



**Be Peace. Choose Peace. Create Peace.**

## CHOOSE CIVILITY CULTIVATION

### What is Civility Cultivation?

The ability to have a productive and respectful conversation with someone who disagrees with you is defined as civil conversation. Being that it is a peaceful practice, when civility is cultivated and practiced daily, real progress can be made. Addressing someone with different beliefs from your own is often troublesome in the context of today's society; therefore, it is important to convey a sense of decency along with respecting their sincerity. This ensures that you are not attacking one's beliefs, causing them to become defensive and unwilling to work with you to find common ground.

It is evident that the cultivation of civility needs to become mainstream among American citizens, politicians, and in the workplace. It is now common practice for people to attack one another verbally, and sometimes physically, when they disagree. This is a counterproductive action. The goal when there is discourse should be to compromise and find common ground, respectfully, that will serve both involved parties<sup>1</sup>, but this is impossible when the parties are unwilling to hear each other. Civility cultivation can help lead to compassion and compromise.

### How do people learn Civility Cultivation?

There are many ways to learn how to cultivate civility. Getting involved in different types of dialogue is a way to hone effective civil skills. A resource known as [Make America Dinner Again](#) reinforces this by setting up an opportunity to host or attend a civic dialogue. Several guests with varying political views come together for dinner, with food helping humanize the experience, and it is up to participants to ensure that they are practicing civility. The organization offers a "host guide" that lays out the steps. This type of event can lead to more positive interactions with people different from us.

### How do people implement Civility Cultivation?

Incivility is present in many parts of our society today; it can be found in political environments, businesses, medical institutions, and even homes. Any place that fosters *incivility* can also foster *civility* if the right amount of attention is brought forth. Our political leaders have a responsibility to set an example for the American people on how to act with civility, whether they choose to follow it or not<sup>2</sup>. Conducting or attending a civil dialogue is a great way to participate in hard conversations with the intention and expectation of cultivating civility. [Doing Good Together](#) is another resource providing basic steps to ensure that civil conversations are happening on a small scale. These small lessons can be implemented on a larger scale and utilized in places like the workplace, school, and many others. Civility must become ever-present in our world today or else people will remain polarized and unwilling to compromise.

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<sup>1</sup> Spath, T., & Dahnke, C. (2016, February 18). *What is Civility?* The Institute for Civility in Government. <https://www.instituteforcivility.org/who-we-are/what-is-civility/>.

<sup>2</sup> Reardon, J. (2021, January 5). *We Can All Promote Restoring Civility in Government*. 2Civility. <https://www.2civility.org/civility-in-government/>.

## For what types of circumstances is Civility Cultivation suited?

Civility cultivation is well-suited for developing positive social and emotional behaviors among people who use it. This is due to its ability to prevent negative behaviors from happening in the first place. It also applies the positive behavior of civility, which will lead to progress and compromise.

## Does Civility Cultivation work for preventing or controlling aggression or violence?

In her thesis, *The Bipartisan Women of the U.S. Senate: Civility, Collaboration and Stewardship of Upper Chamber*, Shannon Marie Kula explores the tools and techniques that give the few women of the U.S. Upper Chamber the ability to pass bipartisan legislation<sup>3</sup>. These tools include “civility, collaboration and cooperation”. With the inclusion of civility, it is understood that people are more willing to compromise with one another, meaning that they are taking action to care for the opposing party.

Civility has been practiced many times in all types of cultures, and treating people with civility leads to less division. When engaging with people, it is proven important to show them respect because they are a human being, just like you. Civility is especially important when engaging with those who are different, because, without it, opportunities for growth often go undiscovered.

## Where else might I go to learn more about Civility Cultivation?

Civility Cultivation is a peaceful practice that one can learn and get better at. Here are a few resources.

- YES! Solutions Journal—for a more in-depth look into the problem of incivility, along with the solution of civility, visit <https://www.yesmagazine.org/opinion/2021/04/09/build-bridges-peace>.
- Institute for Civility—Addresses the division that is present in the United States Government brought on by the lack of civility. This organization holds no position on political issues. <https://www.instituteforcivility.org/who-we-are/mission-and-vision/>
- Make America Dinner Again—this organization provides a guide on how to have a civil dialogue through the medium of dinner. With this organization, one may host a dinner with the intention of practicing civility while speaking about political beliefs with people in real time. <http://www.makeamericadinneragain.com/index.html>
- The People’s Supper—Similar to the previous organization, this is a civil discussion that can happen over the course of a meal. This discussion, however, is intended to be more challenging, as the topic of the conversation is meant to be centered around uncomfortable and polarizing issues such as religion, politics, racial injustice, and many other difficult issues. <https://thepeoplesupper.org/who-we-serve>
- Everyday Democracy—Offers the tools needed to facilitate, participate, or learn about civil dialogues that can be had in a community. This is an organization that aims to promote peace in America by encouraging individuals to get close with the people that they disagree with in an effort to promote understanding and cooperation. <https://www.everyday-democracy.org/resources/guides>

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<sup>3</sup> Kula, S. M. (1970, January 1). *The Bipartisan Women of the U.S. Senate: Civility, Collaboration and Stewardship of Upper Chamber*. Georgetown Library. <https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/handle/10822/1040745>.

- The Institute for Civility in Government—This resource provides reasoning and explanation on the importance of civility within the United States Government. A party system will have polarization by nature, so it is imperative that these two varying parties treat each other in a civil manner so that work for the good of the country can be accomplished.  
<https://www.instituteforcivility.org/who-we-are/mission-and-vision/>

### About Peace Through Action USA

Peace Through Action USA activates and equips Americans to implement practical peaceful solutions to aggression and violence in their communities and our country. We are a national-scope, charitable, civic and social capital-building organization. Learn more at [www.PeaceThroughAction.org](http://www.PeaceThroughAction.org).

*Have a suggested addition to this information sheet? Send it to [inbox@peacethroughaction.org](mailto:inbox@peacethroughaction.org). If you found this information beneficial, [please give](#) a gift of money to support our creation and maintenance of similar resources.*