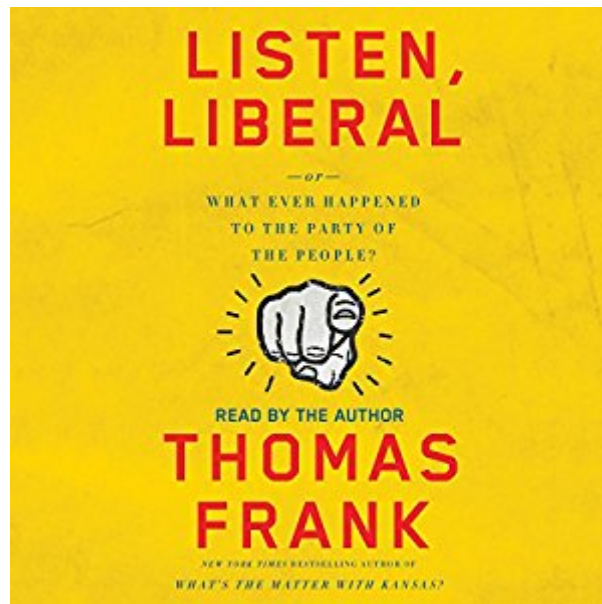


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Listen, Liberal: Or, What Ever Happened To The Party Of The People?



Synopsis

From the best-selling author of *What's the Matter with Kansas*, a scathing look at the standard-bearers of liberal politics - a book that asks: What's the matter with Democrats? It is a widespread belief among liberals that if only Democrats can continue to dominate national elections, if only those awful Republicans are beaten into submission, the country will be on the right course. But this is to fundamentally misunderstand the modern Democratic Party. Drawing on years of research and first-hand reporting, Frank points out that the Democrats have done little to advance traditional liberal goals: expanding opportunity, fighting for social justice, and ensuring that workers get a fair deal. Indeed, they have scarcely dented the free-market consensus at all. This is not for lack of opportunity: Democrats have occupied the White House for 16 of the last 24 years, and yet the decline of the middle class has only accelerated. Wall Street gets its bailouts, wages keep falling, and the free-trade deals keep coming. With his trademark sardonic wit and lacerating logic, Frank lays bare the essence of the Democratic Party's philosophy and how it has changed over the years. A form of corporate and cultural elitism has largely eclipsed the party's old working-class commitment, he finds. For certain favored groups, this has meant prosperity. But for the nation as a whole, it is a one-way ticket into the abyss of inequality. In this critical election year, Frank recalls the Democrats to their historic goals - the only way to reverse the ever-deepening rift between the rich and the poor in America.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There is one (horrifying) theme in Listen Liberal. It is that the Democratic Party has betrayed its natural constituency of labor, and is constantly trying (and succeeding) to outrun Republicans by doing more damage to the social structure than Republicans profess, thus stealing their thunder. It has become Democratic thinking that the common people are at last being treated as they deserve to be. They do it with "professionals". Frank has filled this entire book with evidence of this one point. The difference between Republicans and Democrats ain't what it used to be, according to Frank. The Democrats have decided to put all their eggs in one basket: professionals. They staff their offices with them, just like the Republicans use only lawyers from the Federalist Society. Their backers are Wall Streeters, because the Democrats are at least as generous to Wall Street as the Republicans when in power. For the wealthy, it's a win-win. Doesn't matter who gets in. So while Republicans consider their base the uneducated, bootstrap entrepreneurs who create jobs, the Democrats consider their base the highly educated, networked professionals who create jobs. Two sides of the same coin. And neither one can be bothered with the rest of the population except when vote-gathering. Then, for a brief period, it's all about inequality and jobs. Frank focuses on the last two Democratic presidents, Clinton and Obama, and the upcoming contender "Hillary Clinton. He autopsies their administrations (and Hillary's part in them) and finds them all the same "mouthing platitudes to gain votes from the electorate, then reverting to type and removing any and all support for them so they can to deliver on promises made to the rich.

I once heard Bruce Springsteen say that, as a young person, he had asked his mother why their family were Democrats. His mother replied, "because Democrats are for the working people." I have been voting since 1984 and I have to look back over these thirty-odd years and admit to myself that Mrs. Springsteen's assessment hasn't been true in all that time. Of course, the Republicans certainly haven't been for the working people either. Oh, both parties give plenty of lip service to what they believe the working people want to hear. The Democrats play "identity politics" and the Republicans counter with "culture wars." And this has worked to a certain extent for both parties, particularly in presidential elections for the Democrats and in mid-term elections for the Republicans. But, in fact, neither party cares to address the lingering and worsening problems of the people who make up the majority of the economy and the country. The Republicans offer "trickle down" economics and the Democrats counter with "trickle-down-with-patches." Oh well, at least the Democrats have cared enough to hand out those band aids, but after a while, and especially after the financial and economic catastrophe of 2008, it's time to admit that not one more patch is going

to fix this game. The game is a lemon, it doesn't work! In order to regain true health, our economy needs a new approach, one that gives great consideration to the needs of working people. And to get that it will need a political party that actually represents this majority of the electorate.

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