Civility in Action

In order to become a civil individual and help to move the community in that direction, we need to not only practice civil communication, we need to become civil in our behavior and action. Truly civility needs to be a mindset. At all times we want to be civil. First we need to recognize what are some of the ways to act and behave civil. Here are some of my suggestions which are in no particular order. I encourage you to add to this list for yourself.

Utilize the manners that you have been taught. With a “Please” you make the other person feel respected, that they do have a choice, and are more open to consider your request. A “Thank You” tells the person that you appreciate whatever they did and encourage more helpful behavior in the future.

Give sincere compliments freely. Around us all the time someone is doing something well. A compliment not only feels good, but encourages them to do their best as much as possible. At the bridge table, tell your partner as well as your opponent that they played the hand well. At the same time it is just as important that you accept a compliment that is given to you. That person has given to you their opinion. By accepting their compliment, you are modeling receiving compliments graciously, but continuing the goodwill that was intended by the compliment. Both of you will feel good, and complimenting others will expand.

Smile as you meet people in your daily life. A smile can brighten up the person’s day. They are more likely to smile at someone that they meet. Say hello to the clerk that is waiting on you. This acknowledges that he/she is a person, a human being just like yourself. Then wish a good day. Your consideration will be passed on.

Give of yourself to others. Each of us has need for help many times in our lives. When you see someone who looks lost or confused ask if you can help. When a family has a tragedy, reach out with assistance. Older adults are often reluctant to ask, but may accept an offer of help. A card or a telephone call can be priceless to someone who is incapacitated. Door County has multiple charities; and whatever you give will make a difference. Volunteering is an excellent way to give. Someone or some nonprofit is helped. You gain exponentially. You feel good, you find you want to give again, and you gain knowledge and understanding. When you need help, please ask. So often people want to help, but they do not know what you need. Also accept the help when someone offers. Giving is free. They are not asking for something in return. They simply want to help. By your acceptance, they are more likely to continue to give if the future.

Try a new activity. Of course we all have our interests and participate in those activities. Often someone may suggest that we join them in something that we have not done and do not believe that we want to. Still, think about the gains. The experience has given us knowledge and appreciation for the activity. Also we will learn more about our friend and our friend’s reasons for the interest. We may even find a new interest.

Remember that facts are facts and opinions are opinions. 2+2 is 4 is a fact. Door County is the best place to live is an opinion. It is imperative that we separate the two. Only facts can be proven. When several are gathered, there are many more opinions than the number of people. Each of us is entitled to our opinion. There are appropriate ways to express our opinions, it is acceptable to try to influence someone to come to believe your opinion, and they have the right to not want to change. And remember, “your rights stop at the end of my nose.”

Give hugs! Although when we meet a stranger or someone we do not know well, we extend our hand. This is a good start. We are reaching out and touching each other. BUT there is nothing better than a hug. Each wrapping their arms around the other and embracing, each feeling comforted and warm. Hugs start us out caring about each other. Hopefully we can keep that feeling alive as we deal with the issues of life.

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