



Episode 1,024: Larry Sharpe on Politics, Race, the LP, and Winning

Guest: Larry Sharpe

WOODS: I was really glad to meet you at the Mises Institute 35th anniversary event in New York a few weeks ago, and since then, I've been reading more about you to get to know about you to get ready to talk to you here and it sounds to me like you have a fairly interesting story, but I have a funny feeling I've only scratched the surface of it. So what's your background?

SHARPE: Well, it's a great question and people often ask me, "Where did you come from?" And the reality of it is I'm relatively new to the liberty movement. 2012 is when I really first became a member, and it's because I heard Gary Johnson speak. I was kind of lost when it came to politics in general. And I then realized when I heard Gary Johnson speak there was something different. And from then, I began to attend meetings and see people here in Manhattan and Queens. I live in Queens and I work in Manhattan here in New York City. And I joined the parties and I became a bit more active as a member of the liberty movement, and I learned a lot. I was relatively ignorant to the details.

But the one good thing was, in my actual personal business – I'm a consultant as a day-to-day job – I was teaching many of the same things. When leaders would come to me and say, *Larry, how can I get my people to be more innovative?*, the last thing I would say is, *You know, iron fist, Bob. That's the answer. Iron fist.* I would always say, give them more freedom to fail and to succeed, and those who are hiding behind the bureaucracy will now be found out and you can either correct them or get rid of them, and those who are waiting to soar will actually soar. Freedom is the way to get your people to give you what you actually need from them.

So when I started to hear the liberty message, it was something I was already teaching in college, I was already teaching to my business associates, already teaching to my customers. So it was a very natural fit for me.

My actual personal background: I'm born and raised in New York City. I'm a New Yorker, clearly. I was adopted as a youngster. My parents in the '60s – I was born in '68. My parents in the '60s, my birth parents didn't think that their family would accept a biracial baby. My birth father was black and my birth mother was white. And so I was adopted luckily three weeks later, adopted by a family that happened to be biracial also. Back in the '60s in, you know, progressive New York, you still had to be adopted by race. I know it sounds kind of awkward, but that's the way it was. I'm glad it's not that way now.

So once I was adopted, I was raised in both Manhattan and the Bronx. My adopted mother and father divorced when I was two, so I lost my second father in my life when I was two. And then she kind of took up with another man who raised me until I was 11, and that's when he died of cancer. All through military men. My birth father was in the Navy. My adopted father was in the Army, and the man who raised me was in the Air Force. So of course when I was 17, I joined the Marine Corps and I completed circle. So we have all four branches in my family.

17 years old, I joined the Marine Corps because I was unhappy at home, searching for positive male role models, and I found them in the Marine Corps. I know a lot of people don't like the military and I get that, but I will tell you something, for myself, it saved my life. It actually got me out of a bad situation and it really helped me to become more of a man, to understand responsibility, to understand leadership, and it helped me tremendously. And I'm a Cold Warrior. I joined in the '80s. My enemy wasn't Islam or the Muslims or Iraq or Afghanistan; my enemy was "Ivan." That was the guy that I was taught that I was supposed to hate. So I followed kind of that role for several years until I was about 23, 24.

I left the Marine Corps with a college degree, became an English teacher. Left that to become many sales jobs, because I realized I've got to make money somehow. How do you make money and sell stuff? I didn't have anybody kind of in my world to help me, to show me how to do that, so I did it on my own. I took many sales jobs for many years. Eventually set up my own business. That failed so I sold it off. Then I got another job and then started this business now that I've had now for about 13 years, consulting, training, teaching, leadership, sales, influence. And I've had that for 14 years now.

About a year and a half ago, when I saw that it was going to be Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, I realized now is the time to move. Now was when the liberty message can be heard better than ever. I know I can be a good messenger. So I decided I was going to go run for the party. I thought about running for president in 2016, but I realized everyone there had a higher profile than I had. Everyone, Johnson, Petersen, McAfee, they all had higher profiles than me. If I actually won the presidency, I'd actually wind up hurting the ticket, so why would I do that? So I thought instead I would run as the VP so I could enhance the ticket, hopefully help out whoever won and make a stronger ticket and a strong communications team. So I ran for the VP slot last year, Libertarian Party. Lost in May just barely by about 30 votes. And I've been supporting the party ever since.

I was worried that the party would have a problem after November and we would lose a lot of our momentum, so right after the election, I decided to try to become more of a leader in the party. I'm a member of the LNC, and I decided to kind of take charge and try to inherit all of that momentum. So I started to do that online, videos, YouTube. I've traveled to about nine different Libertarian Party conventions, kind of passing the word and saying, hey, it's time for us to start expanding, trying to grow. We've been winning arguments and losing elections for 40 years. Let's change that. And I said that I would run and I've been encouraging others to run so we can build out an infrastructure in this party that doesn't exist.

And so in July – July 12th, my birthday – I announced I was running for governor of New York State, and I am. And my campaign has taken off and it's doing relatively well so far. For a Libertarian candidate, I'm doing amazing, but my competitor, Andrew Cuomo, has about \$27 million in his pocket so I haven't touched him yet. So that's where I am now. What that a good-enough wrap up?

WOODS: That is indeed. Now, let me ask you, before you came into what we call the liberty movement, are you saying you had no really well articulated political views? I'm curious about if there was anything that you – was it a matter of you heard this message, you said, *Yeah, I guess that's kind of what I already believed?* Or did it challenge you in some way? Did it make you say, *You know what? Maybe I've been wrong about A, B, or C?*

SHARPE: Well, it's funny. Again, I'm a New Yorker, so I was raised in a very black-and-white family – also literally, but also politically. Literally a black-and-white family. It was, if you were a Democrat, you were golden, and if you were a Republican, you were evil. That's how I was raised as a kid, so that's what I assumed was true. I wasn't really active at all as a youngster. I didn't know politics that well, so I didn't know what was good or what was bad. I assumed that was true because my parents told me so.

Well, when I was 17 and joined the Marine Corps, the Marine Corps is a very conservative branch of the service, the most conservative one. And my first commander-in-chief was Ronald Reagan, so I kind of shifted more towards the right and I kind of considered myself more of a Republican as a young voter, and my first presidential vote was for George H.W. Bush. I think I was kind of more of a Republican as a teenager or as a youngster.

But then I didn't really think they were doing anything special either. I still saw terrible things happening. My mother got addicted to drugs as I was growing up as a teenager once my father passed away. First prescription and then eventually illegal. She was actually arrested and she was a convicted felon. So she struggled against the drug war for years until she died. So I wasn't a fan of the drug war or "Just say no," or any of those things, so I became kind of anti-Republican also.

When I heard Bill Clinton speak in the '90s, I thought maybe this guy is something special. I was kind of swayed by his ability to speak, so I thought maybe he's the guy. So I kind of started to follow him. I voted for him I think in '92. And then I realized he was just locking up my buddies and still fighting wars and he wasn't doing anything different than anybody else was either.

So I became very disenfranchised, and I think I was a Perot supporter in '96. I just became the "not these guys" supporter. I think I was Perot, and then I was a big Nader fan. Now, to be forward, I couldn't tell you at the time even one of Nader's policies. I didn't even know what the Green Party was. I just knew it wasn't a Republican or Democrat so I figured it was good. And that sounds very basic and simple, but to be forward, Tom, that's where I was. I was a guy who didn't pay much attention to national politics. I didn't like the Democrats or Republicans, so I thought the Green Party was good because it wasn't them, and that's why I liked Nader. So I supported him up into 2004, I believe.

That's kind of where I was, and I would vote anybody who wasn't Democrat or Republican. As a youngster, I often voted via mail ballot because I was overseas. When I got back to New York, every couple years I went to vote. Usually I voted in the even-numbered elections, usually, and then of course for mayor when that came up in New York City. So when I was voting there, I usually just voted whoever wasn't them. I voted Independent Party, Reform Party, just non-Democrat/Republican.

When I heard Obama speak in 2008, then I thought, *Wait a minute, this guy has got to be different*. Again, I was swayed by the rhetoric. I thought maybe this is the right guy. So I voted Obama in 2008 thinking he could actually be the change candidate. I bought the "hope and change." And then that wasn't different either. He was just Bush, Jr. so I realized that was useless also.

In 2012, I don't think I was going to vote, to be forward with you. I think I had given up. When I heard Johnson speak, it seemed to make sense, but I wasn't sold. I had been fooled twice before. I thought, you know what? No. This was the first time that I actually went to a political party. I actually went to a meeting. I had never gone before. I just wasn't that interested. But when Gary Johnson spoke, I thought, wait a minute, this seems to make some sense to me and I was intrigued.

But I wasn't sold. To be forward, Tom, I was not sold on libertarianism yet. But when I went to the actual meetings in both Queens and in Manhattan, I began to hear things that made sense and I was able to easily connect them to my personal life, the idea of just wanting to have freedom, the idea of force is a bad idea, the idea of volunteerism. I teach the idea of, when I'm talking about sales, the idea of not getting someone to sell something to somebody, to get them to want to buy; the idea of leading through getting buy-in from your leadership, getting people to want to follow you. The concept of volunteerism, the concept of libertarianism fit perfectly into my personal worldview.

So very quickly, I adopted it into my world. So upfront I wasn't, but when I began to hear what was happening, then I got it. Then I read – I think the first libertarian book I read probably was Bastiat's *The Law*. I think that was the first one. That connected with me perfectly. So I'd already read Ayn Rand before, so I already read *Atlas Shrugged*, so I kind of was in that world. I think Bastiat really solidified it for me. Did I answer that question well?

WOODS: Yeah, I think so, but I want to go back to something you said before. You mentioned addiction and the drug war and that it affected your family directly.

SHARPE: Personally.

WOODS: Yeah. So how do you connect the drug war with – I mean, even if there weren't a drug war, people would get addicted to drugs, so what is your connection between those two things?

SHARPE: Yeah, the issue is the reason why my mother struggled the last 20 or 30 years of her life was directly because of the drug war. My mother could not handle my father's death. She was an immigrant and she was alone, and when he died, his family

abandoned us. She was completely alone with a teenage boy who'd just lost his father. And when I say alone, she was completely alone, and it's hard for someone to accept that. So of course, her first issue was prescription drugs.

Now, the drug war allows the FDA and the government to decide what drug is good and what drug is bad, even though the more dangerous drug is clearly the FDA drug. It's not even close. It's clearly the case. Most of our addiction today that we know finally, 80% of it comes out of FDA-approved drugs. The idea of meth comes directly from the drug war making every other drug so expensive that now people decide to make a cheaper drug on their own and literally make poison. Half of Wall Street is on cocaine because that's a wealthy drug – of course I'm exaggerating with half. But then the poor community's all on meth, which is literally shooting poison into your veins.

My mother had to go to the illegal market to self-medicate. She couldn't go to – Now again, my mother was an immigrant from Europe, and in her day, you don't go to get help because that means you're bad or crazy, and you can't go to the cops because the cops will arrest you. How do I know that? My father was a cop, and when he was dying of cancer, his friends, who were also cops, took him out in squad cars and let him smoke marijuana that they had actually seized because they knew he was on chemotherapy. Now, that makes absolutely no sense to me whatsoever. These were cops. My father was a cop. Cops were giving him marijuana. It was illegal. They were arresting people and putting them in jail for marijuana. My mom knew this, so she couldn't go get help. If she were to go get help with her illegal drugs, she'd go to jail.

Well, eventually it happened anyway. She went to jail, convicted felon, and the worst part is, now she decided she was going to lie on all of her employment forms. Every time she applied for a job, she lied. Of course she did. The war on drugs hurts people, makes them lie, makes people liable for things they shouldn't be, makes people not want to give people a second chance. My mom for her entire life was just waiting for someone to walk in that door and go, "Hey, we found out you're a felon. You're fired." She was afraid of everything. She basically became trapped at every job she had. It doesn't matter how someone treated her. She had no choice.

So the war on drugs creates that. It makes everything worse. It ensures that we don't have a nation of second chances. And we're supposed to be that. We were a nation of the amateur. We were the nation of the guy or gal who failed and tried two or three times. We're the nation of the second son who couldn't survive in Europe and decided to come here and try something new. We lose that with the war on drugs. It just takes away all of our rights.

So personally – and this is obviously a personal issue – my mom eventually decided to start her own business because she had to. There was no way around it. She didn't want to be a slave to any employer and walk on eggshells her entire life. I don't know, did I go too far? Did that answer your question?

WOODS: No, that's an excellent answer. That's exactly what I was looking for. Well, we'll continue this conversation in just a minute after we thank our sponsor.

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All right, we just talked about the drug war for a minute. Now I want to ask you about something even more personal, which is the fact that you're biracial. And I'm curious about the perspective that that gave you, being raised as a biracial child and then into adulthood, and how it affects the way you speak to people in your political campaign.

SHARPE: Well, you know, it's generational, right? Being biracial, if you were born 10, 20 years ago and you're biracial, it's much different than me being born almost 50 years ago and being biracial. There's a couple things you have to realize. Even though I am biracial, most of America sees me as black. I don't mind that. I don't mind it. As a little kid, I was raised in a predominantly black neighborhood. As I got older, it was a predominantly white neighborhood. I don't really mind either way. Race is not that important to me in general. I speak to it when people ask me to speak about it. I'm proud of being biracial. I'm happy to be called black. I'm happy to be called – well, I'm hardly called white. Sometimes German, my mother was German, so I speak a little German so sometimes I identify as German. But I don't mind either way. It's fine in that regard.

The thing that you find being biracial is that I have a thicker skin when it comes to race. I've never felt like I was part of either side, if that makes any sense. I've never been considered fully black or fully white. And that's okay, but as a teenager, it can become tough. When you get older, you kind of deal with it. So I'm not sure it affects me that much. I'm not afraid of it. I take it on when people ask about it. I understand the trials and tribulations of being a person of color in America, and I also understand that I can't use that as a crutch and, at the same time, I shouldn't use it as an advantage. I should use it as whatever someone wants to call me. I don't know if that was a good enough answer, but it isn't that big of a deal to me.

WOODS: Now let's talk about the Libertarian Party just for a minute. I'm sure, given particularly that you're running for office at the moment, that you're not interested in commenting on what we might call the politics of the Libertarian Party, and I think my listeners are probably up to here with it. But I'm curious about what makes your campaign different from all the other ones we've heard of. I mean, it must be very discouraging to run as a Libertarian given the entrenched advantages of the other parties. Do you have a particular strategy you're pursuing?

SHARPE: Yeah, work really hard and get beaten up by my own people. That's my strategy. [laughing] I'm teasing but it's sadly true, often. Look, there's a reason why I'm running and it's not just to win. I really believe in my heart that the answer for our country is a third party and the answer is the Libertarian Party. I don't see the Republicans or Democrats making a shift towards the liberty movement at all. I know people often say the Republican Liberty Caucus, well, they're nice and I like them. They're not a real voting bloc. The victory we got with the RLC is we get to keep Obamacare. That's the victory? I'm not impressed. We need to have an actual voting bloc that will be able to cross the aisle, that will be able to really assert pressure on both sides of this aisle and to get people to realize there is a real difference. And it's not just my left boot or my right boot; there is an opportunity for freedom here.

If we're a voting bloc, then we can actually do things like, Hey, here's a bill that's going to lower taxes. Awesome. Maybe we can take out the part where it raises taxes for war. And all of a sudden now, we have an actual bill that can be passed. We can

actually have the bully pulpit and show people there are other answers. Right now, the average American, when they hear a problem, the first thing they think of is there should be a law. That has to change. Democrats and Republicans are not going to change that. Libertarians can and we only do it with the party.

So why am I going through this hell of running as a Libertarian? People have told me, "Larry, you should run as an Independent. You have a better chance of victory." "You should run as a Republican and then change." I disagree, and I disagree for an important reason. If I win as a Republican, I have changed nothing. If I run as an Independent, I can become Jesse Ventura and be forgotten. But if I win as a Libertarian, if I can turn New York gold, we can turn three or four states gold within four years. The upside of winning as a Libertarian is huge. The gamble is massive.

But not just that. Look, right now in New York State, I've got a base of about 175,000 people. Those are the people who voted Libertarian in the Johnson-Weld campaign. Those people, there's a good chance they're going to vote Libertarian again, so I'm considering them my base. When I have that as my base, there are about 18 million New Yorkers. About 12 million can vote. About 4 to 5 million will vote. That's how it works for the past 10, 15 years. If I can just take that one point, that 175,000 base, and triple it in the next 13 months – that's not impossible. It can be done. With that being done, I will break 10%. If I break 10% in New York State – we were ranked 50th in freedom. If I break 10% in New York State, that will shock the nation. It will show the nation you can win and run a real campaign as a Libertarian.

But more importantly, people will know that we exist and I will have the bully pulpit. I can now be the referee for the left and right in New York State. Democrats are supposed to be about civil liberties. They're not. They're supposed to be. Republicans are supposed to be about respecting the tax base. They're not. But I can make them. I can actually be the guy who says, "Why aren't you about these two things? Why aren't you holding to the principles that you should hold to?"

But more importantly than that, the people I have in my campaign, most libertarians can't raise money. I'm approaching six figures already as a Libertarian. Not as a Republican or an Independent, as a Libertarian. I'm approaching six figures already and I'm 13 months out. Not just that, I already have seven people on my executive team and over 50 volunteers who are working now already 13 months out. I am mobilizing people. And why does that matter? Over half of my people are not in my state, and that's on purpose. I'm building out the infrastructure this party needs. We need people who know how to get press, people who know how to raise money, people who know how to organize in our party. If we do that well with this campaign and others, others will copy. Over the next two, three four years, we'll build it out across state to state. When that begins to happen, someone else is going to win, actually win.

Now, can I win? Of course I can. If I can take that 500,000 and triple that to 1.5 million, I will be the governor of New York. Now, that's not Mount Everest. I get that. But it is possible to do if we organize well and actually get the vote out and get people to know who I am. Remember, about 8 million New Yorkers don't vote. If I can get half a million of those people off their couch and to voting, I have a shot at winning. Now, luckily, I'm known in the liberty movement, so that means people can come to me and help from other states. That's my advantage. I can bring people from other states to

help me. You know, in New York, it's going to be New Yorkers for the Democrats. For me, I have a chance to bring others in. If I bring others in, again, it builds that infrastructure.

And two or three or four years from now, we can do what I think is the absolutely right – the right tactics are the top of the ticket, in this case me, has to be somebody who has charisma, who can get press. I've already been to the press three or four times, all local, but again, I'm 13 months out, and people want me to come back. The top of the ticket has to take the press. There's the best chance of getting press with the least chance of victory, but if we can get press – and remember something. When we're in the press – and if anyone who's running is listening to me – the goal is not to get your message out. The goal is to get back in the press. I don't want to be heard one time. I want to be heard three, four, five, ten times. If they then get that I'm a real person, they will then hear my message. If I just get my message out, it is forgotten. So if I can do that well, push that press to the down ticket, the down ticket, which has relationship, can actually win. That is already happening in the party already. We are already winning at the local level. We are winning already in city councils. We're winning already. If we can keep that going, two or three years from now, we'll start winning at the state level. Three, four, five, six, seven years from now, we can win at the national level.

Now, I want you to imagine something, Tom. What if seven, eight years from now, all of a sudden we have one or two actual senators that are Libertarians? One or two elected Libertarians. One or two in seven or eight years. Imagine what would happen in our political world. All those liberty-leaning guys would jump onto our party in a heartbeat. They don't come to us now not because they don't like our ideas. Of course they like our ideas. We don't have a party right now, infrastructure that makes sense for them. They have a better infrastructure in the Republican or Democratic Party. I get that. When we build an infrastructure out – and the infrastructure is bodies, it's people who get it, people who know how to win and run campaigns – when we build that, they will come to us. We'll create that voting bloc and we'll change this nation. With just three to four senators, we can control the Senate.

And the best part is, over the next two or three years we'll do that at a local city level or local state level, and people will see that, you know what? When Libertarians control the state senate, the world doesn't end. When Libertarians control the city council, it's not the zombie apocalypse. In reality, we can actually have good stuff and good things without forcing government down our throats. We can actually devolve the government and still have happiness.

The thing I preach all the time, Tom, is that this movement is actually not about freedom and liberty. We say it all the time and we're wrong. It's not about that. Our movement is actually about the pursuit of happiness. That's what it's about. How do I get there? Through freedom and liberty. The reality is a lot of Americans don't want to be free. And I'm okay with that. No worries. If you don't want to be free, I'm good with that. Just I want you to be free to not be free. I want you to pick and choose. I want you to think and try and pursue happiness in your own way and be able to fail and get back up and try something else. I want everyone to do that.

If I ask you the question – and I'm using a quick plug. We have a New York City mayor candidate running, Aaron Comme, and he actually used this in one of his debates. He said, "Is there one thing that I could give you to make everybody happy?" And the answer obviously is no. There's not one thing. Happiness is different for every person. So what do we need? Freedom and liberty creates the pursuit of happiness. We won't all be happy and happiness will go up and down within our lives, but we as the movement have to understand, if we talk about freedom and liberty, the average American turns off.

If we talk about happiness, they will hear us. Instead of me talking about liberty and freedom, I talk about libertarian ideas, libertarian solutions to people's problems. That's what we want to talk about. This is about happiness. You go to the average person and say, "Don't you want to be free?" the average American says, "I went to work today. I'm free." They don't get it. You talk about liberty. The guy says, "What are you talking about? This is for, what? George Washington? Come on. Liberty was set 200 years ago. We're done." I don't want to talk about that. I want to talk about what really matters, and that's people pursuing happiness the way they want to pursue happiness.

WOODS: All right, let me ask you a more philosophical question, then.

SHARPE: That wasn't philosophical?

WOODS: Well, I mean in other words, having nothing to do with political strategy.

SHARPE: [laughing] Okay.

WOODS: If somebody, as you would concede, were to do nothing other than look over your voting history over the past 20 or 30 years, you'll concede it will look erratic to somebody. But now that you're in the liberty movement – it's not that long that you've been in it – can you say that you have completely embraced libertarianism in this short time, or is there any part of the philosophy that still gives you pause?

SHARPE: Hmm, loaded question but I'm happy to take it. The first thing is, the philosophy itself I completely embrace because I had already embraced it. I just didn't know I had. I'm exactly what people talk about, the idea of, you know, you're a libertarian; you just don't know it. So I embrace it completely. Are there aspects of it that I don't like or that I don't think is necessarily correct or realistic? You know, theoretically, in a theoretical idea, I wish we could move directly right away to a voluntary society. That would be awesome. I don't think it's realistic right now, and there are people who want it tomorrow.

What I'm most worried about is people who want change too fast, and I've learned this both in my personal life, in professional life, in political life. When you change things too quickly, people become afraid. When people are afraid, they make bad decisions again and again and again. Personal life, professional life, bad decision, bad decision because of fear. And when we look at the government, government very rarely – it does happen, but particularly in America, very rarely in America does government just randomly take away your rights. Almost always, we eagerly vote them away because

we're afraid. *Oh, I'm afraid. Strong man, please take my rights. Oh, I'm afraid. Yes, pass this law.* So I want to avoid fear and I want to avoid fast change and that makes some libertarians upset. I'm really about the government turning into a facilitator first before we start abolishing. I want us to facilitate the change that we need and begin to take the teeth out of the government and begin to facilitate the right change. So some libertarians disagree with that.

I was just on a live feed last night, and people were talking about the idea of, you know, do I agree with the alt-right coming in or the libertarian socialists coming into our party? And I've got to tell you, Tom, I'm okay with them all coming through. I'm okay with the fight that we have back and forth. I don't mind any type of libertarian. If we're all pointing in the right direction, I know it sounds kumbaya, but I guess then I'm kumbaya. I'm fine with that.

I'm okay with them coming in, and the reason I'm okay with it is because those who are really about force – and in my heart, I always say the same thing: government is force. It's what it is. It's force. If there is a problem or issue that is worthy of force, then we should consider law. If it's not worthy of force, why are we considering law? And a lot of people come to the Libertarian Party thinking we can just use the libertarian movement and Libertarian Party to enforce what I think is right. *See, my thing is right, so we'll enforce my idea of liberty.* And then we're going to have a conversation and we're going to have arguments. People are going to fight and we're going to look bad, look stupid. It's going to happen.

But I would rather us do that and move through this than be a warlord party, which is what the Democrats and Republicans are. They're both parties of the local warlord. Whoever's in charge, that's what Republicanism is. Right now, Republicanism is Trumpism. Is a Trump Republican a Bush Republican or a Reagan Republican? Of course not. They're different? Why? Because of the leader on top. Is an Obama Democrat the same as a Carter Democrat or a Clinton Democrat? Of course not. It depends upon the leader on top.

But the libertarian movement, the Libertarian Party is evolving, and it doesn't change because of the leader on top; it changes because of what we're actually doing. I mean, you at the Mises Institute, you're doing the same thing. You're bringing up ideas based upon how things change. So we're evolving and adjusting and shifting with what I think is real policy and real ideology. The reason why we fight so much is because we have an ideology. I can say – tomorrow I can declare, "I'm leader of the party tomorrow." I can declare that if I want to, and it will mean nothing. People will still get mad at me, fight at me, insult. We'll still argue. I can win the presidency tomorrow and I still wouldn't be leader of the party. And I'm okay with that. I'm actually happy about that.

I talk about in my leadership training all the time. A good leader isn't the guy with all the answers. A good leader is the guy or gal with all the right questions. A good leader is not someone who is the smartest guy in the room. A good leader is someone who makes smart people even smarter. I want to make sure that the party is being led by a real ideology. And I'm happy that we fight. I accept them all in. Those who actually will want to turn us into a party of "force my opinion down your throat," they're going to leave.

I was on an NPR show in upstate New York I guess about two months ago, and it was about the alt-right. And one of the guys was saying, you know, Hey, you know, the alt-right comes out of the Libertarian Party. And I said, No, they go through the Libertarian Party. Not from. They all come out of Republicans, right? They come out of the Republican Party. They go to the Libertarian Party, and they stay for a while because we don't immediately throw them out, because we actually hear them. We talk to them. We have an actual argument back and forth. And they think, Wait a minute. I have a chance here. I can control this party. Then they realize they can't, and they leave and they go back to either their own party or they go back to the Republicans again. That happens often.

But the good thing is, as the 10 people come through, we keep two or three of them. I'm a big fan of that guy; I think his name is Daryl Davis. That's the guy who was the brother or the black guy who has gotten KKK members to turn. He's gotten them to become his friend, and he collects their sheets as his trophy. He's gotten like 30 KKK members to turn. You can't turn people who don't hear you, so I'm happy to have them. I want to talk – I can't turn people who think the answer's government unless they hear me and I talk to them. I want to talk to them.

Consistently I hear, This guy's bad; he's a fascist. This guy's bad; he's a socialist. This guy's bad; he's a this. These are our brothers and sisters. There are literally millions of Americans who are eagerly voting our rights away every year. We can't just call them names and kick them to the curb. We have to draw them in, because this way they can undo the votes they've been doing for the past 40, 50, 100 years. so I don't want to just call them names and push them to the side, even within the party.

People always tease me and say, Larry, you're trying to be friends with everyone. Yes. Yes. I want them to come. Look, if you want to make anarchy tomorrow or you want to make anarchy in 10 years, 20 years, 100 years – if we're facing freedom, we're facing the same way, I'm on your side. I'm on your side. I call this the – I bring it from business, obviously, the 80/20 rule. Maybe you'll have heard of that principle. If I believe in what you're talking about, if we agree 80% of the time and we only disagree 20% of the time, I can support you 100% of the time. If you're facing freedom, we're on the same page. This country is facing towards oligarchy and marching there are breakneck speed. I just want to turn it around.

And to my more ideologically pure libertarians, you have two choices. You can fight me, which many of you do and that's fine. Or as I start bringing the masses in – which I am bringing more of the masses in – you can do me a real favor, do me a solid and turn them. Help me teach them, coach them. When people come into the Libertarian Party, they very often don't know what we're about. They just think, Oh, they're better Republicans or better Democrats, they often believe. And that's fine. Don't get mad at them. Be happy they're here. Talk to them and turn them. Always remember this: the most zealous are the converted. If we can convert that guy who used to think, you know, Bernie was the answer, that guy's our next state chair. That guy's running the next local party. He's running for office in two years as an L.

So yes, what I've found in politics so often, which you know, Tom, is a lot of short-term thinking. I am not a short-term thinker. I am a long-term thinker. I'm playing a long game here. This is a 7-to-11-year plan for me, for the party. This is not just about

me winning next year. I want to win next year, but here's what I know: the liberty movement made a turn last year. A lot of people were upset with 2016. I'm not. It was a good turn for us. We got the biggest turn we ever had. We're turning. The next time is a tipping point. I don't know when that happens.

I hope it's me next year. If I win New York State next year, I'm promising you this country will turn in three to four years. This will be a sea change. If we turn New York gold, we'll turn the nation gold. If I don't win next year but I make impact, that still turns. It gets us even more embraced in the mainstream media. It gets me able to use the bully pulpit to talk even more. More people will win and that tipping point will come in 2020 or 2022 or 2024. But when that tipping point comes, we will turn this nation in the right direction. I hope I answered your question.

WOODS: Larry, what's your website?

SHARPE: It's LarrySharpe.com, Sharpe with an E. E makes it special.

WOODS: [laughing] All right, so LarrySharpe –

SHARPE: But you can also go to my Facebook page too, if you want to. It's Larry Sharpe for New York, the Facebook page.

WOODS: All right, so I'm going to link to both of those things, LarrySharpe.com – with an E – LarrySharpe.com and the Facebook page at TomWoods.com/1024, which is our episode number of today. Well, Larry, best of luck in what you're doing. I lived in New York for 12 years and I love being there. Every chance I get, I get back there and I absolutely love it. Even though it has many problems and there are a lot of people there who disagree with me, it's still – I'm going to sound like I'm from Disney World – it's a magical place.

SHARPE: [laughing]

WOODS: It's a wonderful place, okay? I'm going to say it. I'm going to say it. So I hope you do well and I hope you spread the message there. Thanks so much.

SHARPE: Thanks for having me.