



Jonathan Van Ness' Advice For The 2018 Midterms Is Focused On One Big Thing – EXCLUSIVE

BY [LILLI PETERSEN](#) | 3 MONTHS AGO |

**ZERO SUGAR.
ZERO SUGARCOATING.**

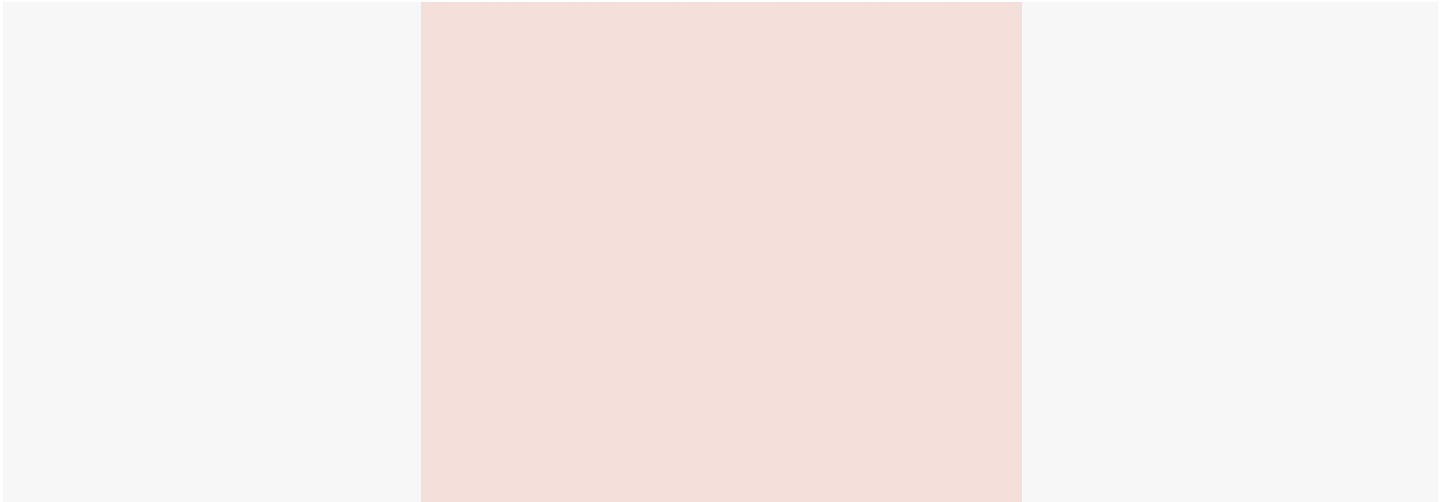
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Your favorite hair-grooming-and-self-care-guru isn't just focused on making you a better person, but making the world a better place. It's no secret to anyone who follows *Queer Eye*



the week before the election. And yes, you can believe that [Jonathan Van Ness' advice for the 2018 midterms](#) is focused on some big issues.



For Van Ness, the big issues heading into Election Day on Nov. 6 aren't the high-profile races, but rather, the local ones. The *Queer Eye* star and podcast host is giving his focus to down-ballot races and state legislatures, he tells me in an interview with Elite Daily at Lipton Tea's Stress Less Monday event on Oct. 29. "[Attorney generals](#) and state legislatures," he says. "I'm really, really fired up about it."

"State legislatures are a place that Republicans have really used effectively to not only gain power but keep it," he says, citing the [issue of voter suppression](#) and non-representative demographics in state legislatures, which are responsible for creating and passing [laws at the state level](#). According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), as of October 2018, a whopping [two-thirds of state legislatures are controlled by Republicans](#), even though only 56 percent of seats are held by Republicans. In 25 states, Republicans hold control of both the state legislature and the governor's office. "I would definitely say, keep your eyes on the down-ballot initiatives, know who's running for your attorney generals, know who's running for your state legislatures," Van Ness advises.



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jvn



and death hunny. The NRA is spending 7 figures to push thru Kavanaugh & the Trump administration is diverting money from cancer & AIDS research to cage families. Get it Queens & get it hard.



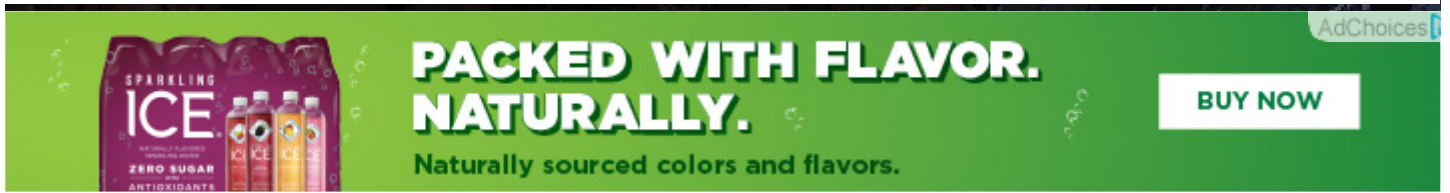
With a week and change to go before the election, Van Ness is wearing his heart on his sleeve – or at least, his politics on his nails. When we sit down to chat, one of the first things I notice is that his nails read "Vote Yes On 3" in bright blue letters – and of course, I have to ask if it's in reference to [Massachusetts' Question 3 on the 2018 midterm ballot](#), a veto referendum on whether to uphold a law prohibiting discrimination against transgender individuals. "Yes on 3 is like, 'yes on your rights, yes on your rights!'" he says, energetically clapping his hands to the rhythm of the words. He calls the referendum, which would repeal a state law prohibiting discrimination in public spaces such as bathrooms, public transportation, businesses, and other public areas, a "dangerous blueprint" for other states and conservative groups to challenge trans rights. The law, he says, protects "trans people's rights to public spaces, basically to exist in public spaces that we take for granted all the time as cis[gender] people."

"It really is a very dangerous [measure], and it's something that has to be beaten and it really shouldn't even be there in the first place," he says.



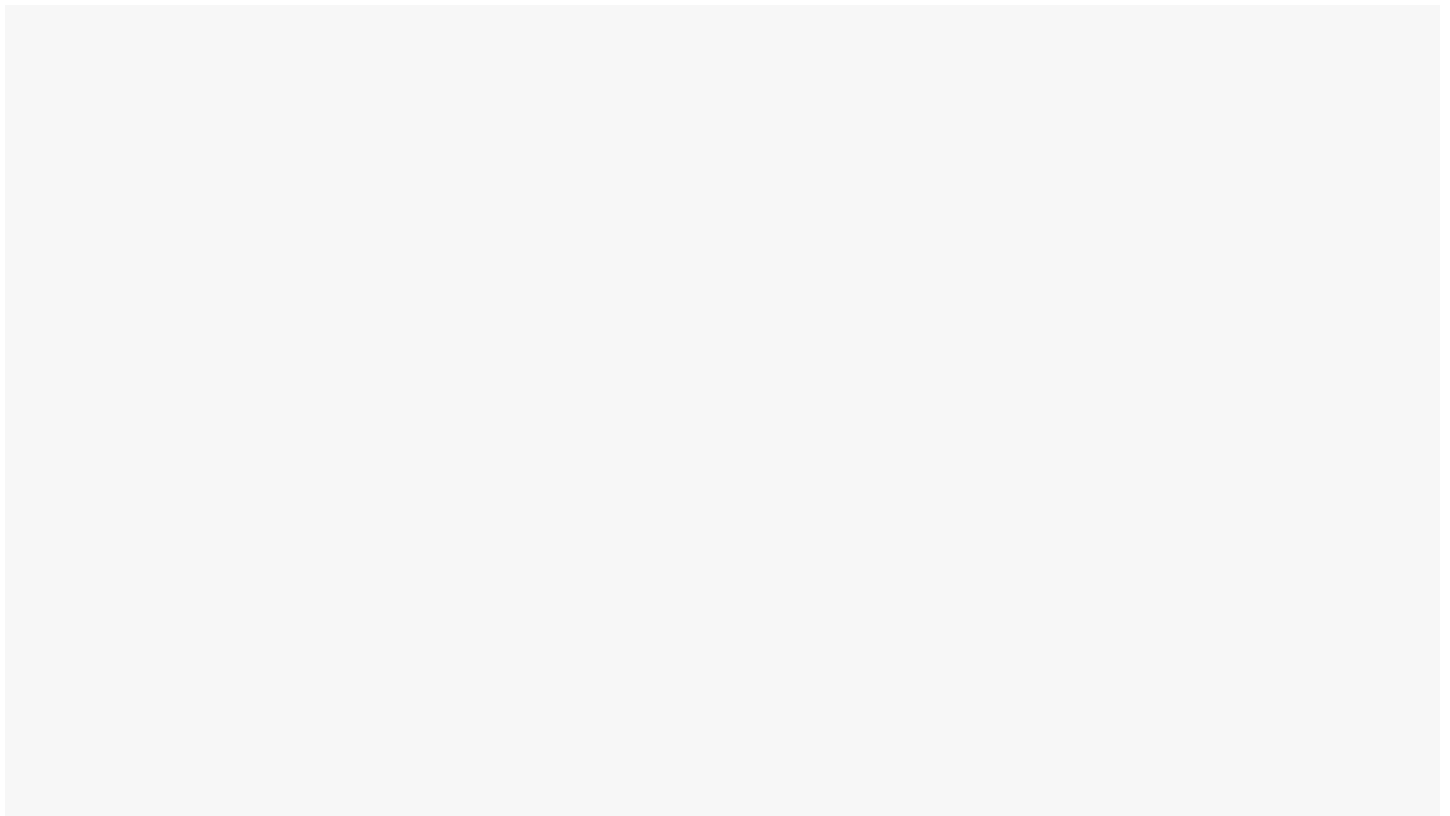
Thanks @nailsbyme I stan my political nail realness

Hey Massachusetts!! Vote Yes on 3 next Tuesday - #transrightsarehumanrights



Van Ness is also currently promoting Lipton's Stress Less Tea, which is fortunate because, let's be honest, no matter how much you care about an issue, being deeply invested in politics can be wearing. "A lot of times I think people forget how far we've come in such a short amount of time, and that requires patience," he tells me, referencing the need to acknowledge negotiation and compromise. "That's why self-care and wellness are so... I'm so connected to them, and they are so important to me," he says. He adds that he carves out time for things like brief "morning mindfulness moments" every day.

"To be able to normalize and talk about wellness, to talk about stress and relieve it and be able to talk about it over a cup of tea and be able to connect with people no matter what your political beliefs are, I love that," he continues. "It's important to get these ideas to as many people as you can, because the calmer you are, the more aware you are of irrational, idiot ideas."





Because yes, what you do matters. "Does money help make the world go round? Yes, absolutely," he says. "But really, it's your time and your connection."

I'll drink to that. See you at the polls, JVN.



ROBIN MARCHANT/GETTY IMAGES; FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES



Support – EXCLUSIVE

BY [KELLI BOYLE](#) | 3 WEEKS AGO | [f](#)



Do your friends tell you you're "celeb obsessed"? Do you follow your favorite celebs' every move? Know their Instagram histories so well that you can rattle off their inner circle by name and IG handle? If yes, Elite Daily's new series, [SideClique](#), is just for you. We're bringing you everything you've ever wanted to know about the people living their lives right alongside our favorite celebs.

Todrick Hall has some famous friends and co-workers. His YouTube channel (which has close to 3 million subscribers) has gotten him worldwide recognition and into the room where it happens with the likes of Beyoncé and Taylor Swift. He choreographed Beyoncé's "Blow" music video after she saw some of his own videos, and his friendship with Taylor Swift got him a featured cameo in the "Look What You Made Me Do" music video. [Todrick](#)



Hall and I are on the set of his "Glitter" music video when we sit down to chat about his career. He had already met T. Swift by the time he starred as Lola in *Kinky Boots* on Broadway in 2016, but it was during this stint in Harvey Fierstein and Cindy Lauper's Tony-winning show that his friendship with the "Delicate" singer really solidified.



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THAT SHE'S GIVEN ME FOR THE BOYS THAT I'VE DATED.

"When I moved to New York, I went out to eat with her when I was doing *Kinky Boots*," Hall tells Elite Daily, "and I had done shows in New York before, but it had been so many years and I felt like I had lost my friend circle. And so I was so happy that she was [living in New York]." Hall says their friendship was a casual one, so he didn't expect her to come see him in the Broadway show.

"She said that she was going to come and see the show and I was like, I'm never going to ask her to come and see it again because I know she's busy, I don't want to pressure her. And she just showed up to the show one day." He says Swift not only saw the show, but she stayed for two hours after meeting, speaking, and taking pictures with everyone in the cast and crew. From then on, he knew he had a solid friend in her.



Hall reveals that, like many on the internet, he believed Swift's niceness was just a front she put on for her famous persona. But he maintains that niceness still holds true in their personal and professional relationships.

"Huge things will happen and she'll be like, 'OK, great. This is what we have to do, this is what the universe has given us, this is what we're faced with. How are we going to fix this?' I would love to handle my minor issues the way that she handles some of her huge issues that billions of people are going to see and judge." He doesn't hint as to what any of those "huge issues" he's talking about are, but her public beef with [Kim Kardashian and Kanye West](#) comes to mind, as well as incessant tabloid coverage of her past relationships.



"I think that one thing that I really love about her is she has been burned by a lot of people," Halls continues, "and you would think in a lot of ways that she would be totally OK with being a princess locked in a tower that nobody was able to enter. But she's willing to get back up again and trust people again, which is a very scary thing when you're somebody in that position."

Hall has proven himself to be a loyal friend to Swift as well, going to bat for her frequently [against Kanye West](#).

When Swift finally voiced her political opinions in what the internet felt was a long overdue Instagram post, Hall posted on Instagram as well, showing his pride in her decision.



He explained in the lengthy caption that Swift being so guarded for so long about her political beliefs was part of the reason he kept their friendship casual at first. He echoes the same sentiment in our conversation.

Referencing her complete lack of a public political stance over the years, Hall tells me, "She has such power that I don't even think she realizes how much of an affect it would have on people."

He continues, "I was explaining to her that, as a gay person, I didn't know for sure how you felt about gay people and I was a little bit nervous to talk to you about my love life or whatever." And he recognizes the criticism she would receive for not voicing her political opinions before the 2016 presidential election.

Many people justifiably feel that Swift, with such a powerful influence over newly 18-year-old potential voters, could have done much more political advocacy in 2016 than just posting a picture of herself with an "I Voted" sticker. When you have a platform as large as Swift's, it's easy to see how not using said platform in a tumultuous political time would garner heavy criticism. Some of that criticism, Hall says, was pointed at him as well.



"Sometimes, people would give me flack online that she wasn't doing certain things," he tells me. "I love the fact that she has grown and evolved in her own time, as every artist has to do." He continues, "It can be very scary to potentially risk your career or your reputation to stick your neck out for something when you don't have to do it. You don't have to stand up for gay rights, you don't have to voice your opinion, and you'll sell the same amount of records. But somebody who truly cares about the way this country is falling apart and will take it upon themselves to use their voice to do something – that, I believe, is just the right thing to do."

She did that when she officially endorsed [democratic candidates running in Tennessee elections in 2018](#) (and there was a [massive surge in voter registration](#) as a result). But Hall recognizes this was overdue. But Hall knew that being a good friend meant supporting her decision, regardless of how late it was.

So when Kanye West tweeted that he was ["distancing" himself from politics](#), Hall couldn't help but laugh (and call the rapper out on Twitter).

"Well well well Miss @kanyewest," he said, "while I'm thrilled that you claim to have hopped off the Trump train, I cannot help but bask in the irony that you are now 'distancing yourself from politics' while the girl everybody was dragging is now promoting a blue candidate like it's her job." Look what you made him do, Kanye! Elite Daily reached out to West's team for comment on Hall's tweets, but did not hear back by the time of publication.



All tea and shade aside, Hall tells me that Swift is one of those friends who is basically a therapist for him, and vice versa.

"I feel like I owe her money for the amount of therapy that she's given me for the boys that I've dated," Hall quips. He reveals that he hasn't always approved of her past relationships either, although he stays tightlipped on just which of her famous exes he's referring to. (Booooo.)



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"I think that it's easy to be surrounded with a lot of 'yes' people," he says, "but with Taylor, there was somebody that she was dating that I didn't necessarily approve of and I was definitely very honest with her about how I felt about it. She just would always be like, 'Thank you so much for your honesty.'"

Throughout their entire friendship, however, they never had the chance to work together. That is, until Swift asked him to be in the ["Look What You Made Me Do" music video](#).



YouTube

"I feel like it is the most expensive music video that's ever been created in history," Hall jokes.

Outside of working with his bestie on the video, Hall says it was a wonder to see director Joseph Kahn at work on the video. Kahn has directed a large number of Swift's videos in the past, including most of the videos from *Reputation*. The biggest were "Look What You Made Me Do" and "...Ready For It?" both of which Hall was on set. To perform in the former, and just observe the latter.

"It was amazing to watch [Joseph Kahn] work and to see everything," Hall says, adding, "I was also on the set of '...Ready For It?' to watch that as well. And it was just really, really awesome and to be able to hear the song and to see the sets. I make videos for a living, but to see the budget of how these sets were built and how amazing they look, it was just insane. I had never seen anything like that before in my life."

He brings up his choreography for Beyoncé on the "[Blow](#)" music video as a comparison. Beyoncé's self-titled surprise album was famously more low-budget than some of her other videos because it was being kept as such a huge secret, so seeing Swift's massive budget for her *Reputation* videos was an eye-opener.

"When I did the video with Beyoncé, we went to a location, a roller skating rink, and that's where we did it, so that was the aesthetic of that video," he explains, "But I've never been somewhere where they built an entire world and a cemetery and a thrown and all these things. It was just really crazy to see it and to be a part of it was just really, really awesome."



"Taylor Swift doesn't have to ever dance," he, a professional dancer, says. "She'll still sell the same amount of tickets. She just *loves* to dance." She danced alongside Hall in the "Look What You Made Me Do" video, and Hall sees it as a huge moment of pride. He tells me, "She was scared at first, she was for sure nervous. But once we saw the playback and I was like, 'You look amazing,' she just kept going in more and more and more and more. Every single time, she'd give it more energy, more performance, and now I see her dancing in [the *Reputation* stadium tour] more than she's ever danced before. And I'm just so proud of her."