Balancing Me and WE

The third tool of civility is Be Inclusive. This really asks each of us to listen to other viewpoints besides our own. This allows us to see issues in other ways and can help us to find common ground. On the other hand we seem to live in a world of either Me or We with an end result of me wins or we wins. In reality often that means that neither wins.

Consequently, being inclusive additionally means that we need to work at better balancing Me and We. It is critically important that we take care of ourselves(Me). Me is the only person who is a 100% responsible. First you need to fully know yourself, skills, wants, and needs. Secondly, you need to identify any consideration that that is an absolute for you. An examples is “I need to live in the same community as my family”.

As a single and living alone, your balance of Me and We is unequal on the Me side. You can make many of your decisions or deal with problems only considering Me. Still you have many We connections- family, friends, work, community, state, country, world. In these WE situations you need to be one of the WE. Knowing your absolutes, you make decisions about the WE’s that you join. Otherwise in the other various WE worlds, you follow the rules even if you fully do not agree, find that you can accept the majority decision, or work to find an agreeable solution. Those WE’s can also help you to make your best decisions.

When you enter an intimate relationship this balance begins to shift. Now you are in a daily WE situation. It is very important that you and your partner not only understand each of your absolutes, but also can live comfortably with them. There is still time for your Me. As your family expands, the time is reduced as you have now more WE responsibilities. Most of the decisions are WE decisions which take time to work through.

In most work situations you are in a WE environment. You were hired for your talent and interest in the focus of the work. You need to be comfortable with the WE policies, guidelines and values. Some workplaces do allow you to work on some of your own projects, but otherwise the work you do is WE. When you are speaking about your work, it is best to always use WE in describing your work.

There are many workers who work in some fashion of government. One category are those who are hired for their skills and interests. You follow then the same WE guidelines as the rest of working force. There may be a higher degree of confidentiality.

 The remaining government workers are elected. You were selected because a majority had similar beliefs as you, were of the same party, or felt you were a better choice. But once chosen, you are working for WE or all of the people in the district that you represent. Unfortunately there is a second Me that exists in these work places. Overall our country has a two party system, Democrat or Republican. As you do your work, you need to be a WE. When action is taken, it is the WE that did it, the legislative, judicial, or executive body. Perhaps with this focus the members of each party can focus on the WE work, making decisions that are in the best interest of all the people, what are the problems that need to be addressed, what are the options and with each what fits with your thoughts and what can work with your beliefs, and how each option will affect all the people. I will always remember the words of one of my co-workers in Fond du Lac, “There is more than one way to get to Oshkosh”. Maintaining these balances of Me and We will allow for civil conversations in all our walks of life.

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