



Well, the election is over...thank the Lord! Whatever your opinion is, I think we can all agree on one thing...

Campaigning sucks!

Whether you're a candidate or the voting public, campaigning sucks...

I don't want to dwell on how bad campaigns suck...I want to talk about how we might find a way to agree on at least one thing; hopefully more...

The morning after the election, I had the TV on – and not on FOX, not on CNN, not on MSNBC, thankfully...I had it on one of the ESPN stations. But guess what? Even they were talking about the election. Wasn't everyone that day after? ...Anyway, one of the guests on the show, Mark Schlereth, was asked about his experience in professional sports. Did his team take time out to discuss national and global events and issues? Schlereth was an offensive lineman for the Denver Broncos. If you'd like to listen to the full context of his comments, you can go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MOgEPxkRQU> and listen from 25:48-29:17. He shared how his teammates on Denver's offensive line would shut down their meetings thirty minutes early each Friday. Their offensive line coach, Alex Gibbs, would go to the white board and write down a topic. (In the old days – my era ☺, the board was a chalkboard, and we called these CHALK TALKS.) The topic might be anything, from "Your 16-year-old daughter comes home and tells you she's pregnant" to money to marriage. And Gibbs would say,

You need to get to know each other. You need to understand each other.

The players came from diverse backgrounds. They were of different colors; grew up in different parts of the country. These talks enabled them to:

- Come together
- Build a bond – a band of brothers, so to speak
- Go into "battle" unified...as one.

That happened because they set aside time intentionally to get to know and understand one another.

These non-football activities forged a unity that made them extraordinary when it was "game time."

To truly become one, we must get to know one another and understand one another. When I understand you – who you are, where you've come from, your story – I'm not so quick to judge, label and condemn you. When these kinds of conversations take place, we can find common ground; places where we do agree. And while inevitably we will disagree, the unity, the bond already forged will allow the notion of TEAM to prevail even when disagreements arise, even when heated disagreements arise. These kinds of conversation make it possible for us to

agree to disagree without being disagreeable.

And, what's the alternative? NOT talking...NOT understanding each other...Where does this path take us?

- To assumptions and conclusions about others (almost always incorrect ones...).
- These assumptions and conclusions lead us to misunderstanding.
- Misunderstanding not addressed will lead to unnecessary conflict.
- Unaddressed conflict will lead to division.

Is this your preferred future?

I doubt it.

Now, these kinds of white-board conversations aren't likely to take place with three hundred million participants. But they can (dare I say should?) take place in families, in small groups, in business and sports teams. And if these teams can lead the way, maybe our three hundred million might follow and the change we're all clamoring for might happen in a way that could be a pleasant surprise for all of us.

How about you? Is it time to break out the white board?

I'll just bet that, if you do, and you write a topic on the board, and you take thirty minutes to discuss it with your team, over time you'll build the TEAM, the understanding and the unity that you can then take in to whatever "battle" you face. I'll just bet that if you practice this, you'll be glad you did!