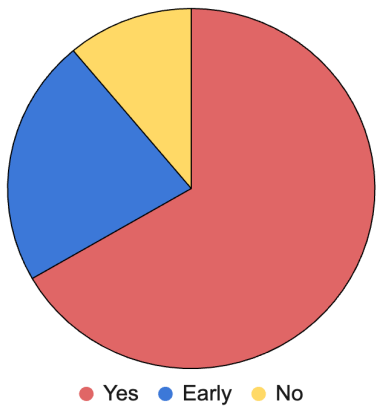
What's Your Opinion?

DID YOU VOTE?

Yes, early voted - 12

Yes, voted today - 4

No, didn't vote - 2



Next Poll:

AI is taking over!

Do you think AI generated art is acceptable?

Answer the poll on The Herald's Instagram page, **@astateherald**. Polls are posted on Mondays. Previous poll results can be found on **astatetheherald.com**

Have an idea for a poll? Send your ideas to the opinion editor. **See box below for emails.**

The death of nuance is the death of America

ELLA DOBSON

A&E EDITOR



Ella Dobson is a sophomore psychology major from Jonesboro.

When you think of America now, I'm sure you don't think of the rolling plains of the Midwest or our beautiful historical sites. I doubt you immediately think of our founding fathers or even the Constitution. I would bet the first thing you think of is our president, the economy or even the fact that America hates itself.

There's a long list of things that people say are destroying America. They range from inflation to immigration and it seems that everyone is either entirely on one side or the other. The middle ground has completely disappeared.

In modern American society, we have completely lost the art of nuance. It seems unfathomable to consider that some things aren't just right or wrong. We don't have the ability to recognize the small, subtle details of debated issues and understand that there is not always a "right answer."

This lost art probably isn't the root of all the political, economic and intercontinental conflicts America faces, but it is the reason why we can't solve any of them.

As of 2026, more than half of U.S. adults get their news from social media, according to Pew. Social media is built on grabbing your attention, keeping it for short periods and building an algorithm around what you keep watching.

If your "For You Page" gets a political video and you sit there and watch it, chances are you'll get another one. And another. Until your entire page is full of political clips taken out of context.

Because that's what social media is. Except for the few trustworthy and unbiased news sources, the political videos are heavily edited, carefully written and most likely entirely out of context, just to get a point across to the average viewer's 47-second attention span.

And social media creators aren't required to fact-check everything they post. They can say whatever they want, incite whatever emotion in their viewers and it could all be totally false, within libel laws.

This emotional clickbait has real consequences for the American mindset. It reinforces stereotypical and polarized thinking and forces citizens to choose an all-or-nothing side. You're either Republican or Democrat and you have to support that party all the way.

In reality, this isn't true at all. You



PHOTO COURTESY OF KNOWABLE MAGAZINE, ART BY DAVIDE BONAZZI

can align with a certain party's values while disliking party candidates. You can vote blue AND red on your ballot if you like. You can have multiple beliefs at once.

You can think we should place heavier taxes on the rich while still understanding that corporations fuel the national economy. You can support an individual's right to bear arms while advocating for stricter gun reforms. You can know Pro-Life advocates just want to save babies who can't speak for themselves and also know that Pro-Choice advocates just want to protect the right to personal autonomy. You can understand the necessity of immigration regulation while protesting I.C.E's treatment of immigrants.

You can be a Republican and not like Donald Trump or be a Democrat and not like Kamala Harris.

Politics are not often mutually exclusive. But our instant gratification, my-way-or-the-highway, trophy-kid world has tricked us into thinking it has to be. Dichotomous thinking forces us to emotional extremes, making every political discussion a heated debate and leaving no room for compromise.

America doesn't look like it used to. And this isn't all bad. We've improved so much as a nation, but if we don't find common ground to channel this positive growth into, we might as well not have it at all.

So the next time you encounter someone who disagrees with you, don't get defensive or feel hurt. Take a minute and ask them why they think that way. Learn from your differences and find ways to agree.

America is stronger together. We're a melting pot of infinite possibilities and unique humans. The second we stop fighting and start working together, the second real change becomes possible.

There's no proof you tried if you don't succeed

BENJAMIN MORRIS

STAFF WRITER



Benjamin Morris is a senior creative media production major from Brookland, Arkansas.

The master has failed more than the student has tried. If you haven't failed, you haven't tried. Failure is proof that you're trying. Right?

This sentiment is repeated daily and looks stunning on a living room pillow; it's something we've all heard a thousand times. Which begs the question: is it true? Is failure really proof of effort? I don't believe so.

My first reason for this stance is simple: it takes no effort at all to fail. In fact, failure can be evidence of a lack of effort. Because of this, failure cannot be evidence that you tried.

Imagine it's January 1 and I make a resolution. I'm going to wake up early and work out every single day. January 3, I hit snooze. January 5, I deleted the alarm. I put no effort into my goal and failed as a result. Failure exists here; effort does not.

The second reason is that effort without external success is invisible from the outside. For example, there are 13 million artist profiles on Spotify. Roughly 80% have fewer than 50 monthly listeners.

Does their lack of fame and success mean that these artists haven't tried? Of course not. Many of them put all that they have into music, but haven't seen results. Still, their accounts alone are not proof of effort either, because just as many artists have barely tried.

For another example, take two students: one who studies for weeks and another who doesn't attend the class. Exam day rolls around, and both fail. The first student tried, but just looking at their attempt, you wouldn't know that.

The truth is no one can tell who tried and who didn't just from the attempt alone. You don't see which artist wakes up and practices and which ones sleep in. You don't see those who agonize over their lyrics and those who get them from AI. Their effort, or lack thereof, is invisible.

However, in both examples, you could tell who tried and who didn't. The ones who tried are going to do way better; you can probably tell who is giving it their all and who is doing it for a bet by listening to one song. Even if both students fail, the one who studied probably got more right or at least learned something.

However, this reinforces my claim. Of course you can tell who tried and who didn't. Those who didn't try failed to make art that you care about, while those who did succeeded. The students who didn't study failed to learn, while the student who did succeeded.

In the end, the phrase "failure is proof that you're trying" only works when the absence of visible, external success means the absence of success altogether, and that is not true.

The only proof of effort is success, but success isn't just the final goal, because you succeed every time you make progress. If you've given it your best effort, look for your successes, even the small ones. Because failing does not mean you tried.

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