

**WITH MALICE TOWARDS NONE
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA AND BRAVER ANGELS
SELF-ORGANIZING GROUPS**

90 minutes via Zoom

(Separate Gatherings for the Generally Pleased and the Generally Displeased)

Participants

- **A host/convener and 5-11 people who know the convener and have been personally invited.**
- **Everyone feels similarly about the outcome of the election: generally pleased or generally displeased, although they can have different levels of intensity of feeling**
- **Everyone has read and is on board with the spirit of the With Malice Toward None pledge (but they don't have to signed it).**
- **Although they may have passionately supported their candidate and strongly opposed the other candidate, they are also concerned about divisiveness in country together. (This gathering is not designed to turn skeptics into believers about finding ways to connect across political differences.)**

Desired Outcomes for Participants

- 1. Their core experience of the election has been acknowledged and accepted in a group of peers.**
- 2. They can find the words to articulate their reasons for supporting With Malice Toward None.**
- 3. They commit to action steps to reduce polarization in their personal lives and the community.**
- 4. They are motivated to join a larger effort with Braver Angels and other groups.**

Special Design Features

- **The host connects with potential participants via an invitation (we will provide a script) and via personal communication with those who express interest.**
- **The host either facilitates or invites a friend to do so. The role only basic facilitation skills. We will provide a guide and video demo. Someone has agreed to take notes.**
- **Participants have printed out the agenda or can view it on a screen.**
- **The basic elements of the plan:**
 - a) Introductions, goals, and personal interest in the gathering**
 - b) Everyone gets a chance to say why what we are here to do is important.**
 - c) Action commitments**
 - d) Interest in follow up**

Agenda (120 minutes, assume Zoom)

1. **Friendly greeting by the host, everyone introduces self with just their name and where they live/go to school. (03-05)**
2. **Icebreaker question: What was your favorite food as a child? (05-10)**
3. **The facilitator reads the goals of the gathering (10-15 min.)**

“We have come together in an initiative sponsored by Braver Angels’ With Malice Toward None, with these goals:

- **To gain support for our personal interest in moving past the hostility and animosity for our fellow Americans that the recent election has stirred up and brought to a head.**
- **To identify actions steps we each take individually and with others to reduce polarization in our own circles, our communities, and our country.**
- **To share what we learn and commit to here with other groups working for the same goal of preserving the Union**

An important point: Although it’s fine to express our feelings about the campaign, the candidates, and the election, let’s not spend most of our time discussing how misguided the other side is. Let’s focus on building bridges.”

4. **Introductions (min. 20-35)**
 - **Everyone says (in one minute) why they accepted the invitation to participate in this gathering. Facilitator calls on people.**
5. **The importance of what we are doing here (35-55)**
 - **Question: Given the state of rancor and disunity in the country, why is it important that we reduce contempt for our fellow citizens who see politics differently and strive for connection and collaboration, knowing that it will be hard? Why not just try to beat the into submission?**
 - **1 minute of personal reflection**
 - **Everyone gets up to 2 minutes to respond. No cross talk.**
 - **If the group is over 15, use breakouts and report outs**
 - **Joint reflection on the main themes that just came out: What stood out as we listened to one another?**

Brief break (55-60)

6. **Action Steps (60-105 min.)**
 - **A Braver Angels reading that invites participants to draw on the tradition of We the People who created our government, are responsible for its future, and have**

handled other threats in the past. The statement would explicitly encourage people to join the Braver Angels movement.

- An action grid (see below) adapted from the red/blue workshop
- Sharing action steps with the whole group (or first in breakouts if the group is large and someone can execute Zoom breakouts)

7. Next steps (105-110)

- Ask for agreement to share notes (no names attached) with one another via group email and with Braver Angels
- Ask for interest in participating in further conversations with this group and with larger groups and activities organized by Braver Angels

8. Check out (110-120); Everyone gets 30 seconds to share how they feel about what we have done here today for ourselves and our country.

- Zoom group photo for the willing.

ACTION STEPS

Our country has rich resources to draw on. Some of these resources come from our past experience with times of great division, and some are present now in We-the-People.

Question: What can each of us do individually, and what can we do together, to move past malice and disdain for people who believe and vote differently, so that we can work together for the future of the country?

This is not about what *other* people should do on their own, but what *we* personally and collectively, to help avoid a long term civic divorce.

Please write down your ideas, starting with what you plan to do personally.

Personal Actions (Me as an individual)	Actions to take by those of us with similar views