

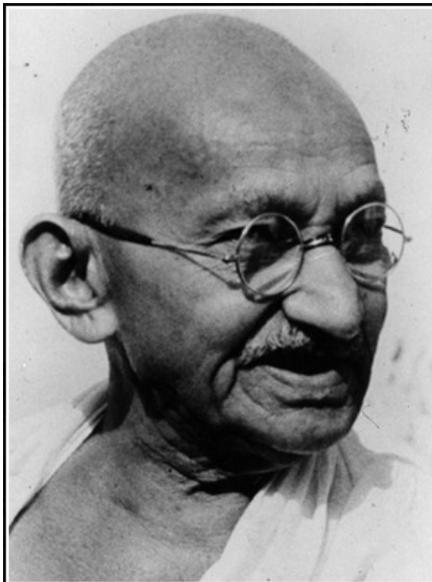
Aldea Explores




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.



Civility does not...mean the mere outward gentleness of speech cultivated for the occasion, but an inborn gentleness and desire to do the opponent good.

— Mahatma Gandhi —

AZ QUOTES

Reflect and Discuss

Gandhi's words are both timely and difficult. They are from his book, *My Experiments with Truth*. In the section where this quote is found, he is discussing how he taught non-violence and civility to those who had been mistreated. Do you agree with Gandhi?

If so, describe what this might actually look like in practice.



Being Civil When You Are At Odds

Reflect

Around minute 5:30 Dave reads this quote from Roberts book on Civility.

Some studies of civility have contended that civil behavior is essentially an agreement to restrain one's self—to seek compromise or to avoid matters where compromise is not possible and conflict is inevitable (e.g., Carter 1998). Such an approach might be beneficial in some social circumstances, but it seems ill-equipped to solve persistent social problems or to address long-simmering grievances. To speak of civility, then, we must speak of more than just avoiding conflict.

Discuss

Robert goes on to say that one of the hallmarks of civility is relationship. If people know they must sustain work toward a common good, then they know they must continue to talk about challenging topics. This should drive how we treat each other.

Discuss what you see in our local and national conversations. What can we do to add genuine civility to difficult but important conversations. We need to work for a better future. How should that shape how we talk to those with whom we disagree?



Social Media - 21st Century Town Square

Reflect and Discuss

Dave and Robert discuss the good, the bad, and the ugly of social media. Whether you are on social media or not, you need to realize that it is the 21st century town square (at least one very powerful version). The exchange of ideas on social media affect the direction of humanity.

Social media has opened the door for important conversations. It has also created problems, not the least of which is an exacerbation of incivility. Reflect on and discuss how you believe concerned and engaged citizens should use social media in a responsible manner.

Possible Questions

Are we doomed to more incivility because of social media?

Is the good of social media worth the troubles it creates?

If you use it, how do you use it responsibly?

If you don't use it, do you have any responsibility to understand it in order to be an informed citizen?

Should social media be an important place to discuss topics or just a way to connect with friends?

Is incivility worse because of social media or have we always been uncivil?

Digging Deeper

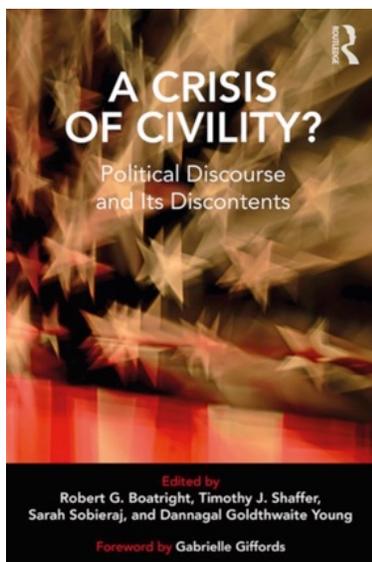
Extremes, Civility, Incivility, Better Ideas, and Creating a Just Society

From around minute 25 to 31, Dave and Robert discuss how we evaluate ideas in our society and how we tolerate (or not) those ideas. Dave shares the view that the edges of society often garner great attention around almost fundamentalistic ideas that lead to intolerance (on both edges).

Explore

What do you think of this notion? Are we giving too much “air-time” to extreme ideas? Are we losing our ability to actually judge ideas (through critical thinking) as more or less good and worthy? How do we avoid fundamentalism, on the one hand, and uncritical tolerance on the other?

Robert Boatright’s Book On Civility



[Click HERE to learn more about the book.](#)

After-Cast - Get to the Ideas

After watching the After-Cast, consider these ideas for discussion:

- How do we get past mistakes in how we say things to evaluate the value of ideas?
- Is irony worsening our incivility or playing an important role in speaking truth to power?
- What do you think are the most important elements of civility?

