

# Stephen Dinan Outlines America's Noble Destiny

## Bridging Our Political Divide is Key

by Mary Magline



**S**tephen Dinan, founder and CEO of The Shift Network, is a champion of the transpartisan movement that seeks to transcend America's current political climate to realize greater unity and understanding. His new book, *Sacred America, Sacred World: Fulfilling Our Mission in Service to All*, offers innovative, practical solutions for engaging citizens in an emerging whole.

Dinan has forwarded thinking in his work with the Institute of Noetic Sciences, where he helped shape the Shift in Action and One Minute Shift programs, and with the Esalen Center for Theory & Research, a think tank he helped create to explore human potential frontiers. He is also an active member of the Evolutionary Leadership and Transformational Leadership councils.

### **What political problem tops the list if we're to make progress on anything?**

We all know that American politics suffers from extreme polarization. Just as the middle class has faded away

from our economy, the bipartisan "middle" has dropped out of our political process. In the last two decades, moderates have become far less prominent, giving way to ideologues on both sides of the aisle. As a result, Congress is virtually unable to legislate, because politicians on the left and right insist they have all the answers. They often refuse to work with the president if he is from the other party. This childish behavior is a far cry from the bipartisan approach to solving problems that once made this country great. Our country is falling apart and we need to renew ourselves by finding a sacred vision of national unity.

The fast-growing transpartisan movement offers an answer that can be aided by perspectives of transpersonal psychology and a visionary spiritual dimension drawn from wisdom traditions of the East and West.

### **How is transpartisan best defined?**

Transpartisan means that Americans can rise above damaging divisions. It provides hope that if we supply the

right intention, we can hold to a vision that honors the ideals of a wide range of viewpoints. No one can be 100 percent right or 100 percent wrong, and we transcend limiting conservative and liberal categories by using dialogue and maturity in embracing the truths of all parties, while leaving behind their excesses and errors.

We can belong to any party and claim an important piece of the truth; a singular truth we stand for, such as liberty or social justice or economic growth, but it represents only a personal selection from a larger set of sacred American principles. To attain insight into these principles, we must move to an enlightened vision that honors all political perspectives, seeing each as a valuable, yet incomplete contribution toward the emerging whole.

### **Why have you called for a sacred America?**

"Sacred" is a word that binds us together in the mystery of life and links us into a single human family in which ultimately no one is our enemy. A sacred worldview leads to a life filled with respect and reverence. It informs and enables us as we reach for our highest destiny as a country, not built on a desire to be number one, but a humble sense of calling, animated by a spirit of service to all.

America is being called to explore new frontiers politically, economically and spiritually, in service to our own citizens and the world. We are to embrace a path away from the waste and tragedy of war and toward universal health, sustainability and prosperity. It requires the best of both progressive and conservative values and a collaborative style of politics that seeks higher ground. Global accords and councils will replace the endless posturing of every military era.

### **What have you, as a progressive, learned from conservatives?**

Conservatives tend to focus on preserving what has worked in the past, which is a useful function. In the

human body, we have strong elements required for health that basically protect its homeostasis. Too much change happening too quickly can be dangerous to us. Conservatives often play the same role in society, minimizing the risk of chaotic change and preserving core values, commitments and culture.

I've found that embracing conservative values and perspectives is a good form of cross-training in my role as a spiritually based CEO, where it's imperative that I not risk everything on each new idea. A moderate path draws upon the best of conservative perspectives while opening to new possibilities for innovation and cultural expression, which tends to be a focus of progressives.

**How can we replace political gridlock with a more perfect union?**

The ultimate solution comes in personally building bridges of curiosity, respect and understanding, and recognizing that true, lasting answers to extremely complex problems require the best thinking of all parties and ideologies so that some hybridization of solutions happens.

We may not come to consensus on major issues, but we can come into deep dialogue and human exchange. Extending a hand of friendship across the aisle is ultimately one of the most important things we can do as citizens. The women members of the Senate have led the way in doing this, often creating breakthroughs through their personal connections with members of the other major party.

*For more information: [StephenDinan.com](http://StephenDinan.com)  
or [TheShiftNetwork.com](http://TheShiftNetwork.com)*



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