The Personal Cost of Politics

We hate politics – office politics, party politics and world politics. It's what makes everyone nervous, suspicious, violent, fragile, despondent, desperate, regretful and vulnerable. Did we miss anything? Probably did. Politics produces many effects.

It enters our lives, whether we want it or not, mostly uninvited. From TV and computer screens, emails, texts, blog entries somewhere. From Twitter remarks; images and videos sent by friends and posted by people we don't like. It rides the bus and enters into your home from child's school; jumps over the fence after a brief conversation with your next-door neighbor. Oftentimes resonates in FM radio news program; looks at you from the billboards as you drive down the road. Politics manifests itself through the supermarket price tags or the price of gas. It's often a part of an early morning coffee with your spouse or a late night family dinner.

Too frequently, if you don't talk politics, you and your significant other find you both have nothing to say to each other. And this is very sad.

It masquerades as life itself, sneaks in as something real, vibrant, significant, substantial. When it is not. It clandestinely substitutes itself for some really important things – like health, finances, home and relationships. Often it is the firestorm started by the mass media out there. They make a case of whatever they want to make the case of. Noticed lately – they suddenly are at dearth of political subjects to write about. With Donald J. Trump leaving office, there is no bone to pick; no one to attack for what one does or does not do in political office.

Lots of it is made up. Politics is one hot information product everyone wants to sell you. Are you buying?

It's real and it's not, at the same time. Like a circus show put together for the paying public. Akin the stormy weather one cannot do much about – except evade it as much as possible. And yet you cannot switch it off completely. Just like Ralph Nadler once said "Turn on to politics, or politics will turn on you". A scary thought.

We mostly participate in politics when we vote. That alone assures most of us whoever we elect would make things right. Help us march forward, so in peaceful times politics doesn't continuously occupy our minds and daily lives. When this

is not the case; when passions continue to flare up; when half the country views the other half with hateful suspicion and curses the people in charge, then something is definitely wrong.

Politics is best kept at arms' length in our personal lives. It is something one is best be aware of, but shouldn't let get between you and friends, relatives, co-workers, and – God forbid – bosses. It can get you fired, canceled, divorced, detached forever from the people in your life. Makes you mentally strained, isolated, even prone to aggression.

Real stories: a retired friend of ours lost few old army buddies of many years once they learned he didn't vote for their presidential candidate. They're no longer on speaking terms. Another friend told us how she is at odds with her husband lately. She was a life-long Democrat and supported them with donations. At some point she realized what was happening with the country she lives in. She left the Democratic Party and stopped donations. Never looked back. Quickly abandoned her NY Times subscription; wished her former party to go and commit an impossible sexual act upon itself; went "red". Her husband stayed "blue". They speak to each other, of course, but lost lots of common ground that bonded them together for many years. The strain shows daily. Even people on the same side of the great divide cannot always agree on what is happening around them and what they should do about it. They argue for hours and it isn't healthy for anyone's sanity.

Another pal of ours (he voted for Trump) tells us of his pro-Biden co-workers (he works at a repair facility), who surreptitiously are trying to find out who he voted for. He keeps to himself, fearing retribution.

We are certain the world is full of anecdotes and everyone has a story to tell.

Politics is acid.

If only you didn't make that final snide remark, kept your mouth shut. Or were diplomatic and changed the subject when you still could. Didn't get sucked into that black hateful hole; but no, you had to have the last word in a heated political conversation. Showed how you cared; how you loved someone close to you, no matter what. It would have made a difference then. But now it's too late.

Sounds familiar?

Stay away from the edge of the abyss. Beware of the ill effects politics brings into your life. Avoid the void it creates. Everyone has enough daily strains. Adding new ones does nothing but damage, a damage that cannot be undone.

Politicians come and go, but when your friends and family members leave you over politics, you cannot bring them back. It may not be your fault, but it is your world.

Give it a rest. Turn off that TV. Skip twitted political commentary on the screen. Pass over the artificial narratives. Go for a walk, for a ride. Play with the dog. Read a good book. Finish a home project. Sing. Talk about fine art. Cook a meal for your family. Say to someone important in your life that you love them. Giggle. Dance. Make love. Play a video game. Watch a movie together. Photograph nature. Watch the snowfall or the grass grow.

We are not telling you what to do. Ultimately, those are your decisions and your life.

But when the storm passes, what are you left with?