



Where Excellence Is Tradition

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Hold Hands and Stick Together

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Hardly a day goes by without the news headlines detailing the conflict, in-fighting and bickering among our politicians. In newspapers, online and on TV, instead of honest and open debate regarding ideas and issues, we are regularly inundated with the news of our local, state and national elected officials fussing, fighting and avoiding each other. Here are just a few recent examples of the dissension and discord between our publicly elected servants:

- DuPage County Sheriff John Zaruba and County Board Chairman Dan Cronin, while they work in the same office complex, haven't spoken to each other for months as they are in an ongoing dispute over budget and staffing issues.
- Our top state elected officials – Governor Bruce Rauner, House Speaker Michael Madigan and Senate President John Cullerton – continue to use the press to spar, fight and posture over who is to blame for the lack of a state budget. They have not met formally to problem solve and address the budget stalemate in four months.
- College of DuPage trustees have been embroiled in a power struggle for months, culminating in a three-month boycott by veteran trustees that resulted in a lack of a quorum to conduct Board of Trustees meetings.
- Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Governor Rauner continue to use the press to posture and position their views regarding the proposed takeover of Chicago Public Schools. Yet, neither has reached out to engage in face-to-face dialogue regarding CPS's funding woes.
- Our President and Senate, with little debate and discussion with each other, regularly use the media to frame their differences over the authority and timeline of naming and approving the next U.S. Supreme Court justice.

Some of the best advice that we can give our politicians comes from our own kindergartners. Robert Fulghum's book, "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten," outlines the following rules or principles to follow for getting along and working together:

- Share everything
- Play fair
- Don't hit people
- Clean up your own mess
- Don't take things that aren't yours

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- Watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together

Addressing difficult problems, which sometimes can be polarizing, requires an intentional effort to meet regularly to share and listen. Problem solving and building consensus is hard work, but can be accomplished when differing sides are willing to meet and work collaboratively. Just like our kindergartners learn at a young age, our elected officials need to "hold hands and stick together" if they're serious about identifying viable solutions to our challenging problems.

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