

First vote; then contemplate your vacation

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No matter what happens on Election Day, we're all still going to wake up in pretty much the same situation on Wednesday morning. So, yeah. Let's all just take a deep breath.

Maybe it's the effect of social media and an increasing dependence on being constantly "connected" that has us viewing the world from a distorted lens of our own design. No matter who we're voting for, we're all panicky, confused, angry and scared.

Yes, it's true there's a lot at stake. But it's time to accept that, as of this moment, you can only do what you can do.

And, realistically, there are just a few things you can actually do.

First, if you haven't already, vote. Listen and think before you decide, then go to the polls and fill in your rectangles. You'll feel better. Really.

Second, let go of being right for the next few days. Unless someone asks for information, they probably aren't going to read your link or listen to your rant.

For the time being, remember these words: "Let's agree to disagree." Take five deep breaths and think about where you want to go on your next vacation.

Third, and most importantly, don't put too much pressure on yourself or others. You may feel that a person's decision to vote for the candidate you did not choose is a deal breaker. You may believe it shows what their core values really are. This one choice is how you will judge him or her for the remainder of their lives.

Easy there.

Let's get something straight, OK? A vote is a decision, a choice, even a declaration. As long as you vote legally and only once, a vote is not a crime. Maybe try to feel like that other person's vote is not about you. Maybe try to understand they have different beliefs.

Many believe a vote is sacred, but even in that case, there are many forgivable sins.

Plus, it's increasingly clear democracy doesn't work very well with the current trend of "my way or no way" politics. The fact that this is bleeding over into our personal lives is as disturbing as the main two candidates are unpopular.

Here's what won't change on Wednesday as long as you don't carry out your threat to move to Canada (it's likely you won't): We live in a democratic republic where we get to have a point of view without fear of persecution by our government. There are billions on this earth who can't say the same thing. Take a little comfort in the fact that we do have some control no matter who wins.

Our next president will not be the end of the world - at least not on Wednesday. Odds are, he or she won't be the end of the world after that either, but we'll worry about that in January.

For the time being, instead of clicking on that doomsday headline and spiralling further into despair and/or anxiety, focus on the one thing you can control in this final stretch of this historically bizarre American election - yourself. And maybe find a cat video to watch.