

Social Media, Politics and Work

Dear Stephen,

I know this seems like a picky question with all the stuff going on in the world today, but I am a Facebook and Instagram friend to several people from work, and it has become an issue. I am in field sales and work for a mid-size manufacturer, so beyond my local team I have casually developed Facebook friends with many people at HR — like people I've met in factory visits or training, such as one of our corporate trainers and the customer service rep that services my territory. Befriending them on social media was a way to break the ice when I started this job years ago. A nice way to stay close to the long-distance work colleagues who are still part of my job.

Social media has evolved to so much more than just Facebook and Instagram. It seems to me like everyone overshares, and if I had to do it over I would not include my co-workers as part of my Facebook, just LinkedIn. I am afraid to drop

them, and I rely on many of these people to help me do my job day-to-day. It's fun to see and read about these people's kids, their vacation or what they did over the weekend, yet whenever there is an election coming up, Facebook in particular turns into a political jungle.

I live in a blue state and city but my company, like many contract furniture manufacturers and floor-covering companies, is in a red state. My wife and I are not very political. I have work friends in every color state, and they all have different opinions. Well, two different opinions is what it comes down to.

I hate reading about the political views of my co-workers, and



You can send your workplace questions to Stephen at: StephenSays@bellow.press

Questions selected to be answered, will appear in this column. Please use the Subject: Stephen Says for all emails. Stephen Viscusi is a bestselling author, television personality, and CEO of The Viscusi Group, global executive recruiters located in New York. Follow Stephen on Twitter [@stephenviscusi](https://twitter.com/stephenviscusi), Like [Stephen on Facebook](#); and follow him on [LinkedIn](#).

now I am stuck. I don't even care about their political views, yet I know many people in the office do care about others' viewpoints. Do I drop them from Facebook? Risk their friendship and help at work? Or just leave it alone? I get it no one is notified when they are dropped, but they will miss seeing about my life, and people in work situations know when you drop them on social media. I expect my coworkers will take it personally.

It's a problem at HQ and my local colleagues. Ugh, what a mess. What do you suggest? What's the best way out of this one? Do I drop them or do I keep them?

Signed,

Drop Or Keep?



Remember what my mother always told me — no politics or religion at work!

Dear DOK,

Keep them on your Facebook and ignore the post. What are you a baby? Do not add any more new work people, and if you change jobs you can start over.

I think you should keep the worlds separate, but not everyone agrees with me. You said you're not a political person so it will bother you less than your colleagues who are political. Remember what my mother always told me — no politics or religion at work! And the same advice might apply to the dinner table or that Thanksgiving Zoom call you are planning with the uncles, aunts and cousins. As far as people expressing their political views on social media, it is a free country, and they can say what they want, but they should understand those views might leak into their work life.

I get what you are saying, and I even see it on LinkedIn where I think it is inappropriate but just ignore it. I do think we tend to judge one another based on what we read on people's social media. We

form opinions about not just co-workers but also friends and relatives when we read what they say about politics (especially this year), when to wear a mask, their kids' school or 100 other topics. I have friends on social media who feel compelled to tell everyone what they had for breakfast, the details of their exercise program and — oh, please do not get me started on this — pictures of their pets from every angle. How cute!

I know this is an important election, but every election is important. Free country, free speech, so get used to it. If you can't handle this small problem, maybe you do not belong on social media. So, back to the original "drop-or-keep" question. You do have the option to drop them and maybe you should, but my advice is to accept it for what it is — free expression and people thinking they are the Masters of Facebook. Keep them — it's what we all signed up for.

Just remember to vote!

Stephen