

Brighten Up – It's Thanksgiving!

By Roger L Simon

First, Happy Thanksgiving to all readers of this still rather new Substack! We have plans for 2025, unique to the format, we sincerely hope will make it useful to many of you beyond just our humble opinions. This will be revealed shortly (MEGA).

Meanwhile, and unfortunately, amidst all the genuine excitement of a new Trumpian world of American entrepreneurial potential is the specter of more ideologically broken families than ever seen in this country since the Civil War.



I am part of one of them.

I won't go into details because of privacy concerns but I know

I am hardly alone. Thousands or even millions of families have similar ruptures that add a bleak overtone to this post-election holiday season.

The endless television and social media whining of the losers only adds to the unpleasant atmosphere, as does football spiking by the winners.

Some of this is natural, but it has gone over the top in this era of information overload.

One talking head went so far as to urge her audience to boycott all family members on the other side to ostracize and banish them in perpetuity as if they were some version of untouchables.

She was not universally well received for this.

Nevertheless, self-selection of a similar nature is taking place across the country.

It's terrible for the soul.

We are all more than our political opinions. They are important, of course, but only part of who we are.

We have been encouraged to forget this, to be true to our "team," to such an extent that a form of blindness has set in.

Yes, we are more comfortable with those who agree with us, but we also have families. Some of them will have misfortune, become ill, die. We will too. The degree to which we need each other will be manifested too late. That should provide a motive in itself for reconciliation.

And then there is simple loving-kindness, what is called "chesed" in my tradition but appears under different names in so many others. We obviously need more of this. I write these words more as a reminder to myself than for others.

Perhaps it is too much to ask that this rupture can be solved this Thanksgiving. Perhaps that female talking head, as rage-filled as she was, was right. We should stay away for a while.

But I think not. It's a time to mend fences. If we don't start now, we may never. And the way to do it is by listening to each other. Really listening.

That doesn't mean we have to agree. That is highly unlikely to happen. But the act of listening itself can create surprising change or at least acceptance and comity. Sometimes all people really want is to be heard, more than they realize themselves.

This does not have to happen at the Thanksgiving table. It can happen anywhere if the right moment is chosen. And, yes, it will often backfire. Still, it's worth trying. But do it gently, carefully. (Again, I am reminding myself.)

From another wise tradition:

The Master allows things to happen.

She shapes events as they come.

She steps out of the way

and lets the Tao speak for itself.

—The Daodejing

Happy Thanksgiving again. The AI illo at the top was made with X's grok with the instruction "Thanksgiving table with everybody arguing." It came up in seconds. Enough said.

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