

Brooke Goldstein: Safe spaces on university campuses--the better word to describe them would be shame spaces--where if you go into a space on a university campus and you want to talk about something that somebody else in the room who might be over sensitive might have his or her feelings hurt, you are going to be shamed and that's totally contrary to the notion of academic freedom. I think the trend to have these safe spaces on campus when they are abused in the way that they are being abused now is very dangerous. What a real safe space should do is allow a free and open and non-violent perhaps moderated dialog between opposing sides because that is what is going to bring people together, not shaming someone because of their views, not calling someone names like a racist or a bigot or an Islamophobe just because they have a view that is different than yours. Now obviously there is real hate and there is real racism, but that's where the marketplace of ideas comes into effect. I personally believe that the majority of people in our Western democracy are good people. They believe in the equality of the sexes, they believe in freedom of speech, they believe in freedom of association. But if you are not allowed to dialogue with other good people when you happen to disagree, how are we as a collective community supposed to come to an agreement on anything, and what that does is divide people and polarize people which is what we are seeing now for example in the United States to the extreme. We have the alt right and the alt left. And the irony is that it is very easy for us in Western democracies because of World War II to openly criticize what we see as neo-Nazism, and of course, it should be criticized. But when you see the same type of racism and bigotry in the alt left, those who come out and criticize it are attacked. Why? Why is that the case?