

Embracing Tension to Build Bridges of Understanding

Conversation Guide

Based on the wisdom and practices of Nonviolent Communication, Courageous Conversation, Revolutionary Love, and the Mercy World, this Conversation Guide is intended to prepare for potentially tense and polarizing conversations that come up in our everyday lives.

Before Conversation

- Strive for compassion based on our interdependence
- Recall the need for community and collaboration to cultivate a more just and equitable world
- Feel and process divine rage for the stories and issues you care about
- Enter the conversation with a sense of wonder and desire to understand others
- Expect discomfort and non-closure

During Conversation

- Consider the power dynamics and safety of the conversation
- Maintain mindful awareness and presence throughout the conversation
- Listen and communicate feelings, needs, and wounds
- Engage through the storytelling of your truth
- Ask mindful questions with curiosity and wonder
- Avoid judgments of right and wrong communicated through body language and words
- Meet others where they are
- Maintain the balance of sharing a variety of perspectives
- Build connection, community, and relationship with empathy, compassion, and love
- Allow others to challenge your perspectives
- Accept the discomfort and push through challenges

Conclusion of Conversation

- Accept non-closure
- Trust in the Divine
- Determine if the conversation can be revisited
- Pause and breathe to care for yourself
- Reflect on the conversation and allow transformation to occur
- Celebrate transformation while looking to the next place where conversations are needed

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Reflection Guide

Based on the wisdom and practices of Nonviolent Communication, Courageous Conversation, Revolutionary Love, and the Mercy World, this Reflection Guide is intended for reflection after tense conversations around polarizing topics that come up in our everyday lives.

Before Conversation

- How did I enter the conversation with a sense of wonder?
- How have I processed my divine rage to support me in the conversation?

During Conversation

- How did I attend to the power dynamic of the conversation and maintain safety emotionally and physically?
- How did I leave space or invite all to share and be heard?
- Did I ask mindful questions to maintain and engage the conversation?
- Did I maintain my presence and engagement in this conversation? Where did my attention drift?
- How did I share my feelings, needs, and wounds and the realities of injustice and oppression in my life experience?
- What stories of truth did I share to engage others?
- In what ways was I able to build relationship, community, and a sense of connection?
- What did I learn about the other's feelings, needs, and wounds?
- How can I be attentive to their feelings, needs, and wounds?
- What invitations did I hear to challenge my own perspectives or include in my work for justice?
- How can I reimagine justice and equity?
- How did I push through the challenges and discomfort of the conversation?
- Where did I find connection to my values and beliefs?

Now, After Conversation

- How can I let go of closure and trust the work of the Divine?
- Is this a conversation that I can or should revisit?
- Where did I feel divine rage? What can I do to process these feelings?

Overall, what went well?

How can I improve the next time I engage in a tense conversation?