

Aldea Explores




Civility

Welcome to a Deeper Conversation

Use this reflective guide yourself or with a group. Don't feel you need to explore every idea on every page. Use what draws you into reflection and conversation.



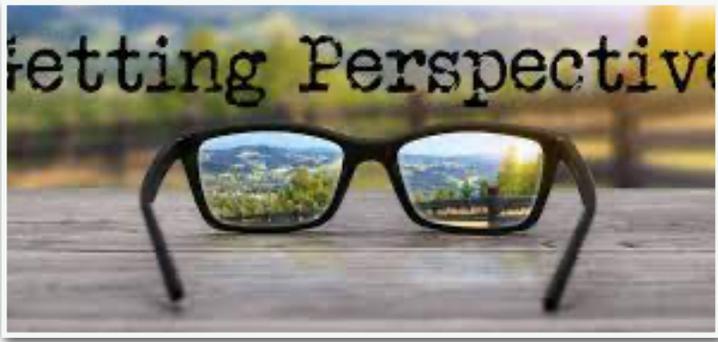
So let us begin anew -- remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate. Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.

— *John F. Kennedy* —

AZ QUOTES

Reflect and Discuss

We are again reminded that civility is about how we treat each other at the borders of our disagreements. Consider Kennedy's quote (above). Discuss the qualities Kennedy highlighted that help us treat each other in more civil ways (at the borders of those disagreements).



Having Difficult Conversations - Perspective Getting

Reflect

Around minute 6:30, Dave asks Lea to describe how she views civility.

Lea had an epiphany. For her, as she deepened involvement in politics, avoiding difficult topics (with her family and others) was simply not the best strategy. A better strategy was to learn to hold the tension of different perspectives (even if we disagree with those perspectives). We call this perspective taking or perspective getting. That is, we actively seek to understand not only what it's like to be another person, but actively seek to understand their challenges and ideas around a certain issue. It's deep engagement in understanding.

Reflect & Discuss

Reflect on perspective taking and perspective getting. It's one thing to try and put yourself in the shoes of another. It's quite different to actively seek to listen to their experiences and allow them to share how their experiences shape their behavior.

What can we do to better engage the experiences of those we disagree with?

What questions would we need to ask?

What biases might we need to jettison?

What value might come from this approach?



Political Reform and Social Advancement

Reflect and Discuss

Dave and Lea talked about the need for political reform. Particularly, in the way we run elections and treat candidates along the way. As well as how politicians work together once they are in office. Lea discusses important elements needed to work at the borders of our disagreements.

- Understanding the “why” of needed change that affects the lives of people
- Communication must be deep and frequent
- We need to leave personal attacks at the door
- Holding in mind the many people and groups affected by the change

Possible Questions to Explore

What do you think needs to change about our political process AND is there anything we can do to change it (as individual citizens)?

Look at some of Lea’s important elements (above) - How can we better express these elements? What other elements do you think are needed to have difficult but important conversations about social issues?

How can we be involved in these conversations as individual citizens?

After - Cast: How To Engage in Our Political Process with Civility

During the After-Cast Lea and Dave explored ways we, as citizens, can engage the political conversation with wisdom. Here were a few of the ideas they explored:

- Understand and express your voice
- Communicate with those who represent you
- Use data and facts when you communicate – don't just throw around unsubstantiated opinion. Do your homework.
- Broaden your view beyond your echo chamber
- Recognize that your voice does matter and that decisions about your life are made whether you express your voice or not

Reflect and Discuss

Take a look at the list (above) and discuss how you might act in ways more aligned with those behaviors. As you consider the behaviors, what obstacles get in the way of practicing them? If you had to pick two behaviors from the list to focus on, which two would it be?