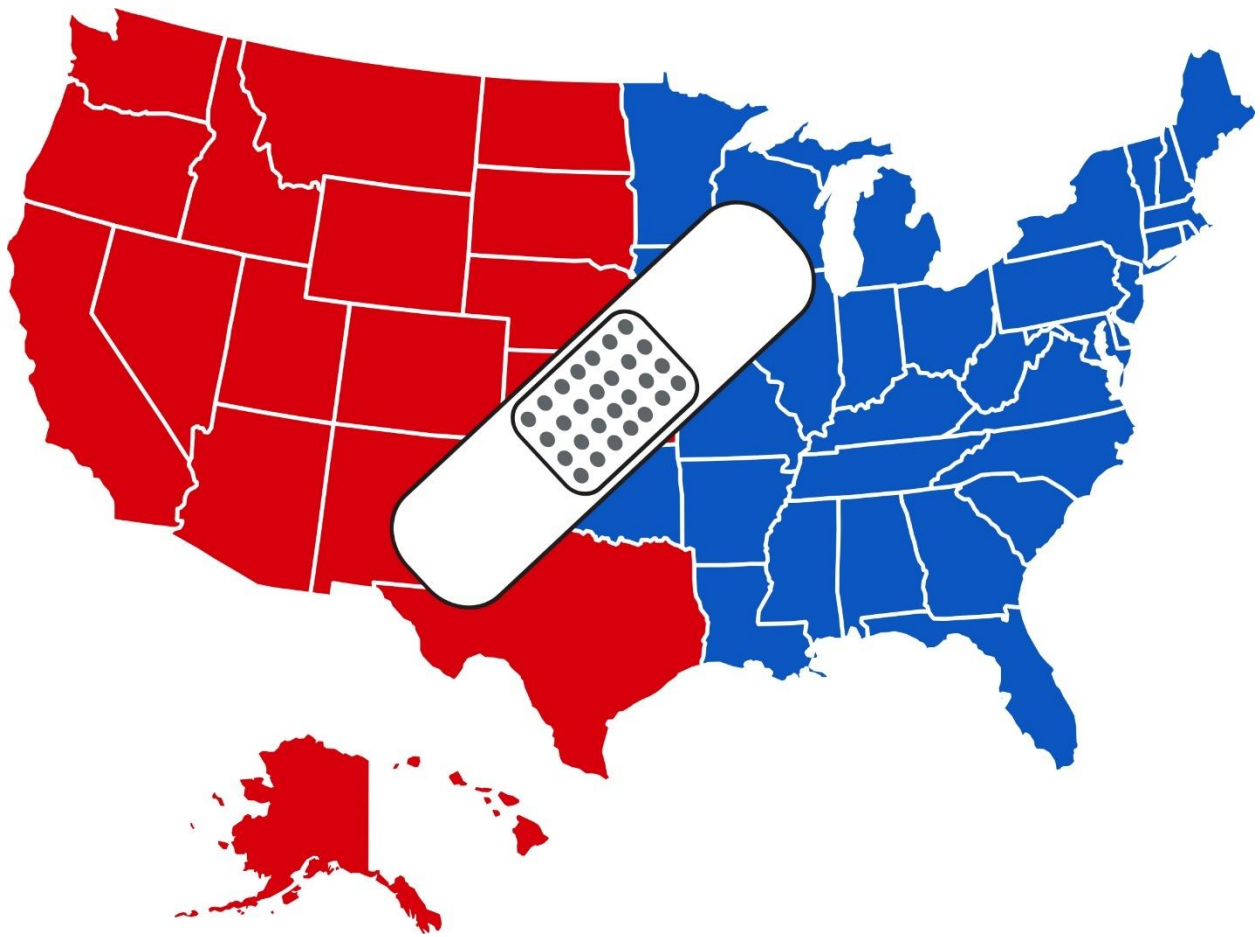


I. Before Trump



“Henry, what are you doing in there [behind jail bars]”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Waldo, the question is what are you doing out there?”

Henry David Thoreau

On the first day of 2025 I retired from my 30+ year career as a healthcare author, speaker, and culture coach. I loved my work, and especially the people I was privileged to work with, but in today’s polarized world I could not speak or write about political issues without concern for the impact on my business and clients. Healthcare executives would be understandably reluctant to hire someone who was publicly speaking out about abortion, gun violence, climate change, and (especially) the human, moral, civic, and economic catastrophe that is being unleashed upon our nation by Donald Trump. I had to choose on which side of the bars I would stand.

Since starting Values Coach in 1996, I’ve been speaking and writing about values. I’ve shared my course on *The Twelve Core Action Values* with hospitals and health systems across the country. I’ve authored and coauthored books and journal articles on the importance of values, and the way lived values are the foundation of culture. The cruelty, corruption, and cowardice of Donald Trump’s Republican Party violates the values I hold as a Christian, as an American, as a human.

There are many excellent books, articles, blogs, and podcasts about the acute and growing danger Trumpism poses to our nation and our world. I have chosen to write poetry, free verse, and reflective essays because it provides a unique platform for using humor, satire, irony, truth-telling, and an appropriate sense of outrage. And because as far as I can tell, no one else is writing about Trumpianity and Trumpism in this way. (Ezra Pound famously counseled poets to “make it new.”)

The Trumpian wars on the environment, on science and education, on healthcare and economic security, on our nonpartisan civil service and judicial system, on women’s reproductive freedom, and on basic human decency are like the Big Bang. The explosive destruction we are experiencing today will cascade in ever-expanding waves down through future generations. The environmental devastation, disease and death, economic privation, racism and misogyny, and violent hatred we are already seeing from Trumpism will tarnish whatever legacy we pass along to our children and grandchildren. The sequel to *Trumpianity* will be *Trump to Your Grandkids: Drop Dead*.

