

## You Might Be Right - Democratic Knowledge Project- Transcript

**Danielle Allen:** I think we do need civic education and we do need knowledge, but we also have to make sure that we're inviting people to participate in a democracy that's genuinely responsive, genuinely effective in solving our problems. That's why I work on both civic education and democracy renovation.

**Marianne Wanamaker:** Welcome to "You Might Be Right," a place for civil conversations about tough topics brought to you by the Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs at the University of Tennessee. For the past two and a half centuries, the United States has been a model for governing that depends on the will of the people, but many would argue that we have strayed from a democracy that is of the people, by the people, for the people. Are we in need of a democracy renovation or a course correction that creates greater democratic access? The Governors interview Harvard University expert Danielle Allen about her vision for shoring up democracy.

**Phil Bredesen:** Well, Bill, we've got a really interesting guest for this podcast and somebody I've known for quite some time and I'm a huge admirer of, and I think you will quickly become the same.

**Bill Haslam:** I already am a fan of her writing, so this is going to be fun.

**Phil Bredesen:** Great. Well, listen, Danielle Allen is with us. She is a professor, the James Bryant Conant University professor at Harvard and director of the Center of Ethics there, is a graduate of Princeton University in 1993, has a couple of Ph.D.s, one from King's College in classics and one from Harvard University in government. She's previously been on the faculty at the University of Chicago, formerly a trustee of both Amherst College and Princeton University, past chair of the Pulitzer Prize Board and joined—

**Bill Haslam:** Wow, Danielle, have you done anything productive in your life?

**Danielle Allen:** Oh, goodness. I know. I don't go to the beach very often, I guess.

**Phil Bredesen:** Yeah, you already think she must be 85 years old with all this and so on, but she has a column with the Washington Post, which has been very popular about constitutional democracy. She doesn't just write, she's also the founding director of the Democratic Knowledge Project supporting education for participation in a healthy constitutional democracy and Partners in Democracy, which is working to pursue democracy reform, to create better success and access. So I think we have a great guest. And let me just start out, Danielle, by suggesting maybe you could describe to us a little bit what the Knowledge Project is and what it is you're trying to accomplish, and we can go from there.

**Danielle Allen:** Sure. No, thank you so much, Governor Bredesen, Governor Haslam, it's great

to be with you both. I really appreciate that you're having this conversation together and modeling for all of us what the work of civil deliberation, civil discourse, even civil disagreement might be. So thanks a lot for having me.

The Democratic Knowledge Project is a civic education provider. There's a sense in which what we're trying to do is exactly, I think, what you're trying to do on the show, which is to invite people into participation, to welcome people in, to connect people to our institutions and our shared public problems to ensure they have understanding and that can support effective healthy civic participation in our constitutional democracy. So we develop curriculum. We have a yearlong grade eight curriculum here in Massachusetts, for example. We also provide professional development support for educators. We work really hard to make sure that people have the philosophical foundations of democracy and good understanding of that, good understanding of our political institutions and also the space to probe and explore their own values and the values of other people so that they can learn how to work together to solve our shared problems.

**Bill Haslam:** Danielle, one of the things you talk about is that maybe it's time for a renovation in our democracy, so any of us who have ever renovated our homes would know there's two different kinds. One involves paint and wallpaper, maybe changing the knobs on your kitchen cabinets. The other is taking it down to the studs and working on the foundation. Which one do we need here?

**Danielle Allen:** Well, I think, governor, I might actually say that there's a third kind of renovation as well. There's those renovations when you're, say, putting on an addition, for example, or maybe you're taking two rooms inside your kitchen and your dining room and you're opening them up into a bigger space. So it's not that you have to go all the way down to the studs, but you are meaningfully transforming the shape of your house. So it's really that third kind of renovation that I have in mind for our democracy.

There are a couple of reasons for this. There's the fact that here we are in the 21st century. We're huge. We're 330 million people compared to the three million when we started and we're incredibly diverse and we have an amazing economy, this huge economic engine, and there are just lots of ways in which we need to accommodate our growth, our growth as a people, our growth as a society. There's a second issue that when we look at the house we share together, these institutions we built, the truth is they weren't really built for everybody at the very beginning, and as I often say, some folks got rooms with a view and other folks got relegated to the basement. So that's where I think there's work to do to renovate to make sure there are good rooms for all.

**Phil Bredezen:** In your description of the Democratic Knowledge Project, you put a lot of emphasis on curriculum and curricular developments and professional developments and so on. Do you think that really though that a lack of knowledge of people of these things is the fundamental issue? Are you addressing what actually is wrong with democracy?

**Danielle Allen:** Well, I'll tell you the thing that keeps me up at night is the statistics or data points about young people and their disconnection from our democracy. There are two data points that I find really alarming. You may know these already, but the first is if you ask different generational cohorts, whether they consider it essential to live in a democracy, folks who were born before World War II register at about 70% that it is essential to live in a democracy. For millennials and under which is not that young anymore, 40 and under, not quite 30% considered it essential to live in a democracy.

There's a similar study that's actually brand new, came out in January, asking the question of whether or not people feel proud to live in America and same sort of thing, Baby Boomer generation, about 73% say yes, we feel proud, Gen X about 53%, millennials, 36%, and then the really scary data point, for Gen Z, only 16% of the members of Gen Z say they feel proud to live in America. So that's a story about connection, about motivation, not just about knowledge. And so I'll be honest, I think we do need civic education and we do need knowledge, but we also have to make sure that we're inviting people to participate in a democracy that's genuinely responsive, genuinely effective in solving our problems. That's why I work on both civic education and democracy renovation.

**Phil Bredeesen:** One quick follow-up question, if you were to ask some of those people who were in those lower percentages, the younger people, the next question which is why do you feel that way? What is it about American democracy that you find non-essential to things that are important to you? What do they say?

**Danielle Allen:** Well, the truth is I think it really comes back to the world they've lived through and if one stops and remembers that folks who are, let's say, 21, 22, right now, their lives were marked by having been born just around or just after September 11th. Then in their early childhood, but old enough to remember things, we had the Great Recession. Then we have had the period of increasing polarization from 2009 to the present. Then, of course, we had the incredible polarization of the 2016 election and then a global pandemic. So the simple fact of the matter is they have lived through really hard times in this country's history. I think in that context, they haven't seen their country perform at the level of their own hopes and aspirations. I think it's against that backdrop that we have to understand their sense of disconnection.

**Bill Haslam:** And let me follow up, but great point. I'm teaching a college class or have been this semester and I'm having to remind myself these students were being born or maybe weren't born yet when 9/11 happened, but you could really go through our history and say, "Well, they could have lived during the Civil War or World War I or the Great Depression or World War II." Haven't we always had these difficult times as a nation and what makes these times different enough for folks to feel so disengaged?

**Danielle Allen:** No, I really appreciate that question. I think we're all wrestling with it and trying to understand it. Folks may remember that after 1989, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the

end of the Soviet Union, there was a distinguished author, Francis Fukuyama, who wrote a book called "The End of History," as if now we had triumphed and that was it. It was all going to be stable from there. I think that was exactly wrong. I think that was the beginning of history, actually. I think the period of the Cold War, despite its difficulties, fears of nuclear war and the like, was actually an incredibly stable time, geopolitically speaking. It was a relatively speaking stable time inside this country domestically and in the wake of that, we have a lot more uncertainty and turbulence in the world. Probably the times we live in are more normal, right? More the norm for history. But we had several generations that lived in more stable times, and so I think the contrast means there's a great generational divide between the Gen Z generation and Gen Xers and Baby Boomers.

**Bill Haslam:** One of the things that you write about and that I agree with you on is the whole idea of civics education, if we're going to remodel the house, like started out talking about, one of the things we need to do is start with a healthy presentation of civics. What should that look like? Today we're debating should we talk about CRT or focus on ABCs in schools? How do we get past those debates and talk about foundational civic knowledge?

**Danielle Allen:** Well, this really is the deepest question, and I do think understanding what to do is helped along by knowing what's happened and why are we where we are. We are at a point where, as of about two years ago, we were investing \$50 of federal monies per kid in STEM education every year and 5 cents per kid in civics education every year. That discrepancy tells a whole story there, but how did we get there exactly? Partly it was because we saw the importance of STEM education and it is important. We do need to invest in science, technology and math and medicine. At the same time though, the other problem was adult polarization. So there have been earlier efforts in the nineties, in the two thousands to build a structure for supporting social studies and civic education and those efforts have foundered.

Governor Bredesen, you may remember this, when the National Governor's Association was moving the Common Core state standards forward, the goal was have to have standards in English language arts, math and science, and also social studies. And the social studies standards landed on the cutting room floor because people could just not agree across the red/blue divide. I say all this to make the point that the single greatest resource we need for rebuilding civic education is collaboration across the red/blue divide. So I want to commend to your attention something called the Educating for American Democracy Roadmap. It was released in March of 2021 and it does provide a framework for excellence in history and civics learning for all learners K through 12. It was produced by a big cross ideological network of academics and educators across the country, about 300 people participating, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the U.S. Department of Education in both the Trump and the Biden administrations.

And we do have answers to your question, Governor Haslam, about the actual content. We do care about the philosophical foundations of democracy, about political institutions, about the history of citizenship and both inclusion and exclusion in our country, and we believe there

needs to be a full story told. But what we do in the roadmap is we organize it around questions. What are the questions that every student should have the chance to investigate, to explore, to bring research and evidence to considering? So rather than providing answers, we provide seven thematic areas that we think people should explore and a structure of questions to engage the nation's community of educators and students in a shared conversation.

**Phil Bredesen:** I was governor during the time that the Common Core stuff was going on, was very involved in it because of the stuff we were doing in Tennessee. And you're exactly right. There's not a lot to argue red and blue about in calculus, but there's a lot to argue about the way you should teach social studies and literature and some of the other kinds of things. There was also the issue, though, the other big issue that helped to undermine those efforts was the sort of extreme distaste for having a federal mandate, a federal policy in some way on what it should be taught. There's, I think, a very well-established ethic in this country that these things are the provinces of local school boards and so on. Do you see that as an impediment to the kind of thing that you're trying to do?

**Danielle Allen:** I really appreciate that you raised that issue of the fact that we by and large don't want to see the federal government mandating curriculum, and I think that's right. I think federal government should not mandate curriculum. That was a really core principle for the work we did for the Educating for American Democracy Roadmap. It matters that it's a civil society effort, it wasn't a governmental effort. Yes, it had federal funding, but it was a civil society effort and it's connected to a policy model which expects that states and districts will then be doing the work of taking a look at the roadmap, considering its inquiry framework, considering a set of design principles that we articulated, and answering the question of, well, what does this look like for us in our context, in our circumstances? So we support what we call aspirational federalism. This is an approach where, again, different states are figuring out their context-specific answers, but there is a sense of a shared purpose that we can put enough north stars on the table together to be moving in shared directions even with great diversity across our federal structure.

**Bill Haslam:** Yeah, the Common Core example is an interesting one because like you said, in Tennessee, Governor Bredesen was around, I guess when NGA and others were working on establishing those standards. I was there when the world blew up around Common Core, and my view is it actually got attacked from both sides. The right, who as Governor Bredesen said, "Oh, this is the federal government wandering into our lane here in terms of telling us what we should teach our children." The left saying tied to that was, "Here's what students should know and here's how we're going to assess whether they know it." And then that wandered into some stuff that the teachers unions didn't like.

And so it actually did the amazing job of having each side not like it, but what got lost was this notion that a third grade parent should know how their third-grader is doing compared to the rest of the country and what we expect them to know at that point in their educational advancement. How do we pull the arguments out of the gutters that they tend to get in on either side and talk

back to that, "Here's what we're actually trying to do and can't we get to the greater good?"

**Danielle Allen:** Well, again, I think that's so important. And I think there's some silver linings that come with the fact that social studies didn't make it into the Common Core. So one of those silver linings is that for those of us who work on civic education, there hasn't been any kind of existing accountability structure. At the same time that that's the case, those of us who work in civic education, we really care about democracy. So we really believe in accountability. If public dollars are being invested in something, then the people deserve to be able to have assessment to see that those dollars are being well spent.

And so that means in the civic education community, we are really interested in accountability and assessment, but we've also had the space to experiment and to innovate. So we have developed some pathways to evaluating student learning that get us out of the bind of the high stakes testing model, but that don't give up on the concept of accountability. We're piloting right now and we hope to be sharing learnings from this and we hope that this might actually open up the broader conversation in education about how we can in fact maintain accountability, have meaningful assessment, but also support the joy of learning for students and educator empowerment in relationship to teaching and instructional plans.

**Bill Haslam:** Well, let me shift to maybe a more fundamental issue as we think about this. I'm one of those that think that the founders, given the times and circumstances, got a lot of things right. But the world has also changed. There's no way they could have anticipated a world of social media and artificial intelligence. How do we take the eternal truths that we think has allowed the country, despite all our stumbles, to progress and realize that, like I said, the world has changed in some really dramatic ways? How do we do both of those things?

**Danielle Allen:** Well, I think for me, one of the solutions to that conundrum has been to see that often eternal truths are really design principles, that is there's a certain kind of principle for what you want to achieve, but how you achieve it will vary with context, with time and place. So what do I mean by that exactly? If you read the Federalist Papers, you'll see a number of principles articulated. So for instance, our institutions need to have or deliver what they called republican safety. This means that they need to always be protecting the basic rights and liberties of the people. At the same time, those institutions also needed to deliver energy. They actually had to get stuff done. Those are the eternal truths, those design principles. And then the question is, in context, how exactly can you achieve that? An interesting paradox of the world we live in now is that our very institutions of representation depended in their original conception on the geographic dispersal of the citizenry for their healthy functioning.

Madison wrote about this in Federalist 10. He was trying to solve the problem of faction and tribalism in American politics. That was one of the purposes of the design of the Constitution, and again, representation was supposed to be a solution, so it wasn't going to be a direct democracy, so you wouldn't have rule by the mob, rather you'd have esteemed representatives filtering public opinion and achieving synthetic judgements. But it wasn't just representation itself

that was supposed to do this. He argued that it was the very breadth of the republic, the geographic spread, the mountains and rivers.

This sort of spread and dispersal would make it hard for people with extreme views to find one another. They would have to go through representatives to get their views into the public forum. That was actually baked into the design of our representative institutions. So here we are in a world where geographic dispersal can't play that role for us anymore. It can't serve as a break on faction, so to speak. So I think we have a real design question. If we want our representative institutions to do that filtering work as Madison imagined as a core principle, then what tweaks or adjustments do we need to make to achieve that again?

**Bill Haslam:** Danielle, as somebody who studied the founding documents of our country extensively, knows them well, has thought about how to improve the democracy, it can't go without noting that as a African-American female, you would've been kicked out of the club twice. There would have been two reasons you wouldn't have gotten to be in the room where it happened. Do you have a perspective on that as you study about the founding of our country and how do we renovate it to make it better?

**Danielle Allen:** Sure. No, I do and I appreciate the question. It's a really important one. As we know, a lot of people are really focused on that question and making sense of it. I think it's really important to underscore that we've always had multiple voices in our country arguing about what a healthy society and healthy government is. So even right at the period of the founding, there were voices in the room who were already committed to abolition, for example, who were already raising questions about women's inclusion. And if you take the Declaration of Independence, its language, which was in a very significant way drafted by John Adams, northerner who never enslaved people, that language immediately was put to work in Massachusetts to bring about the end of enslavement actually. So before the end of the Revolutionary War, Massachusetts had accomplished abolition. And relatedly at the Constitutional Convention, James Wilson from Pennsylvania was of the very clear and precise view that the Constitution had been structured in such a way as to bring about the necessary end of enslavement.

Of course, there are others who thought otherwise. And so in that regard, the constitution was a hypothesis. Would it advance the cause of human freedom over time or would it not? Those who thought it would were proven right in the end. So I see those founding documents. I sometimes make an analogy to sort of diamond in a horse stall just because of some of the conditions of where you found it doesn't mean you're going to chuck the diamond out. And I do think that its value is immense and there was great wisdom that went into the crafting of the constitution, even though there were also great errors that were made at the same time.

**Phil Bredezen:** I'd like to follow up, Danielle, which is a question on that. You spoke about Common Core and way back when we were talking about social studies then, and even up to current times with things that I've been working on, there seems to be this big dichotomy in the

way people think we ought to treat our past with some people saying, "No, no, no, you need to unearth and put everybody's nose into all of the bad things that we've done, these smallpox blankets and enslavement and child labor and all those things." There's others that say that's not helpful. Every society has to have its myths that it works with as to how things work and we ought to be more focused on the future and not requiring that kind of revisiting of those issues. Do you have a view on that as to what the healthy thing is?

**Danielle Allen:** My first commitment is to the truth. As an academic, that's my core commitment. So the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And I believe that that commitment to the truth sustains a commitment to the public good over time. If you're committed to the truth, then you'll see the good and you'll see the bad and you'll do the work of understanding what resources of principle do we need in the present to be making good and sound decisions with each other and current conditions. So truth first and foremost, that means good and bad both, and there's a lot of good in the country's history. There's also bad. So we have got to be honest about that.

**Phil Bredeesen:** Let me move on. Another question. You've written, and we've spoken about things in a somewhat theoretical vein about principles, you also have advocated for some very specific actions, enlarging the size of the House of Representatives, for example. Could you explain a little bit your thinking here and what actually it is you think that would accomplish?

**Danielle Allen:** Absolutely. So one of those key design principles also of course was popular sovereignty. The notion that the people's will should directionally steer the government and that there should be proximity between representatives and their constituents. The original ratio in the House of Representatives was about one representative to every 30,000 constituents. We're now at about one representative to every 160,000 constituents and counter to that place where we are now in scale, the founders expected and thought it was right that the House should grow continuously as the people did. They thought that the balance of who was in the House should be shifting as the demography of the people was shifting. For a hundred years, we haven't permitted the size of a House to grow, and these large districts now are locking in a set of problems for us.

Representatives are not so close to their constituents any longer. There's a certain kind of information vacuum that gets filled at that scale by national media bringing nationalization to politics instead of letting folks select local leaders and representatives who are closely connected to the fabric of local conversation. And money has a greater role in politics than it would if people could run in smaller districts. So there are a number of reasons to think that a continuously growing House would in fact do a better job of helping us live to that design principle of popular sovereignty and the responsiveness of our legislative branch to the people.

**Phil Bredeesen:** And what are you talking about specifically? Obviously, there's not enough room in Washington to accommodate a Congress the size of 36,000 or whatever it was you said earlier in a district, but you're talking about doubling the size. What are you talking about?



**Danielle Allen:** Sure. No, there are a couple of different specific proposals on the table for how to increase the size of the House. My favorite is one that I call the deferred maintenance strategy. So for the last hundred years, because we haven't been growing the House, when states have grown, other states have lost seats. So that's a body of seats that you could consider deferred maintenance. If we could have just been able to add seats, we'd be at a bigger number and that would put us at 585 instead of 435 seats. So that's where I think we should grow. And the good news is we could fit that many people into the existing chamber. We don't even need a new building to do it.

**Bill Haslam:** Intriguing idea. You do make a great point about, I think, in one of your articles you talk about the only time Washington spoke at the Constitutional Convention was to argue for smaller districts. And so it's been a fundamental idea from the very beginning.

**Phil Bredezen:** I'd also like to, while we have you, Danielle, even since the time that I've known you, there's been this huge change in the growing presence of AI in politics and I think we haven't even begun to explore what it's going to do. Do you have some thoughts about how that impacts your attempts to renovate American democracy?

**Danielle Allen:** Sure. AI is really a double-edged sword, it has to be said. As with any technological tool, there's good that can come from it if we harness it appropriately, but there are also a lot of challenges. And I think one of the hard things about AI is that they're both near term challenges and then much farther out challenges. So the near term challenges are already pretty visible to us. We can see that misinformation is going to accelerate.

Fraudulent imposter types of strategies will be much easier for people to perpetrate. And so we can imagine that that will complicate very much how well people can understand what's happening in politics. Too many false stories, invented images, things that look real that aren't and the like are going to really destabilize people's sense of what's actually true and what's my basis for judgment. The longer term challenges are more in the territory of new kinds of capacities that we don't fully understand yet as if we're at the moment where nuclear power had just been invented and we don't really know yet all of what it can do. So there's two different categories of problem that we have to be able to think about.

**Phil Bredezen:** Can you think of things that might be possible with AI that would be advantageous to the renovation of democracy that you're talking about?

**Danielle Allen:** Sure. Yes. I can give you a concrete example. Taiwan has really done some interesting things with technology that has supported consensus building in their political system. So they have developed tools that communities can use to discuss controversial issues. And what they're able to do is they give people a chance to write open-ended answers. So instead of our surveys where you have to, "How do you feel number one through five on an issue?" people could just write how they think about something and then AI tools can sort those

opinions and find the places where there's actually agreement that people aren't seeing and they've been able to use this method to support compromise legislation, consensus building legislation and make the effectiveness of their government stronger.

**Bill Haslam:** Danielle, one of the things that we always ask every guest is along the lines of, Senator Baker had a famous quote where we took the name of the podcast, as, "always remember the other person might be right." Can you think of a time in your career, really anywhere, as teacher, academic, where you thought, "I think I might not have gotten that exactly right? The other side might have been right." Can you think of a good example for us on that?

**Danielle Allen:** Oh, gosh. There's lots of times that's happened. Let me see if I can think of a good example. Maybe we can come back to what we were talking about. The recommendation that we increase the size of the House of Representatives came out of a commission process I was a part of sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and ultimately we made 31 recommendations for democracy reforms. They included increasing the size of the House, term limits on Supreme court justices, universal civic duty voting, a variety of other things. And there were definitely recommendations that ended up in the set that we as a commission unanimously approved that when I first heard them, I was like, "You're crazy. That is a crazy idea."

So it was a wonderful process actually, and we were really inspired by the Benjamin Franklin quotation from the end of the Constitutional Convention when he stands up and says, "This isn't perfect, but I'm pretty sure we couldn't do any better. And so I'm going to bury my reservations and go out there and defend this and we should all do that together unanimously." So I think a lot of us had that sort of "you might be right" kind of learning experience as part of the commission work.

**Phil Bredeesen:** So just to dive into that a little more, I was involved with that commission, as you know, in the early stages until I went off to try at politics again. And give me a specific example of a recommendation that was in that report that you initially said, "That is really crazy."

**Danielle Allen:** Well, the trouble is I would love to do that, Phil, but we sort of committed to not sharing where our reservations are.

**Phil Bredeesen:** Oh, fair enough.

**Danielle Allen:** It's been an interesting experience though because there are recommendations where I've gone around the country arguing in defense of them, even though that's not where I started myself and I have come to see the wisdom of them.

**Phil Bredeesen:** Okay, fair enough.

**Bill Haslam:** And I would add that's like what you just have done, Danielle, it's a great example

of leadership. Sometimes as a leader you have to bear some burden or pain rather than to give it out, like you said, "I'm going to defend this even though it might not be exactly what I would've done." Well done.

**Phil Bredesen:** I think anybody who lives in the world of political office faces that all the time and you're always forced to be talking about things that you think the overall benefit comes from people being on the same page and moving something forward. And it might not be exactly what you would've proposed.

**Danielle Allen:** Exactly, but it's a real benefit. I just want to underscore that, it truly is, right. And it's one of the great virtues of democracy that we can achieve that.

**Bill Haslam:** Well said. Any final word for us? I don't ever want to end these without somebody having the chance to say, "What I really want to say is this." Anything that we haven't touched on when we think about the renovation of American democracy that you think is important?

**Danielle Allen:** Well, I'll just add to the comment you made. You mentioned that George Washington spoke only once at the convention to—

**Bill Haslam:** I only know that because you told me. I only know that because you wrote about it.

**Danielle Allen:** Right, exactly. Put his thumb on the scale for smaller districts. Madison, the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights, it's an amendment that never actually got fully ratified, was an amendment to ensure that the House would continuously grow over time. So we have two of them on the record for the importance of this principle.

**Bill Haslam:** Hard to argue with Madison and Washington, I guess, when it comes to the design of democracy.

**Phil Bredesen:** Oh, we could have done it better!

Danielle, thank you so much for being with us and we really appreciate it.

**Danielle Allen:** Thank you, Governors.

**Bill Haslam:** And even beyond being with us, thank you for your efforts to contribute to building a better democracy for our country. I think there's a lot of folks that are concerned about where we are in the trajectory, and I'm grateful when I see folks like you putting your shoulder to the wheel and trying to say, "Well, what can we actually do to change this?"

**Danielle Allen:** I appreciate that. Thanks very much. It's an honor to have been with you today. Thank you.

**Bill Haslam:** Thanks so much, Danielle.

**Phil Bredesen:** Thank you. Bye.

Well, we could do five podcasts with Danielle.

**Bill Haslam:** I loved how her view of the big battle in this country about the whole, whether we should take the view of the 1619 Project or the view of the 1776 version of the world. The reality is all of our personal histories and our country's history is messy. But within that, at least I fundamentally think our founders got it right, like she said, her diamond in the horse stall. And it built the foundation for, again, what I'd argue is one of the greatest countries, if not the greatest country in the history of the world. That doesn't mean we shouldn't be aware of our flaws and the things that we can do better.

**Phil Bredesen:** Yeah, I tend to be mean a little forgiving of some of those flaws because I think that if I could come back a hundred years from now, there are going to be very intelligent people who think that something that I believe today is so immoral as to be impossible to believe that anybody of good sense could believe that. And so I just tend to evaluate these things in the context of their times and what was appropriate, but Danielle's notion of the truth matters and her commitment to that, I think, that's a guideline.

**Marianne Wanamaker:** Thanks for listening to "You Might Be Right." Be sure to follow on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you listen to your favorite shows. And please help spread the word by sharing, rating and reviewing the show.

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