



State of the Union - 2026

Originally Discussed: January 2026

Description: A guided conversation to take an honest “snapshot” of the country right now—starting with what’s going well, then what’s not, identifying who/what is behind each, and exploring practical ways we can contribute to positive change (within our reach, individually and together).

Estimated time: Up to 75 minutes

Getting acquainted and comfortable

5–10 min.

Welcome

Thank you for coming...

We are a part of **The Great Reset**, which was born out of a shift we’ve seen in our country: we don’t tend to speak beyond our bubbles and across perspectives. You are now part of keeping the conversation going, and we thank you.

The Pillars of The Great Reset

- To share our own thoughts and perspectives with humility
- To learn from others and listen with respect

Ground Rules

- Every comment is valid and deserving of respect
- We show respect by speaking one at a time, putting our phones on silent, and staying engaged—even when we are not speaking
- In the interest of time, I may cut in to ask you to **“top-line”** something—a synopsis of your thoughts in bullets, not paragraphs

Confidentiality

I’d like a verbal agreement from everyone that you are here of your own volition, and—out of respect—you will keep what others say in this room unless you have their permission to share it.



Reminder: comments may be captured and summarized **without names or images**. If we ever want to use identifiable quotes or clips, we will ask permission first.

Personal Introductions

Please share your name, where you live, and one way you engage with your community (voting, volunteering, local groups, attending local events, or even just keeping up with local news).

Setting the Stage

5 min.

When you think about the **state of the union** right now—local, state, or national—what words or feelings come to mind?

What's Going Well

20 – 25 min.

What do you think is going well right now in the country?

- Where do you see progress, stability, or resilience?
- What's working better than people assume?
- Where do you see people showing up for each other—locally or nationally?

Who/what is behind it? (Make it specific.)

For each “bright spot” participants name, use follow-ups like:

- Who is behind that success? (leaders, institutions, communities, policies, public servants, educators, businesses, organizers, journalists, neighbors, etc.)
- What conditions made it possible?
- What's keeping it going?
- What would it look like to protect or strengthen it?



What's Not Going Well

20–25 min.

What do you think is not going well right now?

- What feels most fragile, broken, or concerning—and who is affected?
- Where do you see trust breaking down (institutions, media, neighbors, schools, workplaces, etc.)?
- What feels like a root cause vs. a symptom?

Who/what is behind it? (Responsibility without scapegoating.)

- Who influences this most? (systems, incentives, policies, leaders, institutions, media ecosystems, platforms, culture—where applicable)
- Who benefits from the status quo, and who gets left out?
- What's one fair counterpoint someone might make—and what can we still agree on?

Moving Forward

5–10 min.

As we close, thinking about everything we've discussed today...

- Where do you think we have the **most ability to effect positive change** (as individuals, families, workplaces, neighborhoods, local communities)?
- What actions feel realistic within our reach—things that build trust, reduce division, or strengthen what's working?
- What gives you hope that things can improve—and what would help sustain that hope?

Closing (final 1–2 minutes)

- If you could leave the group with one sentence, what would it be?