

Guidelines for Promoting Civil Discourse

Below are some of the takeaways I learned from Keith Allred, executive director of the National Institute on Civil Discourse (<https://nicd.arizona.edu>)*. They provide a framework for engaging in tough conversations. They are taken directly from my notes during his presentation. That said, I take responsibility for the use of my own words in several instances.

- **Avoid Premature Consensus in the Conversation**

- Invite & encourage contrasting perspectives
- Create a culture in which expressing a dissenting view is seen as a friendly act
- Make sure all relevant voices are heard
- Ask assumption-probing questions
- Work to understand the spirit of what is being said, if not the exact meaning.

- **Avoid Interpersonal Sparks**

- Listen for understanding—try to find the merit in opposing views
- Ask follow up questions about contrasting positions and perspectives
- Make it obvious that you understand their perspective whether or not you agree with it; try repeating it back for verification, demonstrating that you are doing your best to

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