

Opinion: Finding hope after Tuesday's election

By Kathryn Reed

Why. It's one of my favorite words. And it has served me well as a journalist; sometimes much to the frustration of those I'm interviewing.

After Tuesday's presidential election many are left asking – Why did people vote for Trump? It's time to listen to the answers because we weren't listening during the campaign. We were too busy criticizing Donald Trump to understand that for millions he represented something we didn't want to accept – that people are disenfranchised, they don't want the status quo, they wanted someone who talks like they do, looks like they do and isn't conventional.

I didn't want Trump because he scares me. His words and actions scare me. To want to deport Muslims, build walls to stop immigrants, to disband gay marriage, to say sexually assaulting women is his privilege – well, it's just mindboggling to me people can stand behind someone like that. His world views are opposite mine. His business ethics are opposite mine. I don't know if there is anything about him I like or agree with.

I readily admit my dislike for this man stopped me from listening to those who supported him because I had already made my mind up who I was voting for – or was it voting against?

I didn't want Hillary Clinton either. But she scared me less and I didn't believe she would unravel our country. I also didn't think she would make it great again or better than it is. I liked her experience and trusted she would do more good than harm.

I liked when Clinton on Wednesday said, "Our campaign was never about one person or even one election. It was about the country we love and building an America that is hopeful, inclusive and big hearted."

I want to remain hopeful, have tried and will try harder to be inclusive, and will strive to be big hearted.

Clearly, the country is divided. But I'm of the belief that most of us want the same basic things, but we just have a different idea about how to get there. That's my idealism kicking in. We aren't always going to agree on everything – which is a good thing. If we did, it would be a pretty boring world.

I would like to think we can agree about some basics – that we should all be treated equal no matter gender, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, or who our significant other is.

Most agree the health care system needs more reforms. Most agree our infrastructure is aging and needs to be rebuilt. Most agree people should be treated with respect. Most agree we want to leave the world a better place than we found it. Most agree we want the next generation to be better off than we are.

We have choices. What are yours going to be? Let's be a country that learns to say yes, works together, and compromises.

Let's start a conversation about how to get what we want instead of digging our heels in and saying we won't work together. Congress – are you listening? American people – are you listening?

Eight years ago so many people said "that man is not my president" in regards to Barack Obama. Now the other side is saying the same thing – after chastising those who said the same thing eight years ago. You can't have it both ways. That

divide only grew in the last eight years. Are we going to let the chasm get even larger in the next four years?

Trump will be our president in January. The public has spoken. Protests won't change that. And protesters, where were you before the election? Do something constructive for a change.

If you don't like the Trumps and Clintons of the world, now is the time to start doing something about it. Now is the time to get engaged so in four years you are not enraged.

For those who are feeling a bit lost in the post-election malaise, grieving is a process. Take the time to do so. But do it fast – the country needs you to re-engage. The last stage is acceptance – of course you have to work through denial-isolation, anger, bargaining and depression to get there.

And to those who sat out and didn't vote for a presidential candidate: shame on you. This is one of the greatest gifts we have in this country – the right to vote. As citizens we don't have that many things we must do. But I adamantly believe one of our obligations is to be civically involved – at all levels.

As Clinton said today in her concession speech, "Our constitutional democracy demands our participation not just every four years, but all the time."