

**Title: Robert Talisse, *Overdoing Democracy: Why We Must Put Politics in Its Place***  
**Podcast: Half Hour of Heterodoxy**  
**Episode: 71**

### Transcript

**Chris Martin:** Robert Talisse is my guest on this episode. He's a philosopher at Vanderbilt University and his central research area is democratic theory. In his latest book *Overdoing Democracy: Why We Must Put Politics in Its Place*, Robert argues that we spoil certain social goods if we spend too much time and effort in the arena of politics and elevate political passion above everything else. We'll be talking about that book today.

Hi, Bob. Thanks for joining us on the show.

**Robert Talisse:** Hi, Chris. Thanks for having me.

**Chris Martin:** So you have a new book coming out *Overdoing Democracy*. And we are here to talk about that today. Tell me a bit about your central thesis on that book.

**Robert Talisse:** So the central thesis of the book is as the title, *Overdoing Democracy*, suggests is that no matter how great a good one thinks democracy is and I'm one of those people who thinks that democracy is indeed a great good, but no matter how great we think a good it is it's possible for us to overdo it. And what I mean by overdo it is that it's possible for us to allow the aspirations and travails and associations and loyalties of democratic politics to play too great a role in our overall social lives.

And the central thesis of the book is that when we overdo democracy in this way that is when we allow the democratic aspirations that we have for our politics to overcome and dominate the whole of our social interactions. We actually do democracy less well. We actually start to deteriorate some of the capacities and dispositions that citizens need in order to perform well as democratic citizens.

So although I've come to learn that the title suggests to people when they hear it that the book is some kind of anti-democratic – has some kind of anti-democratic message, the book in fact is an argument that contends that in order to do democracy well, in order to perform well as democratic citizens and indeed in order to repair our democratic politics as paradoxical as it may sound, we need to do other things together than politics.

**Chris Martin:** And the title is *Overdoing Democracy* but from your description, it sounds like you are worried that we are overdoing politics or we are overdoing political polarization. So which of those is your focus here?

**Robert Talisse:** So I'm one of those political philosophers who agrees with the broadly doing in line that democracy is more than a mode of government and so I'm willing to accept a conception of democracy according to which democracy is not just our politics. However,

democracy is also our politics. So in so far as we are overdoing our politics, that is a site where we are overdoing democracy because our politics are democratic politics.

Now, this is an important sort of element of the argument. What I make the case for in Chapter 2 of the book actually is that the problem of overdoing democracy is not a case in which we have allowed some alien distorted form of politics into our democratic atmosphere and that alien form of politics is undermining democracy. That's not the argument.

The argument is that our sincere, well-intentioned efforts and aspirations to realize the democratic ideal of self-government among social equals that those efforts themselves are the culprit, that those efforts themselves in the absence of other kinds of cooperative, social interactions, those efforts contribute to democracy's undoing because, and this is the second part of your question, when politics organizes and structures the whole of our social lives, when the whole of our social interactions are colored by or conditioned by our partisan and allegiances, and I claim that these things are true in contemporary democracies and especially with United States, so when politics comes to play the central organizing role in the whole of our lives, we create conditions that heightened our vulnerability to this phenomenon called Belief Polarization.

**Chris Martin:** And when it comes to polarization, that's something that political psychologist are typically interested in. As a philosopher, what is it about polarization that you think is relevant.

**Robert Talisse:** So it's important to keep distinct two different kinds of phenomena that are called polarization. And one is the familiar kind that's often lamented by pundits on the TV and in the newspapers. So what one might call sort of political polarization is this phenomenon of the dropping out of the middle, making more homogeneous the contending tribes or parties, and the subsequent dissolving of any basis for cooperation or even productive interaction. And I am interested in that phenomenon.

The other phenomenon called polarization which I make a case in the book is intertwined with political polarization is what sometimes called group polarization but I call belief polarization because I think group polarization is a term that's misleading in a couple of different ways. And the belief polarization phenomenon strikes me more obviously of interest to philosophers for the following reason. Belief polarization is the phenomenon that's easily found and has been widely studied in cases where you have deliberating groups that are composed only of like-minded members.

So the phenomenon is the phenomenon by which deliberation among like-minded groups when they get together to talk about the things over which they are like or with respect to which they are like-minded, those conversations and interactions draw each member, each party to that conversation to adopt a more extreme position of the sort that they began with than the position they begin with.

So in the belief polarization phenomenon, we find that like-minded people getting together to discuss what a particular offender in a sort of jury kind of context. We agree that the offender has

done something – agree just we have to figure out what would be an appropriate punishment. The longer we talk together, the more each of us – the more severe a punishment each of us thinks is appropriate.

Or in a slightly surprising kind of case, you get a bunch of people together who all agree that Denver, Colorado is this especially high city above sea level I mean and you get them talking about the elevation of Denver. And in the course of the conversation, each person who is a party of that conversation emerges from the conversation thinking Denver is higher than they began thinking.

**Chris Martin:** Right. Right.

**Robert Talisse:** So the phenomenon doesn't only impact what we might think of as a sort of our value judgments, how much punishment is deserved, it also seems to impact a sort of factual judgments. Now, for those of us who do political philosophy but are also interested in epistemology, the theory of knowledge, the belief polarization phenomenon and how widespread it is and how robust a social scientific phenomenon it is, sort of raises all kinds of interesting philosophical questions about epistemology.

So it looks as if this is a case where we have less epistemic control of our own beliefs. It looks as if they are responsive. Our beliefs shift in ways that aren't tracking reasons so much as just group identification which on certain programs within epistemology looks like it's another form of irrationality or another vice of our minds.

However, for the part of me that is a political philosopher who is also interested in epistemology, the group polarization phenomenon is interesting because it leads us as we are moved to hold a more extreme version of our antecedent belief. We are also moved to hold the new belief with a greater degree of confidence than the degree of confidence which we held the antecedent belief. And the group polarization phenomenon impacts our views of the people who are not like-minded with us. That is as we shift into more extreme versions of ourselves, we also come to hold increasingly negative attitudes and assessments of the people with whom we disagree.

Now, that looks politically salient because after all democracy is many things. But among the things that democracy is and I would argue among the core things that democracy is, is the proposition that it's possible for citizens to regard one another as equals despite the fact that they also think of at least some segment of the population that that segment is seriously mistaken about justice and freedom and dignity on autonomy.

So if the belief polarization phenomenon leads us to adopt not only more extreme attitudes in line with our antecedent beliefs but more negative attitudes and dispositions towards those with whom we disagree, it looks as if the belief polarization phenomenon is attacking, is targeting a core democratic capacity, the capacity to regard those with whom you politically disagree as nonetheless your political equals.

**Chris Martin:** And one thing you brought up and talks about this book is that we can also capitalize on the benefits of diversity with America becoming a more diverse nation by having actual diversity in terms of the spaces we are in and that creating homogeneous spaces is a problem. So here, you are talking about the work of political scientists who have shown that people are opting to live, well, *The Big Sort* is the big book in this area, but people opting to live in places where people share similar beliefs.

Can you elaborate on that point?

**Robert Talisse:** Sure. So one of the sort of areas of research that sort of got me thinking about the book and as figures loom large in the argument of the book is what you were just mentioning, the sort of the Bill Bishop book, *The Big Sort*, and the ways in which since that book was published we have seen the trends that are discussed in that book in certain ways often expected, sometimes surprising. We have seen those trends sort of continue and intensify.

So the thought is this, as the country, now I'm talking explicitly here about the United States although you could find similar trends in other democracies throughout the world, in the United States, as the country has become more diverse along the standard metrics about religious belief, ethnicity, the languages that are spoken other than English, sort of geographical differences and the rest, as the country has become diverse, in the aggregate, the local spaces that we as individuals inhabit have become increasingly homogeneous including increasingly politically homogeneous.

So the fact that the country as a whole has become more diverse does not entail that our own social environments and our lived experience has become more welcoming or more structured around diversity. In fact, quite the opposite. Our everyday interactions are increasingly likely these days to put us in touch only with people who share roughly our political profile.

And when you look at some of the recent data on this, this sort of social sorting or as I call it in the book, the political saturation of the social, consumer behavior of all sorts, in some cases very surprising sorts, tracks our parties and allegiances.

So when I give this talk to non-academic audiences, I say, "Who shops at Wal-Mart and who shops at Target?" And everybody understands that those two commercial spaces are largely sorted according to parties and allegiances. Wal-Mart shoppers skew heavily conservative. Target shoppers skew heavily liberal. Starbucks coffee, the person sitting in your local Starbucks is likely to be liberal. The person getting his coffee from Dunkin Donuts is likely to be conservative.

By the way, in the case of Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts, you can even sort of read this off just the design of those spaces. You walk into your local Starbucks, Starbucks around the world actually, not just around the country, all have a similar kind of interior design which gives you an indication of who they imagine their clientele is and they are imagining who their clientele is based on a lot of research so they know who their clientele is. The internal structure of a Starbucks is designed for people who like to travel, who like to think of themselves as

cosmopolitan, who are not made uncomfortable by saying foreign language words because the names of their drinks are often stolen from foreign languages.

You compare the interior of a Starbucks to the interior of a Dunkin Donuts where a Dunkin Donuts looks like a fast food joint and the Dunkin Donuts slogan of course is, “America runs on Dunkin.” You see that there’s a difference in clientele. Dunkin Donuts is not a place for people to go who like to have the momentary illusion of being in a foreign country. Dunkin Donuts is a place for people to go who want carbohydrates and coffee so that they can get to work. And as it turns out, Starbucks skews largely liberal and Dunkin Donuts skews largely conservative in their clientele.

Now, those might not be very surprising trends. You might have sort of been able to predict them. But when you look at consumer goods of surprising times, you will find that for example, liberals tend to feed their pets wet food, conservatives tend to feed pets dry food.

And among beers and even among sort of expensive fancy craft beers, there are partisan segregations among brands of barbecue sauce. There are certain brands that appeal to liberals. There are certain brands that appeal to conservatives.

What we do on vacation, so if you vacation and you are lounging at a beach, chances are the people on the blanket next to you are liberal. If you are on vacation and you are on a golf course, chances are the person behind you at the previous green is conservative.

And so, when you start adding these things up, maybe they are not surprising and in themselves they might not be objectionable. In fact, I don’t think they are objectionable except when you realized that the totality or the sort of pervasiveness of the phenomenon means that our everyday interactions at the grocery store, in the local park, on the street, and during vacation, on an airplane, these interactions are likely to put us in touch only with people who share our own political profile.

And what that means is that the world around us, we often talk about the online environments being eco-chambers where we hear louder and louder echoes of our own voices and that leads us to – that subjects us to the belief polarization phenomenon and that’s how online political discussion is so unproductive. And I agree with that entire diagnosis.

But it doesn’t stop with our online environments. The political saturation of social space leads to a condition in which the world around us is a kind of eco-chamber where we are constantly being called upon in our everyday choice, in our goings-on throughout the world in our lives. We are constantly being called on to signal and express our parties and allegiances, which means that those who are comfortable with those parties and allegiances are likely to be the people who we interact with. They are in the same spaces that we are in, and that all creates a kind of eco-chamber of its own.

And because it’s part of the profile of the belief polarization phenomenon that not only do we become more extreme versions of ourselves but we come to adopt increasingly negative

assessments and attitudes towards people who are unlike ourselves. Our everyday social environments, given that they are politically saturated, helped to dissolve our democratic capacities.

**Chris Martin:** Now, I had a philosophical objection to the argument you have here and then a couple of empirical critiques. So I'll start with a philosophical objection, which is that democracy is tied to humanism. And one idea behind humanism is that we should respect the dignity of each person to make their own choices about how to flourish even if they seem rather weird to us. So if we are a large number of people flourishing even if it's puzzling to us, flourishing means spending a lot of time engaging in political discourse.

Is it unfair of us to judge those people for making that choice?

**Robert Talisse:** Well, yeah. I think it would – it would be unfair but let me see if I can't sort of contour my thesis a little bit so that it's a little bit less prone to this kind of pushback that you've given here, Chris.

So certainly, it's a puzzle, let me put it this way, of democracy in that. The things that we do that I am arguing in the book cause us to dismantle our democratic capacities or result in our democratic capacities being dissolved. These are all part of what good democratic citizenship is. So democracy requires us to think together, to argue together, to engage together over politics. And part of that endeavor of arguing and engaging and thinking together about politics also requires to sometimes spend a lot of time with building coalitions with the people we agree with, talking about politics with the people who we can make common cause with.

So that's why I want to suggest that this is not an antidemocratic force that has infiltrated our politics and is messing it up. It's good, sincere efforts a democratic citizenship that are the root of the problem. And here's the slight clarification that might help with the question. The thought isn't that – my recommendation is not that when we are – first of all, it's not that we are not engage in politics. I think that that's – we are democratic citizens. We have a responsibility to one another, to future generations, to our Constitution to engage well as citizens.

So the thesis is not a do less politics. That doesn't mean withdraw from politics and take up checkers. So there's no recommendation that we withdraw from politics. The recommendation rather is that we diversify our social activities such that the nonpolitical things that we do in our lives are not so likely as they are at present to put us in touch only with those who share our political profile.

So those who are deeply engaged in politics, I applaud that. Those who spend a lot of time organizing and volunteering and canvassing and campaigning on behalf of their political goals and aspirations, I applaud that too.

The recommendation of the book is the thought that if that is all you do, you're doing democracy less well than you ought to be because you are chipping away at your capacity to see your political rivals as nonetheless your equals.

So if our interest in democratic politics is an interest in the democratic part of our politics, it has to be engaged in a way that does not imperil our capacity to regard our political rivals as nonetheless our social equals. And by social equals here, I mean we have to regard our political rivals not simply as other people who get an equal vote. We have to maintain the capacities where we can regard our political rivals as nonetheless those who are entitled to an equal vote.

And the belief polarization phenomenon chips away at those capacities. So I'm all for vigorous, engaged, participatory democracy so long as it is engaged in the presence of a healthy backdrop within civil society of nonpolitical cooperative endeavors. By nonpolitical, I simply mean endeavors in which we are cooperating with others and their politics, their political parties and allegiances are just not part of the story of what we are doing. We are doing something other than acting on behalf of our partisan selves.

Does that help?

**Chris Martin:** Yes. That's helpful. I mean one thing I see underlying a lot of this is the Aristotelian argument that the optimal point is often the mean between two extremes which I overall agree with and I talk to my students about it. Sometimes I wonder if that's actually a feature of language rather than a feature for intrinsic virtue. But that's another debate entirely.

**Robert Talisse:** That's always the question with Aristotle. But sorry, yeah, go ahead. I'm sorry.

**Chris Martin:** Yeah. But I mean one issue is like how do you measure when you are at the optimal median point? But that is also a discussion for another day.

**Robert Talisse:** Sure.

**Chris Martin:** So to get to the empirical points here, there's a top down point which is elites, political elites have caused some of this. So I call that top down because elites are sort of having this influence from above so to speak. And then there's this bottom up of we ourselves are attracted to outrageous politicians who do extreme things. I think I'll start with a bottom up first. It's one thing people pointed out about the 2016 campaign is that Donald Trump got a lot of free coverage from media because he was so outrageous that he formed this symbiotic relationship with channels like CNN where they got more viewers if they covered him. He got more publicity if he did these outrageous sorts of things that garnered coverage.

And CNN is viewed by regular people. So that said something about our own frailty. We do have the option to watch sober and serious news coverage like PBS NewsHour. For people unfamiliar with it, that's a show on public broadcasting in the United States that is not very – they are not at all sensationalistic and does not try to be entertaining.

So we do have the option to view or to watch shows like that or to watch C-SPAN and C-SPAN 2 but we don't. So we are actually frail in a sense of being prone to reward politicians who do outrageous flamboyant things that are at the extremes that are actually not virtuous.

So how do we deal with this?

**Robert Talisse:** Well, that's a good question. And I – if I were asked to choose between what do I think is the more fundamental explanation of the kinds of pathologies that I'm talking about in the book, the bottom up explanation seems to me to be the right one. And we could talk about that if you want after I say what I'm about to say.

I think it's important – so the pathology that you mentioned, the sort of playing the media because the media is motivated in certain ways or the news media although their social function is to help democracy work in particular ways, their actual incentives are mixed because their commercial they are commercial enterprises.

So the demagoguery, the calling to attention, a mass audience with outrageous behavior or outrageous claims is a – create a set of vulnerabilities and pathologies of democracy that we've known about since book 7 and 8 of Plato's *Republic*.

And I don't have a solution to that except in so far as I think that the ways in which our physical spaces are saturated with politics has made it easier for demagogues of the kind you're describing to succeed in what they do because when our social spaces are arranged such that our social interaction occur only among like-minded people, people who are of the same mind as ourselves, it becomes much easier for us to see those with whom we disagree as benighted, unintelligible, alien, untrustworthy, irrational, and something to be feared.

And in fact, some of the more recent research coming out of the Pew Research Center has sort of confirmed this that in America, we are now more likely to express negative affect overall including unwillingness to trust and the willingness to regard the others as threatening, the people politically other from us as threatening. Those attitudes are now targeted at our fellow citizens.

Twenty-five years ago, negative affect towards political opposition is nothing new. Twenty-five years ago, my father who was a Republican, hated Jimmy Carter – more than 25 years ago, hated Jimmy Carter, hated the Democrats. He did not hate the guy across the street who votes for the Democrats.

What we've seen over the past two decades is the negative affect, the unwillingness to cooperate and the attitude that the other side is not worthy of our trust and is incapable of citizenship, those attitudes are now targeted among citizens, the rank and file citizens, not merely the party leaders.

When the affect – when negative affect is primed in that way, demagoguery becomes very, very simple, becomes very easy. And so, the – I don't think that there's a way for democracies to render themselves invulnerable to the kind of pathology that you are mentioning. And this was after all in the *Republic*. This was Plato's character. Socrates' reason for thinking democracy was so messed up because you couldn't fix it in this way. I agree with Socrates there. You can't fix

democracy. That's a bug that comes with the package and you can't fix it without doing something nondemocratic.

What we can do is try to render ourselves slightly less vulnerable or slightly less easy targets for this kind of thing by shoring up within our social environments, occasions where we can interact with our political rivals under some other description so that I come to understand you, Chris, let's just say, as a responsible co-worker, a good parent, a helpful neighbor, a decent man independent of any knowledge of whether you vote the same way as I do.

When our social spaces are saturated in the way that they are, the first thing I know about you often is how you vote. That looks to me like it heightens our vulnerability to demagoguery in a media system that is set up with these mixed incentives for the media, the news suppliers. It heightens our vulnerability. And trying best to manage our vulnerability is I think the best we can do in a democratic society.

**Chris Martin:** The top down point is about changes specifically in the United States. So I'm not – I can't speak to other countries even similar ones like the UK or Canada. I don't know to what extent. I may suspect in the UK. There's definitely polarization among the public now. And I can't speak to the reasons behind that.

But in the United States, I think sometimes people romanticized this era from about 1940 to 1980 and there was less vitriol. And one feature of that era was the two parties did have – the two major parties did have the same names that they have right now but they were just different parties. So the Democratic Party had a very large Conservative Wing, the Southern Democrats. There were a lot of Liberal Republicans coming from Northeastern states.

So even though we use the same names for the parties, they are just fundamentally different now. And one reason for that is that political elites, some who are in Congress, some who are not, wanted to create a gulf between the two parties because they wanted a distinction. So I'm thinking of activists like Phyllis Schlafly here. Her most influential book was called *A Choice, Not an Echo* because she didn't want the Republican Party to be an echo of the Democratic Party. She saw too much overlap between the parties.

So a lot of what we've seen over the last 40 years has been this attempt to make the Republican Party the conservative party. So 40 years ago, again on average, it was more conservative but it wasn't the conservative party.

So we've seen political elites create a gulf between the two major parties. Now, to your point we could in theory live in a 1976 type era where there's now gulf between Carter – let's say 1980, a gulf between Carter and Reagan and yet Carter voters and Reagan voters don't hate each other, it would be maybe hypothetically possible to go to that era but I feel like the way political elites have continuously work since then, I'm especially thinking of Newt Gingrich and numerous people I've written about, his influence is to make politics more on civil at the national level which then I suppose trickles down.

So what do we do about that issue in the United States specifically?

**Robert Talisse:** Sure. So certainly, the story you just laid out is correct and one I would endorse. I think that as with all sort of large scale social phenomena, the causal directions move in all kinds of different ways simultaneously. So let me spell out what I think is also going on with these same phenomena of the dropping out of the moderates within each of the parties, the amplification of the political differences among the parties and I would include in that under those circumstances, it becomes a virtue of the partisan representatives, the leaders of the parties, the candidates and the party leaders becomes a winning strategy for them to be in intransigent because that looks like the virtue of integrity when you are not backsliding or capitulating to the other side.

So you're right that there's a top down force where the parties are I think benefitting from the animosity that dominates our politics. And the way that they are benefitting or at least one of the ways in which they are benefitting is here's an electoral reality of the United States, it's crucial for both parties and both parties today are facing the same kind of problem although under slightly different descriptions. What wins elections at the national level is turnout. You've got to get your voters out if you want to win.

Now, that is also causally connected in certain ways with suppressing voters for the other side to come out, discouraging them in ways that lead them to stay in on election day. But national electoral politics are now about turnout. And we know in all kinds of context, political and nonpolitical, anger and fear and resentment are really good motivators to get us to do things. So one way in which the top down story runs is that the parties need turnout in order to retain power and control over the direction of the – the policy direction of the country. In order to do that, they need turnout. What's the best way to get their voters out is to amplify the animosity because that's really good motivationally.

The Republicans and Democrats sort of have in that project that I just laid out face two different kinds of obstacles because of the generational differences between their core voters. We can get into that if you want but they've got the same overall problem but it takes different description in both cases because they are trying to get turnout from different sorts of people.

But let me run this sort of other side – the other sort of flipside of the coin which is another bottom up story because it strikes me and there's some research that we've got is this – a lot of it can be sort of gleaned in a new book by the political scientist, Michele Margolis, which is called *From Politics to the Pews*.

Where some of the data suggest that the following kind of bottom up story is part of the broader causal explanation of animosity in politics. And let me – this is not Michele Margolis'. This is my sort of my spin on some of the data that she deals with. Her book is primarily about the politicization of churches in the United States.

But the broader point is this. We've already seen or I've already suggested and in the book I argued that part of the profile of the belief polarization phenomenon is affect. That is, it is by

means of an intensification of our affect that is our warm feelings towards the people like us, our feelings of identification with the people who share our views and simultaneously and increasingly intensified set of negative affects and dispositions towards the people who we see as our political others. That's part of the profile of the belief polarization phenomenon.

So not only do we shift into more extreme belief contents and become more confident in our beliefs, we also come to feel more warm and fuzzy around the people that are like us and find more icky the people who are unlike us.

When you are dealing with a citizenry that has fairly intense negative affect towards those who they perceived to be their political rivals and I've argued in the book that that's just a feature of – that's a by-product of the way in which our social spaces are organized, in some cases, designed. That creates incentives for the parties to tap into that negative affect, to let's say capitalize on that negative affect in the following way. The name of the game for the national elections at least is turnout. Strong affect like resentment and fear and distrust and concern, these are good motivators to get people to get up in the morning and go stand in the line and do something.

And we know, let's put ourselves in the position of party strategists, we know that Conservative voters are distrustful and suspicious of Liberals. Liberals have the same sets of attitudes towards the Conservatives. So here's a good strategy for provoking, for instigating voter turnout. Amplify the differences between the parties, maintain a stance of adversarial intransigence towards the members of the other party, put yourselves on TV as often as possible, disparaging the other party, claiming that the members of the other party are out to destroy something that is crucial to America, or about to put America on the wrong path. These are just good signals and strategies for solidifying voter turnout.

So if you think that the negative affect among the rank and file citizens is what creates the incentives for negative partisanship at the level of the party leaders, the party officials, and the candidates, you get I think another sort of explanatory story that doesn't run, doesn't contradict the top down story that you've told. It just shows that the causal arrows are going in both directions at the same time. The parties are adopting a strategy in light of the way in which we are affectively comported towards our perceived political rivals. They are adopting a strategy that's supposed to – that is a good strategy, a winning strategy for getting optimum voter turnout. In so far as that's a good strategy and it incentivizes them to do more of it and we as citizens imbibed all of that signal, right?

**Chris Martin:** Right.

**Robert Talisse:** So it's a – as I call it in the book, I say it's polarization dynamic. It runs sort of in a sort of self-reinforcing both top down and bottom up set of – causal arrows and signaling phenomena. And I think that you need both sides of that story to get the full picture because let's not forget, with respect to what we are I think accustomed to thinking of as core culture war, policy issues, the things that used to loom large in our political atmosphere in the '90s, culture war, policy issues, sexual morality, abortion, stem cells, things of this nature, gay marriage, things of this nature.

Republicans and Democrats, Conservatives and Liberals in the rank and file citizenry are no more divided over those issues than they were 20 years ago. And in fact on some of the issues like abortion, they've moderated. That is the partisan citizens have become less divided about the legality of abortion.

However what was happened over the past 20, 25 years is that negative affects towards nonpartisans has skyrocketed. So, we are in a condition, we are in a political circumstance in which we dislike and distrust each other more despite the fact that we actually fight about less with respect to our political policy preferences.

So it's the affect I would argue that is playing a – is sort of one of the – it's in the driver seat or at least one of the things or one of the guys in the driver seat for this very puzzling political moment that we find ourselves in.

**Chris Martin:** Well, thank you for your time. I wish we could talk about this more because there are many other aspects about the psychology of this and the philosophy of this is sort of quite fascinating. But I try to keep my episodes to about half an hour. So thank you again and your book is coming out October 25<sup>th</sup>. So by the time this episode is out, it will be out in the public. So thank you.

**Robert Talisse:** Thank you, Chris.

**Chris Martin:** If you're in the DC area you can catch a book signing by Bob at Politics and Prose on Connecticut Ave on November 2nd at 3:30 in the afternoon. And if you're in the New York area you can catch him at Shakespeare and Company on November 7 at 6:30 in the evening.

He's on Twitter @RobertTalisse and his book is on Twitter at @OverdoingD.

As always, if you enjoyed the show, please leave us a review on iTunes because it helps other people find out about the show. You can reach me at [podcast@heterodoxacademy.org](mailto:podcast@heterodoxacademy.org) and you can follow me on Twitter at [ChrisMartin76](https://twitter.com/ChrisMartin76). Thanks for listening

[End of transcript]