

Dear Trump Supporter,

You cast your vote, but now so many people are angry with anyone who voted for Donald Trump. They are saying you're racist, sexist, Islamophobic, homophobic, anti-immigrant, don't care about people with disabilities, and generally are worried more about yourself than this country. You feel that's absolutely not true.

You may have voted for Trump because of your personal concerns about the economy, abortion rights, Hillary Clinton's trustworthiness, or any number of reasons. Perhaps you were angry at the entire political system because no matter how hard you work or how much you play by the rules, you can't seem to get ahead. You wanted your vote to show that you're angry with the system and need change.

You may feel offended that you're being accused of being someone you're not. Don't people see that this election was hard for you too? You really didn't like Trump either, but felt caught in a no-win situation.

Yes, this election was extremely difficult and you may feel that people are overreacting and just need to accept that Trump was elected. But, how do we move forward?

1. Realize that although you may have voted based on issues that are important to you, others felt so strongly about the hateful rhetoric during the campaign, that they were willing to abandon normal party affiliation to keep Trump out of the Oval Office. They may be disappointed and confused that you didn't make the same choice.

2. Remember that hate affects the lives of some people more than others. Throughout the campaign, racial minorities, Muslims, LGBT individuals, immigrants, and women heard so many awful things being said about them. Trump said many inappropriate things and did not stop his followers from doing the same. His lack of willingness to take a clear stand against hate left many people afraid of what he would do if he had more power. Now, that reality has come true, and many who belong to these groups truly feel frightened that they will be targeted. Cabinet appointments since the election continue to feed this alarm.

3. Remember that many people in this country are grieving. They feel like what has been lost is the America that they love. For those who have experienced discrimination or been sexually assaulted, Trump's election may have opened up old wounds and led them to feel traumatized by this election. They may have a genuine feeling of despair about whether their concerns will ever really be acknowledged by their fellow Americans. Give them time to heal. When you tell hurt individuals to move on, it makes them feel even more invalidated.

4. Although you may feel you had good reasons for voting for Trump, if you truly are anti-hate, it is critical that you make that stance clearly known to others and unite with their efforts to combat hate.
5. Remember that even though seeing all this hate out in the open is painful, that openness is necessary for deeper change. You cannot change what you cannot see or acknowledge. Everyone can now see that America still has much work to do on basic civil rights.
6. Remember that social change often takes decades to achieve. We are not moving backward. We are moving forward to deal with issues that are still unresolved.
7. Join forces with anyone who is willing to fight against hate, even if they voted for Trump, voted third party, or did not vote at all.
8. Support organizations that have already been fighting for the rights of so many different groups: the ACLU, The Center for Reproductive Rights, The Trevor Project, etc.
9. Refuse to disconnect from your fellow Americans. A sure sign that hate has won is when we are all clearly separated from one another. Reach out to your neighbors, friends, family members, and coworkers. None of us will truly feel safe all by ourselves. Do not let this election isolate you. That will only feed fear. Look around and you will see many, many goodhearted Americans who want to help make this country a better place, just like you.
10. Never give up on America! Exercise your right to speak up and protest, but do so peacefully. Otherwise you are no different from those inciting hate and violence in the aftermath of this election. As Martin Luther King so eloquently said,

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."