



CIVIL DISCOURSE ACTIVITY

Rose Frech



First, some facts...

- Research shows that both offline and online, we mostly discuss political issues with people who agree with our point of view.
- During the past campaign, 81 percent polled by Pew report that Trump and Clinton supporters not only disagree about policy but can't agree on basic facts.
- 77 percent of Americans believe that the country is split in terms of “the most important values”
- 85 percent believe the country is more deeply divided than in recent years
- According to Gallup, most Americans (44 percent) consider themselves Independents, as opposed to Ds (25 percent) or Rs (28 percent)



NEIGHBORLY DISCOURSE OF TODAY...

SHOW SOME CIVILITY!

NO, YOU SHOW SOME CIVILITY!

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Civil Discourse....

- What is this?
- Why does it matter?
- How has this impacted your life?
- What about civil discourse on campus?
- In a perfect world, how would we engage with people who think differently from us?
- Should we?

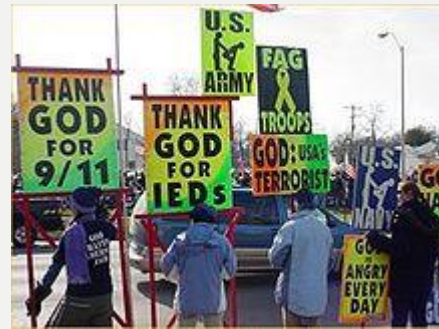
What about being civil with those who promote hate?

- Should people have a right to hate speech?
- Is this protected by the First Amendment?
- Should we continue to be civil in the face of ideas that are hateful/harmful?
- New research shows that many people use free speech arguments only when it is convenient to support their position.
 - *Study participants “who are high in racial prejudice pull out free-speech arguments to defend inflammatory speech when it's racist but not when the inflammatory speech has nothing to do with race.”*
 - <http://www.npr.org/2017/09/08/549373754/study-looks-at-how-people-think-about-free-speech>

Black Lives Matter



Westboro Baptist Church



VIDEO: Why I left...



Civility Takes Work!

“Civility means a great deal more than just being nice to one another. It is complex and encompasses learning how to connect successfully and live well with others, developing thoughtfulness, and fostering effective self-expression and communication. Civility includes courtesy, politeness, mutual respect, fairness, good manners, as well as a matter of good health.”

– Pier Massimo Forni – founder of Civility Project at Johns Hopkins

The basics matter too!

“Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind.” –Henry James

Let's form two groups who disagree on an important issue: The minimum wage!

- Group A: SUPPORT raising the minimum wage to \$15 / hr
- Group B: OPPOSE raising the minimum wage to \$15 / hr

You can be whoever you want for this exercise (yourself, an imaginary person..) –all that matters is that you hold this perspective

Let's learn a bit about each side...

- Why does group A OPPOSE raising the minimum wage to \$15 / hr?
- What is their general perception of people who earn the minimum wage?
- What do they value?
- Where/when/how might they have developed this position?

- Why does group B SUPPORT raising the minimum wage to \$15 / hr?
- What is their general perception of people on earn the minimum wage?
- What do they value?
- Where/when/how might they have developed this position?

Assumptions...

- Too often, we focus on the people involved in the discussions, instead of the issues
- Group A: What assumptions might you make about people in Group B (oppose raising minimum wage) based only on their opinion of this issue?
- What about you, Group B: What assumptions might you make about people in Group A (support raising minimum wage)?
- What do we assume about their political affiliation? Their income? Their belief system? What else?

Let's practice civil discourse!

- Be active listeners!
- First, try to understand, then, be understood
- Both groups: Work together in your group to write a statement that addresses the following. Each statement should be 1-2 sentences long:
 - *Why do you support your position and why should others? (This could include facts, personal experiences, or something more general. Avoid bias, avoid insulting the other group)*
 - *Prepare this as an "I" statement (I think or I believe, etc.)*
 - *Keep your message positive. Include something that acknowledges there are differing opinions on the issue.*

Disagree without being disagreeable..

- Work together in your group to write a statements that addresses the following. Each statement should be 1-2 sentences long:
- *After hearing from the other group: Why do you disagree with the other point of view? Your statement must also include the following:*
 - Demonstrate that you accept the point of view of the other group, even if your don't agree, and respect their different opinion. Affirm their feelings on the issue.
 - Ask a question about the other groups viewpoint, respectfully, to help clarify/better understand. Avoid being combative, and avoid making assumptions!

Find common ground

- Work together in your group to write a statements that addresses the following. Each statement should be 1-2 sentences long:
- *What do you agree with the other group about? Where might your values overlap?*
- *Where could there be common ground?*

Next steps...

- Work together in your group to write a statements that addresses the following. Each statement should be 1-2 sentences long:
 - *Where should we take this discussion next?*
 - *What information might be useful in helping us both better understand the issue?*
 - *If there is no chance for agreement, how can we continue to engage civilly moving forward?*