

BY ERIC L. FISCHER

It was about a year ago at this time that I was married. Specifically, April 12, but even the month or so leading up to a wedding becomes an indecipherable blur, as anyone who has ever been married or closely involved with one can attest.

I don't know how many people were married this election year, or previous election years, but I do wonder if it caused them to re-view their feelings and leanings on issues both political and not. My wife and I ended up splitting the vote, "canceling each other" as she puts it, but our attempts to convince the other to our own point of view caused me to seriously think about where I stand on many issues. As I found out, I had a pretty well-defined platform. Since that time, I'm doing my best to dismantle it.

The term "platform" has several definitions. The first, according to Webster, is simple: "Plan; Design." It's certainly a definition that sees common use. Computer platforms are redesigned as often as technology will allow. Detroit finally seems to have gotten the hint that their current platforms don't conform to modern life. They're ready to roll out the next generation. Plans change. Designs are modified.

According to Webster, how-



ever, a different type of platform should also come to our minds when we hear that word. Platform's closest synonyms are "Plan" and "Design" but the second definition is quite different: "A declaration of the principles on which a group of persons stands; especially: a declaration of principles and policies adopted by a political party or a candidate." A principle is not a plan or design. It is a way of orienting oneself mentally. And in the world of politics, morality, economy and ecology, it is an unmoving point on a sweeping, changing landscape. That's not good. That's unhelpful and dangerous.

To paraphrase a well known bit of wisdom; no plan, even the best laid, meets contact with the enemy unchanged. Everything changes. Everything must. Businesses and organizations fail in short order if they refuse to embrace change. And yet our political system, and all those involved, from incumbents currently holding high seats right down to the individual voter, operate from a very different definition of "platform," one intended for the construction industry. A place to stand.

Ladies and gentlemen, I tell you now, don't trust your favorite politicians to end this static, self-defeating way of operating. Their No. 1 goal is to get re-elected, and the best way to do that is to find out what you want, or at least what you think you want, and align themselves with it unwaveringly. One can't even blame them

for it. It's enormously effective toward their ends. But it is not effective toward our ends.

Just as every company and organization, alliance and group must change as time rolls on and we are presented new information, so too must our views, thoughts and even principles change. Personally, I always supported a very laissez-faire economy. The massive fraud uncovered in the last few months has me thinking. I'm not saying I've changed my mind, but I have climbed down off of my platform.

So what about you, dear readers? Maybe your platform supports gun control or stands against marijuana legalization. I'm not saying I have certain feelings on these subjects. I'm not saying you should.

But please, spend a few minutes to do the following.

1) Determine how you feel about issues key to you.

2) Do some research. Find out the facts, not the platform propaganda.

3) Think, don't feel, your way through to a conclusion.

Because, friends, when we all step down off of our platforms to stop shouting and start talking, maybe our elected representatives will adopt a new plank to their interminable platforms: to stop arguing and start solving.

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