where other people are coming from. See if you can get them to understand where you are coming from too. Am not talking about the trolls (ignore them), but the people who are genuinely trying to argue with you...