

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 do not 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 will not get away with it.
7. Do not make promises you cannot keep.
8. Do not use “no comment.” You will look like you have something to hide.
9. Do not get angry. When you argue with the media, you always lose. And lose publicly.
10. Do not speculate, guess, or assume. When you do not 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 Conduct and Community Standards 210-458-4720 —www.utsa.edu/conduct

UTSA **How Will You Choose Civility Today?**

Civil Discourse is about being able to:

- Recognize a person's right to advocate ideas that are different from your own
- Show respect for others
- Discuss policies and ideas, not people
- Use helpful not hurtful language
- Agree to listen. Respectfully hear and listen to differing points of view
- When unsure, clarify what you heard
- Recognize that people can agree to disagree
- Realize that what you say and what people understand you to have said may be different
- Speak from experience

(source: <http://uspolitics.tribe.net> as of 6/5/14)

Civility in the Classroom

The academic classroom is a place 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 cannot do that by taking your phone call. If you are currently experiencing incivilities in the classroom, please notify your professor or contact Student Conduct and Community Standards 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:

- Use of cellular phones and other electronic devices not authorized by the instructor
- Challenges to your authority, demanding special treatment ("I paid for this..." mentality)
- Eating and 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

Pledge today to not distract your fellow students and 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 Conduct and Community Standards, www.utsa.edu/conduct

UTSA How Will You Choose Civility Today?