

CHOOSE CIVILITY Moments

The National Civility Center defines the following principles as being imperative to a civil society. Do you practice them on a daily basis? Have you ever discussed these thoughts with others. How will you choose civility today? “The Principles of Engagement are guideposts for attracting collaborators and establishing relationships among them.

View everyone in positive terms.

Seeing everyone as a potential resource and agent of change helps to level the playing field and engage all stakeholders.

Develop a common language.

The language we use can either unite or divide people. How can we discuss change if we don’t understand each other? Being aware of the problem, and agreeing on the terms to be used, is a good start.

Build strong relationships and trust.

It is impossible to overstate the importance of trust, which builds bridges across boundaries and makes relationships solid.

Remember our shared humanity.

It is easy to forget we are all humans, with more commonalities than differences. Common sense and history tell us we can work together to solve common concerns—and that when we separate ourselves, we are less effective.

Value both the process and the results.

The gap between the two causes many people to give up on collaboration. Results-oriented people need actions with observable outcomes, and process-oriented people focus on continuing the methods that drive the action. Both are crucial for improving communities.

Look both within and outside the community for guidance.

People living in communities need to take responsibility for their problems and find actions that will address them. But we also need to recognize when to accept and use resources that are available from outside of the community. All resources need to be leveraged around a healthy attitude toward self-improvement.” **National Civility Center at www.civilitycenter.org**



1. First, do no harm. Your words have consequences – be sure they are the right ones.
2. Do not babble. Know what you want to say and say it.
3. If you do not know what you are talking about, stop talking.
4. Focus more on informing people than impressing them. Use everyday language.
5. Never say anything you are not willing to see printed on tomorrow’s front page.
6. Never lie. You won’t get away with it.
7. Don’t make promises you cannot keep.
8. Don’t use “no comment.” You’ll look like you have something to hide.
9. Don’t get angry. When you argue with the media, you always lose. And lose publicly.
10. Don’t speculate, guess, or assume. When you don’t know something, say so.

Taken from: “Communicating in a Crisis, Risk Communication Guidelines for Public Officials”, Washington State Department of Health, 2002.

Handout provided by Student Judicial Affairs 210-458-4720 — www.utsa.edu/osja



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Civil Discourse is about being able to show respect for others. When discussing topics use “I” statements, when you are unsure, clarify what you heard, respectfully hear and listen to differing points of view. It is important to realize that what you say and what people understand you to have said may be different and recognize that people can disagree. Always speak for yourself not others.

<http://uspolitics.tribe.net/>

“Recognize a person’s right to advocate ideas that are different from your own, discuss policies, politics, issues and ideas, not people and disagree without being disagreeable.”

<http://groups.msn.com/WhatsNews/civildiscourse.msnw>

Civility in the Classroom

The academic classroom is a place that we depend on to be engaging and full of different ideas. We expect debate, discourse and disagreement. We, do not, as students expect video games, cell phones, distractions and controlling conversations. In our technology driven society it is important to respect each other by providing them with the classroom experience they deserve. You can’t do that while you talk your phone call. If you are currently experiencing incivilities in the classroom, please notify your professor or contact Student Judicial Affairs at 210-458-4720. Troublesome behavior in your classroom may be classified as anything that disturbs you or your students during the class period. Here are a few examples of troublesome behavior you may have experienced in your classroom:

- ◆ cellular phones, beepers
- ◆ challenges to your authority, demanding special treatment (“I paid for this...” mentality)
- ◆ eating or drinking in the classroom
- ◆ excessive tardiness/leaving the lecture early
- ◆ making offensive remarks
- ◆ adverse reaction to missing deadlines
- ◆ prolonged chattering
- ◆ sleeping
- ◆ talking out of turn
- ◆ dominating discussions
- ◆ shuffling backpacks and notebooks
- ◆ use of electronics for entertainment during class

Pledge today to not distract your fellow students, and pledge today to accept the responsibility to improve your community.

Learning Communities today are increasingly diverse and global. It is wise to establish criteria that encourages openness to wide ranging viewpoints.

- ◆ All should respond to contrasting viewpoints in a respectful manner.
- ◆ Guide classroom dialogue so that all opinions are valued and no viewpoint dominates. Taken from *Civility in the Classroom*, UTSA Brochure available from Student Judicial Affairs, www.utsa.edu/osja

UTSA How Will You Choose Civility Today?

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