



Trust and Our Great Collaborative Experiment

SAGA's deep dive into the power of Collaboration, coupled with this year's election cycle, brings us to the greatest Collaborative experiment of all time—our Democracy. Rooted in the extraordinary principle of self-determination and bolstered by our right to choose those who lead us, it is our national Collaboration. Checks and balances provide guardrails, but the heart and soul of this grand experiment is trust. Trust fuels our belief in the Constitution, the principles that drive our institutions, and a commitment to collaborate on a shared vision despite our differences.

Somehow, along the way, we lost our trusting North Star. We will flip the tables on our future if we allow our differences to supersede our trust in a combined vision for a better tomorrow. Conflict, as challenging as it can be, sharpens and enlightens us, but it has to take place within a trusting space and not a mindset rooted in the belief that one's compromise is someone else's advantage. The beauty in our grand 247-year Collaborative experiment recognizes that we are inherently different but can work together to understand that those differences are what melds the metal of our strength. At SAGA, we see the power of collaboration every day in the actions of our grantees.

So, I posit the question: How do we return to trusting the process?
The answer is simple, the task is daunting, and the consequences enormous.

Enlightened Leadership + Understanding x Collaboration = Trust

More than any time in our history, I encourage you to seek out and support creative leaders who value Collaboration for the greater good—those who recognize the importance of working together to minimize our differences while maximizing our outcomes. They are in short supply, and their numbers are dwindling due to dogma from the extremes. We cannot let the extremes deflect us from our trusting true north. These leaders need our support, and we can lead from behind by getting engaged. One of our grantees that plays a critical role in this process is Democracy Works, and I encourage you to learn more about them as you consider our future. They focus on facilitating free and fair elections without a political agenda. If you care, get involved and stay engaged. This is one experiment that can't afford to fail.

I wish us all a brighter, more collaborative future.

David Bartoshuk, President - SAGA Foundation

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