



Unified: How Our Unlikely Friendship Gives Us Hope for a Divided Country

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In a divided country desperate for unity, two sons of South Carolina show how different races, life experiences, and pathways can lead to a deep friendship—even in a state that was rocked to its core by the 2015 Charleston church shooting.

Tim Scott, an African-American US senator, and Trey Gowdy, a white US congressman, won't allow racial lines to divide them. They work together, eat meals together, campaign together, and make decisions together. Yet in the fall of 2010—as two brand-new members of the US House of Representatives—they did not even know each other. Their story as politicians and friends began the moment they met and is a model for others seeking true reconciliation.

In *Unified*, Senator Scott and Congressman Gowdy, through honesty and vulnerability, inspire others to evaluate their own stories, clean the slate, and extend a hand of friendship that can change your churches, communities, and the world.

Unified: How Our Unlikely Friendship Gives Us Hope for a Divided Country Details

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Rebecca Brown says

SC current history

I found the book well written and of great interest. The dialogue between Tim and Trey kept the pace moving quickly. Chapter 9 was particularly good. I feel challenged to make a friendship outside of my comfort zone.

I recommend reading this book. Our country needs to heal. This offers the hope to do so.

Bridget Shepherd says

I picked this up for my Seattle Library Bingo Card not realizing that most of the books I read are written by white authors, which just made me wonder if I am at fault for choosing the books I read, but I rarely ever look at the author or who they are so I would imagine that my own choice is rather unbiased, so is it my library or just the fact that our society popularizes the writings of white authors?

Either way, this book was a great read. I appreciated the comments on the law and that both of the authors were so honest about their own prejudices and beliefs. I come from a very conservative background but I am more liberal. Family dinners used to be so tense, but I have learned that it is only when you close your mind off from others' opinions that aggression seems to arise. I also think that is so unfair to the black community that people of color cannot be conservative – I understand the history of the party might be far from fair to everyone but that forces them into one party (the whole American two party system is so messed up to me anyway).

Anyway, good read with good morals.

Gayle Slagle says

While I share being a native of South Carolina with Tim Scott and Trey Gowdy, I do not share the political views of either, so I was not sure what my reaction would be to Unified, How Our Unlikely Friendship Gives Us Hope for a Divided Country. However, although Scott is a member of the Senate and Gowdy is a member of the House of Representative, this is not a political book in any way; as a matter of fact, if the reader is not already familiar with their viewpoints, it would be difficult to give a summary of those viewpoints after reading the book. What the book does address is the importance of human contact, acceptance, and friendship; it does indeed give hope to our country, which is divided on so many issues. The book points out that it is not our differences that are important but our human commonality; it encourages us to reach out to those who are "different" from us because when we do, we will most likely discover that we have much more in common than we expected. It encourages us to accept the differences in others and to embrace those differences. Scott and Gowdy tell in alternating segments the story of how the two became steadfast friends even though they come from two very different backgrounds. They offer advice on how we, too, can benefit from reaching out to others and changing things through love and friendship. The book is not sugar coated; it

points out many flaws in our society, but offers hope that through understanding and accepting others, we can become a stronger and a better nation. Tim Scott says it well in the epilogue: " This is our vision for the future of America, We believe that our nation can be unified and transformed by conversations and friendships that lead to reconciliation and understanding. As Americans, we must uphold the ideals of freedom, equality, justice, and opportunity, even as we continue to work together to make those ideals a reality for all. We must come together, find solutions, and get to a point where we can see that our strength as a nation is rooted in all that is good in our world." It is my fervent hope that we as Americans can somehow put aside our differences and remember those things that are great about our country; it is my fervant hope that we can use the power of friendship, love, and acceptance to overcome all obstacles. This book offers hope that we can actually do this.

Steve Webster says

I was heartened to know that Trey Gowdy has the level of personal kindness and fairness that he does. He is such a ruthless, cocksure and hyper-competent prosecutor that seeing him as a kind and good person really made me respect him more. I honestly didn't know Tim Scott before reading the book and he too is a good man, in fact was going to be a pastor before going into politics so his every move is guided by his Christian faith. The "bromance" that is this book is quite interesting. I only gave it four stars because it is such a short, straight-forward and simple read with few real surprises or revelations. Maybe it really is this easy to get along with others of different race, background, socio-economic realm etc, in a powerfully synergistic way. So few in politics seem to be doing what these guys are doing so that it is cool when you see the "Chip and Dale" of politics one-upping each other to bestow compliments and accolades on each other.

Kevin Starbuck says

Great read... refreshing for two politicians to openly discuss relationships and the formation of their friendship. Serves as a powerful reminder that good people working together can make a difference in this world.

Bobbie says

A disappointment mostly due to my not realizing the point of the book before buying it. This book was more about relationships than political problems and solutions

Tyrone Harbert says

I had the pleasure of obtaining a copy of this book during a signing at Fiction Addiction in Greenville. I couldn't figure as fast as I can read I would have it read before meeting them both. However it didn't work out that way, instead a nice older gentleman behind me engaged me in a very rich conversation. He spoke of his recent move to South Carolina and we talked about his shift in politics from being a democrat to republican. Ironically, now that I have finished this book, I can appreciate the experience a lot more. This book is actually not a book about politics, it's about building friendships and breaking down walls of divisions..it's more about communication and coming together than any other dynamic of politico-social strata. This book is a character developer with real practical sharing and reflection. Even though I expected it to be a political work and get to understand the views of these two great men, both of whom are part of only a handful I can truly say I have the upmost respect and admiration for, It was a great breath of fresh air to see deeper into the hearts and minds of these men, unfettered by political badges and coats. Change begins with individuals, something this book makes very clear, It is a great personal growth book that I hope many more will take the time to read and digest.

Margaret Harris says

This is a worthy book and a perfect follow-up to *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*, which I had finished re-reading only a week earlier. These two gentlemen do not write about mental illness as such, but about an unhealthy discord between American citizens, whose anger can also lead to emotional blindness to the perspectives of each other.

Upon reflection, I want to believe that the discord related by the Senator and Representative are actually more in the political arena in which they must labor than it is out here in the everyday work and play world. Protest marches of crowds become increasingly silly as the "causes" diminish in importance. Grandstanding politicians and hysterical journalists on television are increasingly boring. But the premise is correct that political anger encourages more anger elsewhere and more potential dangerous behavior by individuals against innocent others. I definitely commend and recommend this little book as a starting point for stepping back, taking a careful look from a wider angle, and pondering how each one of us who cares for the continuation of our remarkable government "of, for, and by the people" might contribute to mending the rather extraordinary political discord around us.

The book is interesting beyond the wise advice offered about accepting each other's differences. I have a new respect for how much work is asked of—and in at least some cases probably done by!—our Congressional Representatives and Senators. It is perhaps the case that at least *some* of them really do constantly study history and governments and past policy results in order to correct mistakes and make better laws for the future fairness for all of us. And the brief autobiographies of these two fine Americans, as well as the story of their friendship, is inspiration all by itself.

PHS1 says

United States Senator Tim Scott and United States Representative Trey Gowdy, both of whom represent the state of South Carolina in Congress, have written a marvelous book that not only tells a warm story of a great, if not unlikely, friendship between them and their families, but also offers an inspirational anecdotal

theory of how we can unite our communities and nation by actively reaching out to those whose backgrounds are different from our own for understanding of others' perspectives on the goals we all share as citizens and humans.

Senator Scott and Chairman Gowdy take turns each chapter in providing their alternating perspectives on a variety of issues – sometimes agreeing and other times diverging, while always building their mutual bond of friendship through respect and empathy: navigating the halls of Congress as freshmen United States Representatives in 2011; being thrown into competition for the open United States Senate seat in South Carolina vacated by Jim DeMint in 2012; confronting the pain of the fatal shooting at Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston in 2015; supporting each other through the decision of Congressman Gowdy to run one final time in 2016 and take on chairmanship of the House Select Committee on Benghazi; supporting each other as Senator Scott manages the pressure of a national Republican spokesperson as a black conservative; confronting the further pain of the Officer Michael Slager fatal shooting of Walter Scott in Charleston that resulted in a hung jury trial for murder against the officer in 2016; juxtaposing the views of the authors as in the one case a black businessman-politician and in the other case as a white prosecutor-politician on the issue of local law enforcement; recounting key mentors in each of their young lives; and the importance of friendship, dialogue, and understanding in creating reconciliation and transformation.

The lessons Senator Scott and Chairman Gowdy teach in this book move quickly in a well written narrative that is infused with their passion and heartfelt verve at every step as they forge a friendship that undoubtedly will last forever. Their fascinating travails are at once congressional, spiritual, and human – and are relevant to students of history, politics, sociology, and citizenship.

As a former executive congressional aide, I can promise you the country will desperately miss the skills of Chairman Gowdy in public service as much as Senator Scott will certainly miss his friend's nightly companionship at dinner in Washington, D.C. But we owe our thanks to the Chairman for a job well done and congratulations on returning home to his family. It will be up to the Senator to carry-on the estimable blueprint they have offered in this book for moving the country forward in the halls of Capitol Hill. And it is a blueprint well worth hearing and replicating by all of us back in our own American hamlets.

“Unified: How Our Unlikely Friendship Gives Us Hope For A Divided Country” tells great stories and provides great lessons that can hopefully be applied to our political arena as well as our everyday lives.

Blessedmomfxs says

Tim Scott is a US senator from South Carolina. Trey Gowdy is a US congressman from South Carolina. Tim Scott is black. Trey Gowdy is white. They were both elected to Congress in 2010 (Tim Scott subsequently became the first African American elected to both the US House and US Senate since reconstruction). Their grandmothers would not have been able to be friends, in the racially divided south where they lived. When Tim Scott got news of the fatal shooting of nine blacks at a prayer meeting at Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, the first person he called was his white friend, Trey Gowdy.

It is sad that a friendship between a white man and a black man is rare enough that it seems unlikely, but there is still a marked racial divide in the United States. I believe it has widened, rather than narrowed, since the election of our first African American President, Barak Obama.

Sen. Scott and Rep. Gowdy assert that when meeting someone who has obvious racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, political, or religious differences, looking for something we have in common is the first step. There are certain commonalities that cross many barriers: love for family, hope for a better tomorrow, desire

for our communities to be safe, etc. In the aftermath of a disaster (9-11, hurricanes, wildfires, and the like) people tend to forget their differences and go into a mode that allows our better selves to come out. We pray together, we mourn together, we rally. On 9-12-2001 there were no “us and them” — we were all Americans. Our fear, outrage, pain, and grief united us. Trey Gowdy asks, “Why must we face a calamity before we will join hands, pray, and seek healing?”

I’ve not lived life as a person of color. I haven’t experienced the prejudices that come from having brown or black skin. I’ve never been viewed suspiciously for “driving while black” (getting pulled over because you’re a black person in a predominately white area). I don’t experience fear when I’m glanced at by a person in law enforcement. Still, prejudices are widespread and they aren’t exclusively against people of color. Prejudice can be about whites from people of color. It can be about religion, sexual orientation, perceived education (or lack thereof), or socioeconomic status. Tim Scott says, “Our perception of people is too often colored by preconceived notions and expectations, whether those are based on past experience or shaped by cultural norms and attitudes.” Trey is quoted as saying, “...the only two divisions there ought to be in the nation are “people of good conscience and people who are not of good conscience — not racial, not gender, not ideological.””

Tim and Trey have forged a solid, valuable friendship by capitalizing on their similarities, rather than their differences. Trey says, “We can build real trust with others by stepping into their story, by committing our time and attention to what matters to them...As you seek to build rapport and trust with someone, you must be willing to see the world from a perspective that is not your own...The 24/7 news cycle we have today so often seems to focus on differences and divisions within our nation...But as I talk to people one-on-one, I find a universal hope and desire for unity.” (emphasis mine).

Trey states, “People look to Washington for solutions to our nation’s problems, but Congress is often where anger and frustration come home to roost. Although Tim and I are both currently in politics — or perhaps because we’re in politics — we see the limitations and shortcomings of legislative remedies. We believe the firmest foundation for positive change is found with individuals in relationship with one another. Laws are external. Relationships are internal. Policies make you have to. Relationships make you want to. Relationships contain the power necessary to change the course of history, and the delicate, personal touch needed to change the trajectory of a single life.” Isn’t that beautiful, and oh, so true?!

One of the most powerful stories in Unified is a story of a blog post that slammed Senator Tim Scott. Trey read it first and rushed to Tim’s office to see if he had seen it. Indignant, Trey says, “I’m sick of this...something must be done.” Tim’s answer was a simple “You’re right. Please close the door and have a seat.” Trey thinks they’re finally getting somewhere...he’s finally gotten his friend fired up enough to respond (Tim was evidently notoriously calm). Instead, Senator Scott says, “We’re going to pray for [the author].” Tim Scott proceeds to pray for someone who was intentionally hurtful to him. Trey says, “Tim simply modeled what Jesus teaches: ‘Love your enemies and pray for those who hurt you.’...I was not the victim, but I was angry. Tim was the victim, but he forgave and prayed for the person who wronged him.”

I was simply amazed by the wisdom and truth in this book! If you want a different world, one where people love and respect one another in spite of their differences, this book is a great source of advice on how to start down that road. Christians, especially, need the words written here. Some of the most judgemental and hateful people I’ve ever encountered were Christians who, mistakenly, thought that by pointing out the speck in their brother’s eye they were doing him/her a big favor, all the while ignoring the beam in their own (Matthew 7:1-5).

Read this book, then go find someone “different” than you and try to make a friend. We can change the world, one heart at a time.

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for my honest review

David Steele says

We may live in one of the most divided times in American history. The cultural climate is rising without any hope of resolution in sight. Senator Tim Scott and Congressman, Trey Goudy recognize the problems in our land. Yet, they both have a realistic outlook, which is laced with optimism. Their book, *Unified* invites readers to pursue racial reconciliation and restoration, which will strengthen the fabric of our fractured nation.

Unified is a very basic book that reads like a conversation between two lawmakers. These conservative thinkers, who have become the best of friends, bring their unique conservative perspectives to the table. Their mutual love and respect for one another are apparent from the outset. These two men, who are both committed Christ-followers model what friendship can and should look like.

Senator Scott and Congressman Goudy steer clear of politics, however. Their aim is to promote an optimistic vision of hope for the future of our nation:

"We believe that our nation can be united and transformed by conversations and friendships that lead to reconciliation and understanding. As Americans, we must uphold the ideals of freedom, equality, justice, and opportunity, even as we continue to work together to make those ideals a reality for all. We must come together, find solutions, and get to a point where we can see that our strength as a nation is rooted in all that is good in our world."

Unified is a worthy read by two men of integrity; men who are striving to make America a better place. This is the first of many steps but it is a step in the right direction.

PD says

Just like the title says, it's about unity and friendship. I was much more encouraged and uplifted by this book than I was expecting to be. A recommended read.

Clara Roberts says

This is the story of friendship between two members of Congress who come from different environment become good friends. "Unusual friendships are born of many differences: class, religion, background, education or any number of other things." "I need to take responsibility for my on actions and attitudes before I start looking at anyone else." On of these men is white, the son of a doctor and educated at two prominent universities. The other is black the son of a domestic who used football to help him get an education. This is their story there was much for me to think about.

Jeanette says

This is a rating that is rounded up from 2.5 stars. There was, for me, just not enough there, there in this book.

The writing is all "side by side". Tim and then Trey. Trey and then Tim.

It's about friendship. But it is 75% chock filled with name dropping, associations of 1000 tangents and tons of House and Senate building placed connective tissue of every other sort you can imagine.

You got to know Tim and Trey pretty well. And a few of their other compatriots. And of a time which occurred around the terrible massacre during that Bible study (Charleston) in particular.

But I wanted to hear far more about what can bridge true "eyes" of values and laws for those values and far less about the elites themselves in the politico of "us". I didn't get that here, this is only about 1 to 1 relationship, IMHO. Elites they are- despite their not being elitist in self-perceptions.

This book made my feelings (suspicious) about the laxity levels of the legislators' processes toward a meaningful product increase and not decrease as I thought it might by reading it. Like their jobs themselves- I have an inkling that the posturing (higher priority too) always takes more time than the resultant outputs.

Nathan Albright says

[Note: This book was provided free of charge by Tyndale Blog Tours. All thoughts and opinions are my own.]

This is among the rarest of books, and the sort of book I would like to read a lot more often, and that is a collaborative memoir about political friendship. Although the authors of this book are both successful contemporary American politicians, one of them a black Republican Senator from South Carolina and the other a white Republican Representative from South Carolina who entered Congress together as freshmen in 2010, this is not a book about politics per se but rather about the way in which people from different backgrounds can find genuine friendship even in the cutthroat world of politics in our divided country. There is no shortage of books about the racial and political divide in our country [1], but this book offers something striking, an attempt to see people as people and get to know them as people as a way of feeling less beleaguered and less isolated. While I have mixed feelings about that, this book is undoubtedly sincere, and that is not something one says lightly about books written by politicians these days.

The book proceeds in a generally chronological fashion although it begins in media res with a prologue about a racially motivated act of violence in Charleston, South Carolina that killed a friend of Sen. Scott. The authors begin with their initial friendship upon meeting each other in Congress (1) and then look at how that friendship was tested when the two were being pitted together in the press for an open Senate seat (2). Dealing with the threat of race war (3) and the tough assignment of leading an investigation on Benghazi (4) follow before the authors reflect on what they have in common (5). A discussion by the two on how one can create an environment where trust can grow (6) leads into a discussion by both authors on law enforcement and how the language of law and order appears to different people (7,8) before the authors reflect on the positive influences in their life (9) and the solutions to so much of what divides and isolates people here and now (10) before closing with an epilogue that refers to the hope the authors share. All told, this takes about 200 pages before an intriguing preview of the authors' related workbook is taken into account.

In looking at this book it is pretty clear that a big reason the two authors are genuine friends is that they both seem like genuinely decent people. Both of them are humble and reflective, both of them have intriguing life stories of their upbringing, and both of them appear to be quick studies with genuine appreciation for each other. All of that matters a lot in making this a striking collaborative work where the friendship and its context is put center stage. To be sure, it is not an unmixed blessing for the American people to find out that

their elected leaders are becoming friends with each other in a recognition of their common humanity, not least because we vote for political leaders in large part who will enact an agenda, not become friends with people on the other side of the aisle whose worldviews are destructive to our country's well-being. Be that as it may, these two authors are friends and they are not wrong to believe that if someone can form a genuine friendship across racial lines in a place as hypercompetitive as Washington DC, then genuine friendship is possible in all kinds of situations. How to create a context where people can see each other as friends and not enemies is a difficult task, though.

[1] See, for example:

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2016...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2017...>

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