

Divide and Conquer Works Because We Fall for It and Ends the Moment We Don't

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Since the earliest organized societies, long before the first senate convened, long before the first king had a coin minted with his face on it, and long before the first empire drew borders on a map, those who held power learned the same dark art: when your actions cannot withstand scrutiny, you do not *defend* them—you *divert attention* from them.

The most reliable diversion in the human toolkit has always been to fracture the people beneath you into suspicious, bickering, mutually hostile factions. Philip II of Macedon mastered this technique by pitting Greek city-states against each other so he could conquer them one by one. Julius Caesar perfected it in Gaul by exploiting tribal rivalries to defeat a numerically superior enemy. The British Empire institutionalized it across continents by inflaming sectarian and ethnic divisions to maintain control. Medieval monarchs used it to keep nobles too busy fighting each other to unite against the crown. And political

machines in America weaponized immigrant blocs and neighborhood loyalties to keep themselves in power while the public fought over scraps.

The tragic—almost embarrassing—truth is that the tactic has not evolved, because it has never needed to. Human nature has remained obligingly predictable. Leaders who fear accountability still reach for the same lever: divide the people, inflame their differences, amplify their grievances, and keep them so busy distrusting each other that they never turn their eyes upward to ask what the hell their leaders are actually doing.

Now, in our own time, with tools that Philip, Caesar, and the British could never have imagined, we have algorithmic outrage engines, micro-targeted messaging, identity-based political branding, 24-hour grievance cycles, and a media ecosystem that monetizes conflict. We are watching the same ancient strategy executed with digital precision: factions forming not around

shared purpose but around curated differences, and groups defined not by common good but by cleverly crafted resentments. Citizens are turned into rival tribes while officials at every level, from the highest federal offices to the smallest school boards, quietly pursue personal agendas, self-benefit, and unaccountable power behind the smokescreen of the chaos they themselves ignite.

The bitter irony is that every one of us, regardless of party, tribe, ideology, or affiliation, is being played by the same mechanism; we are all targets of the same manipulation, all victims of the same strategy, and all participants in a drama written centuries before any of us were born. The only way out, the only countermeasure that has ever defeated the divide-and-conquer scheme, is *unity*—not the soft, sentimental unity of slogans

but the hard, disciplined unity of citizens who refuse to be weaponized against each other, people who recognize that the common good is larger than any faction, who understand that strength in numbers is not a metaphor but a structural reality. When we stand together, leaders must answer for their actions; when we fracture, they rule without oversight.

Therefore, the call is simple, stark, and overdue. We do not have to agree on everything, but we must agree on this: we will not be turned against each other so someone else can govern without accountability—because the oldest trick in the book works only when the people fall for it. And the moment we stop falling for it, the game ends. Ω

“The reason
why the world
lacks unity
and lies broken
and in heaps
is because man
is disunited
with himself.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson