

CIVILITY COMPASS

CHARTING THE COURSE TO COMMON GROUND



Embrace Human Dignity

Democracy rests on equal respect for all our fellow citizens, regardless of background or views. We must look past our apparent differences to recognize our shared humanity.



Practice Deep Listening

Listen to understand, not to win. Approach others with genuine interest in their perspectives, recognizing they may offer insights we haven't considered.



Identify Key Interests

Look beyond stated positions to understand underlying values, hopes, and concerns. This can reveal unexpected common ground and enable creative solutions.



Honor Complexity

Most significant issues resist simple solutions. Acknowledging complexity and avoiding oversimplification creates space for nuanced discussion and holistic solutions.



Ground Arguments in Factual Evidence

While values shape interpretation, evidence-based discussion establishes common ground. This keeps a conversation focused on ideas rather than personalities and enables objective evaluation of claims.



Acknowledge Context

Perspectives emerge from unique circumstances, including the societal roles from which one speaks as well as from culture, upbringing, and life experiences. Understanding these dynamics illuminates what's at stake for each person.



Show Courageous Openness

Creating meaningful dialogue requires a willingness to admit uncertainty and remain open to new perspectives. Sharing honest doubts and revealing knowledge gaps builds trust and enables genuine discourse.



Stay Connected

While we may disagree, democracy requires respectful engagement. Focus on ideas rather than personal attacks and maintain connection even amid contentious debate.

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CENTER ON CIVILITY
AND DEMOCRACY

The Center on Civility and Democracy promotes constructive solutions to restore and renew American democracy.