

Letter: Why education is essential

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Last week, I had an experience at a local business that was very unsettling. It got me thinking. How did our country become so divided?

Back in the olden days, before 1987, we had the FCC's Fairness Doctrine. According to Wikipedia, the policy instructed news media to present both sides of an issue "to ensure viewers were exposed to a diversity of viewpoints." We trusted Walter Cronkite to deliver the facts. It wasn't news for profit, or political opinion, it was just news.

Back in the olden days, 1960s, there was heated political debate, but we weren't isolated in our polarized camps. Mr. Noble, the Democrat down the street, argued politics with my Republican dad, but they were still friends. Our families went on vacations together. In school, church, Camp Fire Girls, etc, we were taught to respect each other and follow the Golden Rule.

Now political debate devolves into personal attacks. Self-righteous indignation battles it out with arrogant hearsay. Corporate mainstream news and other media bend the truth to influence their listeners and advance their political and financial agendas. We must be able to discern the truth. That is why education is essential. Critical thinking is essential. And learning from history is essential. We must not become gullible lemmings who fall prey to unscrupulous leaders or unfounded conspiracy theories and lies.

The other day, two employees in a local business lectured me for wearing a mask. They said COVID “is just a bad flu” and that most of the people who died from it here in Del Norte County were unhealthy or obese. They said I’d been brainwashed. I do understand that COVID restrictions have hit some businesses hard, so I shut up and agreed; there is a lot of brainwashing going on.

They also quoted a CDC website that said thousands had died from the vaccine. I went home and did some research. There is a CDC reporting system called VAERS that reviews deaths that occur after vaccinations. I searched but could find no timeline, so I don’t know if the reports are one day or one year after the vaccine. But there are thousands of reports from senior care facilities, from hospitals and from individuals, including false reports. The CDC reviews them all, and so far, three deaths are definitely linked to the J&J vaccine. The VAERS/CDC data is being misconstrued by dishonest media pundits and even elected representatives. They are using the COVID vaccine as a political football. They are dividing us. And divided we fall.

Back in the olden days, 1930s, my mother had polio when she was a child. She was beautiful like a movie star but had a limp and her right side was weak. The polio vaccine came out in 1955. Because we all had the vaccine, America has been polio free since 1979. Our families and children are not disfigured by polio.

It is a testament to our American education system and industry that our scientists were able to develop, test and distribute the life-saving COVID vaccines so quickly. Other countries are clamoring for our vaccines. But because of self-serving politicians and media propaganda many of our people are afraid to be vaccinated. Right now, in the middle of summer, there are dozens of people in Del Norte County who are sick with COVID. It is too early to tell if there is permanent damage to people who fall seriously ill. This is why education is so important. Our kids need to learn how to think critically, to discern the truth. They need to know history. We cannot allow ourselves, our families or our country to be manipulated by propaganda.

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