

Group Agreement

The Touchstones

1. **Be 100% present, extending and presuming welcome.** Set aside the usual distractions of things undone from yesterday, things to do tomorrow. Bring all of yourself to the work. Remember that we all learn most effectively in spaces that welcome us. Welcome others to this place and this work and presume that you are welcomed.

2. **Listen deeply and suspend judgments.** Listen intently to what is said and listen to the feelings beneath the words. Listen to yourself also, listen to your body and be open to how you are feeling, how you are reacting, and strive to set aside your judgments. By creating a space between judgments and reactions, we can listen to the other, and to ourselves, more fully, and thus our perspectives, decisions and actions are more informed.

3. **Identify your assumptions and mind your fixer.** Each of us is here to discover our own truths, to listen to our own inner teacher, to take our own inner journey. We are *not* here to set someone else straight, to help right another's wrong, to "fix" or to "correct" what we perceive as broken or incorrect in another member of the group. Our assumptions are usually invisible to us, yet they under gird our worldview, our decisions, and our actions. By identifying our assumptions, we can then set them aside and open our viewpoints to greater possibilities.

4. **Speak your truth and be willing to listen deeply to the truths of others.** Say what is in your heart, trusting that your voice will be heard, and your contribution respected. Your truth may be different from, even the opposite of what another in the group has said. Speaking your truth is not debating with, or correcting, or interpreting what another has said. *Own* your truth by speaking only for yourself, using "I" statements.

5. **Always by invitation and respect silence.** You will be invited to share in pairs, small groups, or in the large group and you will determine the extent to which you want to participate. Silence is a rare gift in our busy world. After you or another has spoken, take time to reflect and to fully listen, without immediately filling the space with words.

6. **Maintain confidentiality.** Create a compassionate and confidential space by respecting the nature & content of discussions in the group. Honor the gift of vulnerability that comes from people's courage to disclose. Honor yourself also and share only what you can carry. Honor each other by committing to a practice of what is said in the space, stays in that space and time.

7. **When things get difficult, turn to wonder.** If you find yourself disagreeing with another, becoming judgmental, shutting down in defense, try turning to wonder: "I wonder what brought her to this place?" "I wonder what my reaction teaches me?" "I wonder what he's feeling right now?"


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