

OPINION EXCHANGE

Gun violence and good food

Let's fix what we can, giving priority to nourishing the hearts and minds of the next generation.

By **BLAKE DONLEY** | DECEMBER 27, 2012 — 8:08PM

I have spent weeks reading about the Sandy Hook shootings. It seems to me we have reached the weirdest point in this country in my lifetime. That may be a function of my age more than anything else -- I was born in 1972 -- but this issue has been a flashpoint for a debate that is clearly too hot and complex for this country or its leaders to handle.

First of all, Americans are addled with fear today. Many believe the government is dangerous. They want protection. These, of course, are the gun-toting, NRA-enlisted, lunatic fringe. Or are they?

Is ours not an incredibly violent government? We have lately been engaged in two foreign wars, and suggesting that their purpose is national security is rather dubious. In the process we have "collaterally damaged" many thousands of innocent civilians and destroyed their homelands.

Throw in President Obama's drone strikes, the defense budget and the Patriot Act, and I begin to see why the "lunatics" may feel a bit threatened.

Asking Vice President Joe Biden to come up with a plan to curtail gun violence is like asking my 4-year-old to come up with a plan to eliminate dessert.

We don't need solutions from our government. We need leadership, damn it. But the brain trust in D.C. has a long track record of horrendous leadership. So I fear we won't get anything useful until we wake up as a nation and decide we want new leaders who can actually lead.

Next, I don't own a gun. That said, banning guns would be like banning dandelions -- the essence of ceremony. It would appease half the lunatic fringe in this country while enraging the other half -- the half with all the guns. It would only serve to further intensify the civil strife already at the highest level I have ever witnessed in my lifetime.

But, hey, the self-righteous Hollywood stars behind the "Demand a Plan" campaign would feel better. And wouldn't we all feel better if Beyonce, Jessica Alba, Chris Rock, Will Ferrell and the rest felt better?

Everyone has an opinion; no one has a solution. Each idea arises from a specific angle or agenda. It seems that the folks who are tapped for opinion work are not critical thinkers; they are knee-jerk myopic specialists.

Reading these opinion pieces is like walking a gauntlet of street-corner preachers. I can admire the resolve and dedication of each. I can't, however, determine whether anything is being accomplished. And I am no more educated for listening -- just slightly deafer.

I would find it so refreshing to hear an "expert," "pundit" or "representative" talk about going back to the start.

Let's examine how we are parenting our children. Let's flip this me-first society on its ass. Let's alter the course of future generations to alter the course of the future. Let's spend time getting to know our children, so that they don't grow up alone and isolated and feeling the need to do terrible things. Let's demand better from ourselves.

Let's reach out to parents struggling with multiple children and multiple jobs. Let's mentor them and refuse to let them slip through the cracks to the dark side of the burgeoning entitlement society. Let's stop belittling those on welfare and instead teach them how to be self-sufficient. Let's accept responsibility and become accountable again, together.



Laurie Harker - Star Tribune

Nutrition illustration.

Let's demand to have good, healthy food. Let's refuse to allow huge corporations to poison our food and our water with toxic compounds, toxic chemicals and toxic organisms. Let's stop allowing them to conduct the largest genetics experiment in the history of mankind. Let's learn to cook and grow our own food again.

Let's nourish the hearts and minds of the next generation so they can do the same for the ones after them. We need to go back to the start, because what we have now can no longer be fixed by another task force, another law or another star-studded public-service campaign.

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