

# *Citizenship Communication Action Guide*

## **Lesson 1: Building Emotional Intelligence**

The two dimensions of emotional intelligence that are the most relevant in the context of this book and the issues it addresses for the health of our democracy and our collective well-being are self-awareness and self-regulation. Empathy is another relevant dimension of emotional intelligence that is relevant and will be discussed in the next entry on Listening.

1. *Self-awareness.* Communication experts and social scientists have developed two components of self-awareness that are important for each of us to understand and practice. These include reflexivity and self-monitoring. Reflexivity was discussed in chapter one as a kind of conscious and critical awareness individual actors can develop that begins to see the links between actions within a social system. Developing reflexive consciousness and reflexive monitoring will help social actors understand the often-hidden connections between power, sanctioning, the rhetorical constitution of meaning and value, norms, and resources. This reflexive consciousness and monitoring can be applied to better and more objectively understand our actions and their consequences so as to have more informed and thoughtful agency.
2. In addition to paying attention to our actions and their consequences, it is important to develop this kind of awareness in conversations and other forms of communication such as debate and argumentation, public speaking, and interviewing. To do this, we need to become high self-monitors. People typically tend to either be high self-monitors or low self-monitors. Whether a person is considered a high or low self-monitor depends on how much individuals adapt their behavior to their social environment. High

self-monitors are more likely to “perform” to others’ expectations. This may sound like a conformist but it is more complex than that. Being attuned to the audience and how your communication choices are affecting them is an important way to develop awareness of the opportunities to adapt when the stakes are high or when it is more valuable to build common ground than it is to be right, forcefully get our point across, or argue for the sake of arguing.

3. *Self-regulation* is a way of dealing with all the temptations that present themselves on a regular basis that could detract from our composure and well-being. When we are not balanced, centered, and grounded, our composure will suffer. Communication experts have identified composure as one of the central criteria used by others to evaluate our source credibility. For this reason alone, it is extremely important. Composure is relevant to the discussions on decorum and civility in chapters two and three. If we practice self-regulation, there is a high probability that we can maintain our composure even in the presence of difficult people and situations, as well as handle stressors better. A good way to practice self-regulation is draw from Aristotle’s rule of the Golden Mean. Avoiding extremes on either end of the spectrum allows us to sustain a state of homeostasis (which was discussed as a desired state of equilibrium in chapter one). For example, being too aggressive in the middle of a conversation with someone we disagree strongly with can be counterproductive but we can also be restrained to the point of passivity or non-involvement. In this case, assertive, direct communication is the golden mean. While there are occasions and situations that demand and call for avoidance or confrontation communicative strategies, on a regular basis, we should seek to embody Aristotle’s golden mean.

Other ways to think about and practice self-regulation include deliberate self-discipline in dialogue or debate so as to avoid the so-called “foot in mouth” experience and defaulting to a reactionary impetus, which will often come out as overly emotional and lacking moderation and composure. In addition, delayed gratification can be a useful practice to develop more self-regulated habits where we more often than not dwell in a state of equilibrium and composure befitting a dignified demeanor in our public communication and behaviors.

## Lesson 2: Deep Listening & Brave Listening

*Deep Listening.* Thich Nhat Hahn, celebrated author, peace activist, and known as the “Father of Mindfulness” offers the practice of deep listening as a way of healing and transformation. In a time of such strong division, restoring communication between two people, groups, communities, or nations should be the focus of part of our behavioral practice. Deep listening is designed to restore communication between divided parties. The title of this book is based on the quote from Abraham Lincoln’s “House Divided” speech described at the beginning of the introduction. Therefore, a nonviolent communication practice based on Buddhist principles to ameliorate the suffering that division causes is worthy of study and practice. It is for this reason the *Action Guide* begins with a description of deep listening.

Deep listening is a practice and requires diligent engagement. Deep listening requires us to listen to ourselves, our own bodies, in order to discover our own pain and suffering and then to listen in the same way, compassionately, to others, to those we love. It is a mindfulness practice. Other mindfulness practices such as mindful breathing, sitting, and walking can be aids for the more challenging technique of deep listening. Thich Nhat Hahn teaches us that in order to listen deeply, we must be empty. Listen not to judge with any prejudices or preconceptions whatsoever but rather empty yourself and listen for the sake of letting another person express themselves and a desire to help. Maintain compassion during the entire time you are listening and the quality of your listening will improve. Even those who speak from wrong perceptions or harbor unjust thoughts need to be listened to with compassion and without judging during a deep listening session. If you feel irritation welling up, Thich Nhat Hahn says your practice is probably

incorrect. You are wanting to answer or correct the person speaking rather than letting them express themselves. Empty yourself of ideas and thoughts, listen with compassion, and you will be protected from the unjust or harmful thoughts and perceptions of the other and recognize simply that the person speaking the untruths, unjust ideas, wrongheaded perceptions may be suffering. If irritation is persistent, then it is appropriate to seek to continue your deep listening at some other time, perhaps the next day or next week. Too much effort or strain to practice deep listening should be avoided. Return to mindful breathing, sitting, or walking and then when you feel prepared to listen compassionately you can resume your conversation.

While deep listening is not a practice that is appropriate for all occasions or moments, if one cannot practice deep listening with another person, particularly a fellow citizen who may present themselves as a political opponent in terms of party, ideology, value, policy position, religious beliefs, or strategic orientation, no real communication will happen. It is for this reason that everyone in a democracy should cultivate the practice of deep listening and be able to engage with polarized others in this kind of conversational encounter, even if it is interspersed with antagonistic engagement, argumentation, and debate. Without a practice of deep listening as a part of the communication repertoire for compatriots, any chance of a meaningful relationship and actual communication becomes improbable. It is for these reasons that a practice of deep listening should find its way into your public communication behavior with fellow citizens who may have significantly different perceptions, values, and partisan commitments.

*Brave Listening.* Human Resources professional Janelle Aaker describes brave listening as having three dimensions:

1. Listen with curiosity. This means that when listening to another person, remember to remove yourself from the center of the picture. Decenter yourself. Remove your ego-involvement. Instead, be genuinely interested and actually curious about what the other person is saying. Be excited about the possibility of meaning they are sharing and you are co-constructing. Ask questions out of pure interest and excitement in the possibility of what it is that they mean and where they are going. Where are they taking you? Embrace and enjoy the journey's unfolding. You can be actively involved in the conversation. Just not as the protagonist.
2. Listen with grace. Instead of defaulting to the tendency to react, just breath, take a step back, and embrace with generosity what the person you are present in the moment with is sharing. Listening with grace will often mean interrogating yourself to identify built-in prejudices and implicit biases that may interfere with your ability to accurately hear the other human being in your presence. Your field of consciousness and awareness can include self-awareness but it should be focused on how you are predisposed to react, interrupt, interfere, correct, judge, and otherwise block the person in your presence who is reaching out to you through the magic of human communication.
3. Listen with empathy. By decentering yourself and resisting the urge to react, you can more readily decode the message from your conversational partner by putting them in the web of their being. Try to genuinely understand their message from the place they inhabit. This includes their values, their experience, their narrative making, and their feelings.

\*There may be times when one feels like the other person refuses to engage in a serious, thoughtful manner, and folks are apt to ask: “What should be done?” “How patient do I need to be?” What if the other seems to have no intention of “reaching out”? When it seems as if there is no reciprocity and no genuine interest or intention in listening to another because of whatever ideological or value division exists between them, deep listening and brave listening isn’t possible. Before this kind of authentic communication behavior can happen, it may be necessary to rebuild social ties even in the face of seemingly extreme differences. The next activity is a structured exercise to help foster perspective sharing and mutual understanding with the existence of respect and civility for the other.

## **Lesson 3: Creating Civil Discourse**

### *Ground Rules for a civil dialogue session:*

1. Be passionate but not hostile
2. Have a fact checker on hand to be used at the facilitator's discretion to evaluate controversial or far-fetched claims
3. The audience will be participating in the discussion and offering their opinions and perspectives.
4. The civil dialogue process happens only in live face-to-face settings where individuals have to take responsibility for their positions and not online where sources can hide behind a veil of anonymity and unleash hostility.
5. The purpose is to take one step back from decision-making and pursue listening and understanding of diverse positions and show that civil dialogue in public discourse is indeed possible. Then, the responsibility is for participants to take this baseline of civility and move forward with difficult discussions while extending this civility into your home, neighborhood, organizations, and public.

### *Process for a Civil Dialogue Session:*

1. Each participant will be given the opportunity to provide a brief introduction of why they are occupying the chair that they are in (5 minutes).
2. Free and open dialogue among participants in chairs (10 minutes).
3. Audience may make comments to and ask questions of people in the chairs and each other (10-25 minutes).



4. Each of the participants may offer closing statements. This can include a strengthening of your attitude and position or an alteration or modification of your earlier opening statement.

Which chair do you choose to occupy now? (5 minutes).

5. Facilitator provides a summary and suggestions for further discussion.

*Sample Facilitator Script:*

The provocative statement we will be discussing today is “On public university campuses in the US, allowing speakers and organizations to express hateful viewpoints that we find morally repugnant is essential to create democratic environments where we can listen, challenge and discuss views with people we disagree with.”

Lots of people are talking about civility right now. Robert Sutton, the Stanford professor who studies people who act like assholes (his language) has been catapulted into public attention recently with a national bestseller, *The No Asshole Rule*, interviewed recently in *New York* magazine, “And my perspective is that even if you’re in the zero-sum game, where the assholes get ahead, there’s all this negative carnage. The people around them, their physical and mental health and personal relationships, they all suffer. And I don’t want to go to Trump too much, but God, look how many people he’s gone through.” In the long run, he concludes, “people who treat each other with some civility generally do better.”

Here's a brief list of 2017 tragic events and discourse related to civility:

1. The Miami Dolphins owner said "our country needs unifying leadership right now, not more divisiveness, we need to seek to understand each other and have civil discourse instead of condemnation and sound bites"
2. Milo Yiannopoulos created a charged controversy as he tried to tour many US university campuses. In January at the University of Washington, socialists, anarchists, and Trump supporters clashed and 1 person was shot. Many such events this past spring have been canceled and several resulted in flag burning, student and faculty petitions, and outbreaks of violence
3. On the Portland MAX train people were stabbed defending what appeared to be 2 Muslim women. Jeremy Christian shouted "Free speech or die" while attacking the individuals who attempted to intervene.
4. A *Unite the Right* rally in Charlottesville resulted in the murder of Heather Heyer.
5. Free Speech Week at UC Berkeley where Steve Bannon, Anne Coulter, and Milo Yiannopoulos were scheduled to speak, was canceled.
6. In a CNN survey 54% say the climate on their university campus prevents some people from saying what they believe because others might find it offensive.

University campuses need to create a balance of protecting academic freedom and creating a safe, non-hostile campus climate and inclusive learning environment. A university cannot fulfill its purpose of transmitting, evaluating and extending knowledge if it requires conformity with any orthodoxy of content and/or method." But the times they are a changing! Free speech around the country, a change in executive branch administration and an increasingly polarized

and fragmented public sphere and American political culture has prompted a lot of ugly, hate filled speech which has real-world consequences.

“You can make the argument that we are living in Peak Asshole,” says Robert Sutton, a Stanford professor who, as the author of the iconic 2007 book *The No Asshole Rule*, is perhaps the world’s leading expert on the species. According to Sutton, the problem of “disrespectful, demeaning, and downright mean-spirited behavior” is “worse than ever.”

But who and what do you censor in the name of student safety? Different campuses have responded in different ways. In 1969 in *Brandenburg v. Ohio* the Supreme Court ruled that there is no free speech right to advocate for violence when violence is likely to occur. Yet, viewpoint discrimination and restricting speech expressing ideas that offend was reaffirmed by Supreme Court justices this past June to be unconstitutional, which includes barring campus speakers.

## Lesson 4: Reframing Messages with Values

MFT (Moral Foundations Theory) researchers surveyed thousands of people around the world regarding the concerns that were morally relevant to them (Graham et al., 2009; Graham et al., 2011). Results led to the proposal of five primary moral foundations—harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity. Importantly, this research finds that liberals tend to endorse foundations based on caring and protection from harm (*harm*) and maintenance of fairness and reciprocity (*fairness*) more strongly than conservatives. However, conservatives tend to endorse moral concerns related to ingroup-loyalty (*loyalty*), respect for authority (*authority*), and protection of purity and sanctity (*purity*) more than liberals. Liberals possess stronger moral convictions related to fundamental aspects of harm and fairness (e.g., benevolence, nurturance, equality, social justice), and conservatives possess stronger convictions related to group loyalty, authority, and purity (e.g., patriotism, traditionalism, strictness, religious sanctity)

### *Instructions:*

Work in groups of 3-4.

For each of the following issues:

1. identify whether the “pro” position would be a liberal or conservative value
2. identify the value based on MFT.
3. reframe the issue using the opposing ideology and a value that corresponds to that ideology

Scenario 1: Mandatory Limits on Carbon/Methane Emissions

Scenario 2: Legalizing Recreational Marijuana

Scenario 3: Universal Health Care

Scenario 4: Maintaining high levels of Military Spending

Scenario 5: Same-sex Marriage

Scenario 6: Making English the Official Language of the US

## **Lesson 5: Countering False Narratives with Strategic Communication**

### **Advocacy**

#### *Activity Objectives and Learning Outcomes:*

1. Identify contexts, situations, and barriers that impede communication self-efficacy.
2. Perform verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors that illustrate self-efficacy.
3. Frame local, national and/or global issues from a communication perspective.
4. Evaluate local, national and/or global issues from a communication perspective.
5. Utilize communication to respond to issues at a local, national and/or global level.
6. Advocate a course of action to address issues at a local, national and/or global level from a communication perspective.
7. Promote social justice, equity, and sustainability.
8. Present messages in multiple communication modalities.
9. Propose solutions for (un)ethical communication

#### *Instructions:*

1. Select a social issue you have passion, interest, or experience with (e.g., Human Rights; Anti-War; Anti-Fracking; Anti-GMO; Anti-WTO; Soil Conservation; International Relations; Anti-Hunger; Sustainable Development; National Service; Climate Resilience; Food Justice, First Amendment Protections; Community Economic Development; Civil Rights; Human

Rights; Animal Rights; Permaculture Education; Biodiversity; Habitat Preservation; Ecosystem Health; Grassroots organizing; etc.)

2. Explore fake news, misinformation, or disinformation on your selected issue
3. Re-interpret the issue in terms of what you think positive policy or cultural change would entail
4. Craft a prose message that objectively demonstrates the real substance of the issue
5. Craft a strategic public message for a target audience to educate them on the substance of the issue and use value re-framing as your strategic message design approach
6. Select an appropriate channel, medium, or platform to place and disseminate your advocacy message.

#### *Project Resources and Primers*

1. Useful Think Tanks and University Resources

Fake News: Bringing Media Literacy to the Classroom

Consult Frameworks Institute

Rockridge Institute

2. Literature

Giusti, S. & Piras, E. (2021). *Democracy and Fake News: Information Manipulation and Post-Truth Politics*. New York and London: Routledge.

*Higdon, N. (2020). The Anatomy of Fake News: A Critical News Literacy Education. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.*

*Lakoff, G. (2004). Don't Think of an Elephant: Know your Values and Frame the Debate. Chelsea, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.*

*Nichols, T. (2017). The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters. UK: Oxford University Press.*

### 3. Instructional Videos

[The Moral Roots of Liberals and Conservatives](#) [TED Talk]

[How to Have Better Political Conversations](#) [TED Talks]



## Lesson 6: Building Common Ground On and Offline

Studies have shown that in both F2F and online environments, salespeople who spend a few minutes building rapport with a potential customer they have no previous relationship or acquaintance with have higher rates of successful sale closings than when a salesperson dives right into their product or service pitch. Furthermore, the kind of information processing all humans do, mostly at an unconscious level, in the *first several seconds* of meeting someone new include judging the other person's:

1. status in a group—high or low
2. level of attraction—high, low, or so-so
3. level of grooming and their personal style of appearance/presentation
4. observable symbolic attributes such as fashion, attire, adornment

Information processing in the *first several minutes* of meeting someone includes whether the other person is:

1. dominant
2. subordinate
3. someone you would like to dance with!

This is not fair, reasonable, or politically correct to imagine that you are being evaluated in the first several seconds to minutes for a job, friend or foe relationship, or business partner based on an almost instantaneous impression!! It doesn't matter. It happens anyway. First impressions can be overruled but they take a tremendous amount of cognitive effort and energy. Roughly 20 additional encounters are required to overcome a bad first impression.

It is much more effective to emit and radiate a powerful and positive impression as often as you can than to be careless in your communication and then have to spend countless hours of precious energy and time trying to reestablish your credibility and attractiveness with others. The importance of building rapport using a mindful and empirically proven approach to dialogue has been discussed in chapter three during the discussion and analysis of polarization. Here we offer a simple and effective way to build common ground in both online and offline new relationships so as to have a baseline of trust that is vital to the success of public life and political culture.

### *Building Rapport through Common Ground Dialogue*

1. Take a genuine, open-minded interest in people
2. Be yourself, be confident, be assertive
3. Begin dialogue with small talk
4. Find a topic of conversation that is non-threatening that you both have a genuine interest in. How? Ask your new contact some easy, but interesting questions about *them*, things about which you can talk about and listen to for a bit, and especially conversational topics that are non-controversial, low-stakes, and where you may find multiple opportunities for a genuine connection and agreement.
5. Once you have identified a common interest and have had a preliminary conversation, you now have a small modicum of trust.
6. Finally, find an opportunity to affirm this person in some way for who they are, but do so sincerely.

## Lesson 7: Critical Media Literacy

1. Select a piece of online discourse.
2. Determine whether the message is espousing a proposition of fact, value, or policy.
3. For propositions of fact, we can apply Habermasian principles of rational acceptability and warranted assertability to ascertain whether the proposition has sufficient ground and support for our open-minded consideration for possible agreement.
4. Remember that even propositions of policy, calling for certain courses of action, need to be based on propositions of fact. Propositions of value and belief (*doxa*) operate differently and shouldn't be subjected to this critical process.
5. If it is determined that the discourse is espousing a proposition of fact, or of policy based on fact, use the following heuristic to critically analyze the message:
  - A. *Evaluate the source of the message*
  - B. *Test the message against your own empirical observation(s)*
  - C. *Analyze the logic and argument based on fact claims*
  - D. *Consider the evidence for quality and quantity*
  - E. *Reflect on who stands to gain and who stands to lose if this message is accepted*
  - F. *Place the message in its historical context*
  - G. *Imagine possible omissions—intentional or unconscious.*

# *A Collection of Quotes to Inspire Democratic Aspirations*

## Compromise

*“Governing a democracy without compromise is impossible” (188).*

*“Nothing is more common in political negotiation than praise for the idea of compromise coupled with resistance to realize it” (190).*

*“The resistance to democratic compromise is anchored in an uncompromising mindset, a cluster of attitudes and arguments that encourage principled tenacity (standing on principle) and mutual mistrust (suspecting opponents). This mindset is conducive to campaigning but inimical to governing” (188).*

*“The first value of compromise in practice is that it enables improvements in the existing and ongoing state of affairs” (191).*

*“The key question to ask of any compromise: does the proposal (or any feasible alternative) represent an improvement over the status quo? This question in effect brings the general value of compromise to bear on the decision about a particular compromise” (191).*

*“General resistance to compromise presumes that the status quo is always preferable to compromise, or that it is always a mistake to yield something to your political adversaries” (192).*

*“Recognizing these two values of compromise . . . enables mutually beneficial improvements and promotes mutually respectful politics” (193).*

*“Aversion to compromise is “odious to passionate natures because it seems a surrender, and to intellectual natures because it seems a confusion” (193).*

*“Compromise is essential for facilitating legislation to improve on the status quo and for cultivating the respect necessary for cooperation in democratic politics. It can in this way serve the common good without itself containing only common goods” (195).*

Gutmann, A. and D. Thompson (2013). Valuing Compromise for the Common Good. *Daedalus*, 142(2), 185–198.

## The Status Quo

*“Privileging the status quo does not mean that nothing changes. It simply means that politicians allow outside forces—the market, expiring agreements, social movements—to control the change” (191).*

## Interpersonal Relations

*“We have daily opportunities to change the spirit with which we approach each other” (183)*

*“See others—those in authority as well as those in subordinate positions—as fundamentally human. This subtle change of stance transforms the world from a place of hostility to a place of community, in which we are connected to rather than separated from the many strangers we encounter daily” (184).*

Tannen, D. (2013). The Argument Culture: Agonism & the Common Good. *Daedalus*, 142(2), 177–184.

## Patriotism

*“Patriotism is better understood as a concern for the honor of your country, your nation. This concern gives you a serious investment in its doings, even when, like most of us, you do not control them” (211).*

## Citizen Honor

*“We can be engaged to participate by our wish to maintain our individual honor as citizens: to maintain, that is, a right to the respect of our fellows” (211).*

*“Citizen honor is not something we owe to all. What we owe morally to all people is the respect due to their humanity, their human dignity. But how we honor each other as citizens is, in good measure, up to us” (213).*

## Voting

*“When I vote, I am not supposed to be looking only after my own interest... Citizens ought to vote for people and policies they believe to be just” (215).*

## Entertain the Possibility that you Might Be Wrong

*“We are fallible people in a fallible world. It is a mistake to think that you cannot have the intellectual humility that fallibilism teaches, with its willingness to entertain the possibility that you are wrong, and still proceed seriously with the commitments that survive the test of argument. To recognize that I might be wrong is not to declare that I am” (216).*

Listen to folks. Respect them and what they have to say.

*“Hearing [folks] say what they want and why is the beginning of understanding their desires. The need for respect suggests a habit of mind in which we assume the best of one another—not, as is so common today, the worst” (216).*

*“We should treat each other better so we can feel better about one another. We should begin by developing a civil public culture in which we address both those we agree with and those we disagree with in a more courteous way. Civis, in Latin, means citizen: civility is the demeanor citizens owe one another” (218).*

*“In our shared life as political people, our citizen conversation is ongoing. No one has the last word” (219).*

*“Understanding even those who will not engage with us is part of the challenge of managing the republic together” (219).*

## Educate Yourself in History and Civics

*“We also need a shared knowledge of the institutions of the republic and their history, as well as an ability to understand discussions of the economy. And since the conduct of foreign policy requires judgments about the whole world, it seems reasonable to ask those who participate in political deliberation to have a basic familiarity with global history and geography, too. This knowledge will come only from a proper education in history and civics taught through education in the humanities and the social sciences” (218-219).*

## The Benefits of a Liberal Arts Education

*“Interpreting texts, analyzing arguments, engaging imaginatively with fictional worlds and with other places and times, and reflecting together on our moral responsibilities: these are the methods of anthropology, history, literature, and philosophy” (219).*

### Freedom & Truth

*“It’s easy to follow along. It can feel strange to do or say something different. But without that unease, there is no freedom. Remember Rosa Parks. The moment you set an example, the spell of that status quo is broken, and others will follow” (p. 51).*

*“To abandon facts is to abandon freedom. If nothing is true, then no one can criticize power, because there is no basis upon which to do so. If nothing is true, then all is spectacle. The biggest wallet pays for the most blinding lights” (p. 65).*

*If none of us is prepared to die for freedom, then all of us will die under tyranny” (p. 115).*

Snyder, T. (2017). *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. New York: Tim Duggan Books.

### Democracy vs. Tyranny

*“One of the major reasons why democracies are better places to live than tyrannies is because we change our rulers from time to time” (212).*

Appiah, K. W. (2013). The Democratic Spirit. *Daedalus*, 142(2), 209-221.

### Some Strategies for Change

*“For structural change . . . accept the emergence of parliamentary style polarized parties and try to adapt our political institutions to operate more effectively in that context” (20-21).*

*“Bring the warring parties together . . . by reaching for consensus through increased social interaction” (21).*

*“Encouragement of or pressure on politicians to come together to make a deal” (21).*

*“Mobilization of centrists in the citizenry to create political space for more collegial and collaborative policy-making” (21).*

*“Use . . . outside bipartisan groups to map policy solutions that split the differences between the polarized parties” (21).*

*“Support. . . independent presidential candidates or third parties to lay claim to the allegedly abandoned political ‘center’” (21).*

*“These efforts by and large seek to create a spirit of compromise, an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect, and a focus on problem-solving—outcomes which are indeed commendable” (21)*

However, please note:

Polarization and tribalism grates against success in applying these strategies. In the polarized environment, the difficulties will be hard to overcome.

*“A more promising strategy of reform is to bring the Republican Party back into the mainstream of American politics and policy as the conservative, not radical, force. Ultimately, this is the responsibility of the citizenry” (21).*

Your vote counts!

Mann, T.E. and N. J. Ornstein (2013). Finding the common good in an era of dysfunctional governance. *Daedalus*, 142(2), 15–24.

### Civic Virtue and Civic Participation

*“Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife.” -- John Dewey (p. 65)*

*“The loss of quality civic education from so many of our classrooms has left too many young Americans without the most basic knowledge of who our forefathers are, or the significance of the founding documents. [They were unaware of] the risks and sacrifices made by previous generations, to ensure that this country survived war and depression; through the great struggles for civil, and social, and worker’s rights. It is up to us, then, to teach them.” -- Barack Obama (p. 73)*

*Kathleen Hall Jamieson drawing from the 2003 Civic Mission of Schools report culled basic skills and actions that would foster civic pride, civic virtue, and civic participation. In what follows, we have retooled her summary as a set of guidelines for contemplation and action. The report argued that schools should not only “help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens*



*throughout their lives” but also “work to ensure that students” are able to develop consistent habits of citizenship.*

In that light we offer the following guidelines (slightly amended directly from Jamieson’s article):

- \*Be informed and thoughtful.*
- \*Foster an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of American democracy*
- \*Develop an ability to obtain information when needed and a capacity to think critically*
- \*Be willing to enter into dialogue with others about different points of view*
- \*Try to understand diverse perspectives.*
- \*Be tolerant of ambiguity and resist simplistic answers to complex questions.*
- \*Participate in your community.*
- \*Participate in public service and work together to overcome problems.*
- \*Expand your knowledge base: Pursue an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs.*
- \*Act politically, for example, by organizing people to address social issues, solving problems in groups, speaking in public, petitioning and protesting to influence public policy, and voting.*
- \*Cultivate moral and civic virtues by demonstrating concern for the rights and welfare of others.*
- \*Be socially responsible.*
- \*Be willing to listen to alternative perspectives.*
- \*Be confident in your capacity to make a difference.*

Jamieson, K. H. (2013). The challenges facing civic education in the 21st century. *Daedalus*, 142(2), 65–83.

### The People and Their Representatives

*“To ignore completely the wishes of citizens is to render the concept of representation moot; accountability after the fact—removing a legislator from office—cannot undo the decision that prompted the retaliation. The wishes of the people must at least be weighed in the decision-making process” (87).*

*“If elected officials understand that the electorate values compromise and problem-solving and that working cooperatively with those on the other side of an issue will be rewarded with reelection and a long career, the degree of partisanship and incivility in Congress, state legislatures, city and county councils, and executive branch offices will diminish” (87).*

Edwards, M. (2013). What is the Common Good? The Case for Transcending Partisanship. *Daedalus*, 142(2), 84–94.

### Civility & Struggle

*“Discourse that denies the legitimacy of struggle or that makes it amenable only to violent resolution is different than discourse that acknowledges, accepts, and works within a logic of struggle and contention” (726)*

*“Conceptions of civility oriented toward manners or political friendship promote rhetorical norms of politeness and controversy that routinely ignore disparities of power and conditions of inequality” (724).*

*In a democracy “inequality often requires those with less power or fewer resources to resort to rhetorical means that are all too open to charges of ‘incivility’” (727).*

Stuckey, M. E., and S. P. O’Rourke. (2014). Civility, democracy, and national politics. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, 17(4), 711-736.

### Dissent

*“Understanding how to keep dissent open as an option is necessary to sustain a healthy democratic culture” (53).*

*“The normal stresses and strains of a healthy democratic practice” can result in “a lively and sometimes severe, even abrasive, discourse in the pursuit of democratic values of inclusion and equality” (54).*

*If dissent irretrievably “dissolves into sheer hostility and confrontation” (54), we test the limits of incivility and teeter on the razor’s edge between persuasion and coercion.*

Ivie, R.L. (2015). Enabling Democratic Dissent, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 101(1), 46-59.