

ThePathForward.mp3

Linda [00:00:12] Hi, everybody, it's Linda. It's the day after the election, the votes are still being counted.

Linda [00:00:19] And if you're anything like me, you are a little bit on edge, a little bit anxious to see how this is all going to play out and not just in terms of who is going to occupy the White House for the next four years, but how we as a nation and we as individuals are going to move forward together. So let's all take a deep breath. Let's stay calm and let's get to work. And here's what I think the work is.

Linda [00:00:56] The work is for us, all of us, to find a path forward. And I believe with every fiber of my being that that path is empathy. We have to find a way to put ourselves in the other person's shoes, if even for a moment, to think and understand how they might be feeling in this moment. Whoever wins. There will be another half of the country that isn't going to feel so good about that and how we react and how we respond to each other in that moment will define us for generations to come. So let's all vow that we will continue to let our voices be heard because they all matter, all of Our Voices Matter. But let's do it in a way that acknowledges, accepts and validates someone else's point of view. So here's what I think and hope will be a good idea, because came to me this morning, I was thinking, how can we have some sort of a path forward? And that is what I'd like to call our new initiative here at Our Voices Matter. The path forward and my quest of you is to think about what that path looks like and how you as an individual can take the necessary steps to move us all along that path, because it's going to take each one of us to do our part. Right. So here's what I'd like for you to do. I'd like for you to think about. What is the one thing that you as an individual can do to help bridge the divide that you have with someone in your life? Family member, friend, colleague, right now we all have somebody that falls into that category who voted for the other side. We need to find a way to remain. Cognizant of how the other person might be feeling. And before we think, before we act, we need to put ourselves in that frame of mind. So, again, my question of you is to ask. And think about how we can take those steps forward and then share them with our audience. So what I'd like for you to do is to pull out your phone. Record something, just a few words, 15, 30 seconds that says what you think we can do as individuals, I want concrete solutions here. Is it sitting down and having a meal? Is it reaching out to someone to say, explain to me, help me understand? Better yet, help me understand why you voted the way that you do. Help me understand why you feel the way that you do. And then I'd like to share my thoughts and feelings with you. How do we find a place of commonality where we can start? The one place that. I think we can start is with our patriotism. I am actually going to step off camera for a minute and go grab something that I have here in my office. Which is the United States flag that. Flew over the capital. I, I treasure this, there's a story behind how I got it, but that's for another day. The point is. I love my country. And I know you do, too. I know each and every one of us loves America. And we want her to survive and thrive.

Linda [00:05:26] But as noted historian and just all around, brilliant man Jon Meacham said so beautifully this morning. Democracy cannot survive without empathy. So if you love your democracy, as I know you do, if you love this country as I know you do. You will work with me. We will work together to find that path forward, and that path has to include empathy. So when I ask you to do is to again go to your phone, record your thoughts and feelings about how we can take some concrete steps to move forward together.

Linda [00:06:12] Then I want you to go to our website, Our Voices Matter podcast, DOT, and we'll have all the instructions on how you can get that video to us. Now, we're going to use that in a couple of ways. First of all, we're going to use it here on Our Voices Matter as we go forward and continue to have these courageous conversations that we've been having for almost two years now. I can't believe it. It's been two years since we launched. So we're going to use it in that way. But we're going to use it in another very, very exciting way.

Linda [00:06:40] Saturday after Thanksgiving at 8pm on KPRC, Channel two here in Houston, my old television station where I was a news anchor for many years. Has generously agreed to broadcast an hour long special called America's Table. America's Table is a concept that came about from the American Jewish Committee here in Houston, the Houston chapter of AJC and its Community of Conscious.

Linda [00:07:13] Last year, they brought together in a live event a group of incredible people from all walks of life highlighting the diversity of our community here in Houston and especially our immigrant community and sharing all of the rich stories that really comprise the fabric of what makes this such an incredible place to live. And this place, Houston, is the most diverse city in the nation. Just ask Stephen Klineberg, who's been documenting this for over 30 years now at the Rice at the Kinder Institute at Rice University.

Linda [00:07:56] So we are a microcosm of what the nation is becoming and this election is a microcosm of what the nation is becoming. There are many positives to those two statements. The challenge is that with the changing face and demographics of our country, we are becoming ever more divided and what we have to do is to find a way to bring ourselves back together. America's table is designed to do that. So this year I was asked to co-chair of the event. Before covid, when it was going to be a live event, and now that we cannot gather live, we are taping the event and turned it into an hour long television broadcast that we hope families all over the country will sit down and watch to see the vibrancy of the diversity of our community and how we are doing everything we can to make it work. And more often than not, we are. So that night, I'm excited to be hosting it with one of the anchors at KPRC. The mayor is engaged and involved, will have some entertainment for you, and we're going to share some rich stories. That will remind us of how much we have in common, how each one of us, wherever we came from, however our families got here, that we are part of what makes America, America, and that is a cause for celebration. And we thought, what a perfect time over the holidays after you've sat with your families and you've given thanks for what you have, especially in this tumultuous year of twenty twenty.

Linda [00:09:59] It's an opportunity for us to reflect further and determine how we are going to move forward. So these video vignettes that I'm asking you to share about how to move forward with the path forward is I'm going to use some of those also in the program that's going to air on KPRC and then we're going to use them in multiple ways throughout the year. Again, as we continue to have courageous conversations here on Our Voices Matter.

Linda [00:10:29] So let me just close by saying this, I'm so proud of us as a nation for the record shattering turnout that we exhibited. As a result of that overwhelming turnout, it is taking longer to count the votes, but that's OK because in reality, the votes are never fully counted on election night. And I think we all have been educated about that in these last few weeks. So let's stay calm. Let's take a deep breath. Let's think about and talk about solutions, how we can talk to each other, how we can listen to each other and learn from each other. As we forge a path. Forward. And that path has to be paved with empathy.

Linda [00:11:29] So I am looking forward to continuing to have these conversations, my next podcast is going to be talking all about America's table. I'm going to bring in the folks who have helped put it together so that we can really share a little bit more detail with you. And even if you are watching us from someplace other than Houston and I know many of you are and thank you for that, you'll be able to watch the broadcast streaming on our website.

Linda [00:11:58] So we'll give you all the details later as it comes on. So in the meantime, think about those stories, how we can move forward, what the solutions are. Share them with us. Go to our website, Our Voices Matter, podcast, dot com. There'll be instructions there on very easily how you can get those videos to us. Really want to share your heart. Your voice because of that.