

TEACHING CIVILITY



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Action Guide

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A Kids Talk Webinar

What has happened to common courtesy? Civility? Kindness and respect?

What are our children learning from this mean-spirited time?

How can we magnify kindness and respect in both children and adults?

These questions are ones that have been on my heart and mind for several years.

This book, _____, made me realize I was not alone in my concern about civility.

Teaching civility, I feel, is integral to our work as school leaders.

Living with incivility, we each pay a huge price in terms of quality of life, health, relationships, job satisfaction and much more.

As we teach civility, the _____ and _____ lessons we offer in our Montessori classroom find renewed importance.

Here's our first challenge.

We have to ask a key question to ask multiple times a day to everyone around us, ourselves included.

Who do I want to be?

Who do you want to be?



- Do you want to be a person who values others?
- Who helps others succeed?
- Who removes obstacles to success?
- Who creates a culture of kindness and respect?
- Who creates a place where people connect to their best selves?

A Washington Post Article offers a startling statistic: 71% of employees are looking for new jobs.

The main reason for their job dissatisfaction is employees don't feel appreciated on the job in two basic ways:

1. _____
2. compensation

Porath's definition of civility boils down to this simple idea:

Treating others with _____ and _____.

Kindness and respect, I think, form the foundation of feeling appreciated. When we are treated kindly with respect, feeling appreciated seems to follow.

What those 71% of employees who feel underappreciated want, I believe, is to be treated with civility, to be treated with kindness and respect.

The Meaning of Civility

Civility comes from the Latin word, *civilis*, which means citizen. In early usage civility meant the state of being a citizen, a member, in good standing, of a city.

The words, civil, civility, citizen, city, civics, cite, citation, civilization, civilian, civilize and more, all have their roots in the word, *civilis*, citizen.

The Meaning of Kindness

Kind has several meanings:



- Having a friendly or generous nature or attitude
- Helpful to others
- Considerate or humane.

Kind comes to us from the Old English word, *gecynd*.

The words, kind, kith and kin, all stem from this Old English word, *gecynd*.

The German word, *Gesundheit*, shares this same root word. Also, the word for child in German is *Kind*, coming from this same root word.

We might say that the original meaning of being kind was treating people as we did our loving family and friends, our kith and kin.

The Meaning of Respect

Respect is defined as “the condition of being esteemed or honored”.

The word, respect, comes from the Latin, *re+ spectare*, to look at, again.

I look you in the eye. You look me in the eye. And I look at you again.

We cannot expect respect. We can only give respect.

When we make this essential connection with the eyes, we enter into the moment with an awareness of each other’s worth, a person worthy of being treated with kindness and respect.

In teaching civility there are key questions to inform ongoing discussion within our community:

- How do we act as a member of a community, a place where people live, work and play together?
- What rules do we live by?
- What is our civic duty?
- How can we be kind?
- How can we give respect?



Treating others with kindness and respect creates the core of being civil, of being a good citizen, of being worthy to live in a community, a group of people working together to make life better for all.

Here is our second challenge.

1. Discuss with your school community members—students, staff, families—our key questions...these key questions, from above.
2. Assess your civility.

To assess your civility take Christine Porath's Incivility Test on Pages 51 to 53 in *Mastering Civility* or using her website questionnaire, *Assess Yourself*. Invite and encourage others to do the same.

A gift to you today is that I've put together a free leadership training on Teaching Civility. You can sign up on my website under the Workshop tab. In that course you'll find all the links to what I am suggesting.

Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.

This nursery rhyme from the 1830's, was created to help children develop self-control in the face of taunting, but I think it sets us up to feel we have to accept _____.

Words do hurt.

To deny the power of words to hurt, denies the power of words to _____.

A predictor of how we handle incivility is linked to our ability to control the situation. If someone with more power to _____ the situation—boss, parent, teacher—treats us poorly, we can struggle with feelings of helplessness.

Our question becomes: What can we do when we are not treated with kindness and respect, or when we see others not being treated with kindness and respect?



Here are some ideas.

Don't go there.

When someone treats us rudely and with disrespect the first reaction may be from a place of anger.

Don't go there.

Anger and revenge will draw you into the downward spiral of disrespect and unkindness.

Years ago, I watched an irate customer yell and curse at an airline employee. The employee seemed to be in control, but I prepared to find a security guard.

This employee stood and listened until the customer was silent.

Her response? Thank you, sir. How can I help you?

The customer said, "I'm sorry. I just want to get home as soon as I can."

Insults were defused...by an employee who offered kindness and respect in the face of incivility.

Most of us don't have the training or self-restraint of this airline employee, but we can choose to not engage in anger and retaliation.

Use a _____ sign.

When you are treated with incivility, stop replaying the incident.

Take control of your negative emotions by putting up a mental stop sign when you start to think about the incident.



Take a deep breath and move on to a positive aspect of your life. For myself, I visualize taking a walk in the woods and leaving the incident behind to be covered with leaves, leaving it behind forever.

Make a plan.

If you are in a toxic work environment, make a plan to find a way out. Take a night course. Volunteer. Look for a new job. Learn a new skill.

Look forward and not behind. Make a plan and grow into it.

Put on your _____ first.

When my husband became a private pilot, I learned why on every flight the attendant tells you, "in case of emergency, before helping others, put on your oxygen mask first".

At 40,000 feet of altitude you have less than 20 seconds before you pass out from oxygen deprivation.

In 20 seconds without the mask, everyone on the plane will be unconscious and in five minutes, or less, everyone will be dead.

When you are dealing with incivility, you need to take care of yourself. Put on your oxygen mask, first.

If we take care of ourselves, it's easier to have the self-control to be kind in the face of incivility.

Good nutrition, sleep, stress management and exercise help you take care of yourself so you can be there for others.



Set the tone.

As a school leader *act with courage* to provide a civil environment.

Keep this question in the air: *Who do you want to be?*

Help others become aware of their disrespectful and unkind behaviors, and how they can change them.

Discuss with your community members—children, families, staff members— what they can do to become kinder and more respectful.

Use Porath's chart and discussion questions, *Who's Civil in Your Group?* A download of the chart with discussion questions is included in the

_____.

Creating a community and a culture based on civility takes courage. Yes, it will feel uncomfortable.

We know, though, what the alternative looks like. And it is not pretty!

I encourage you to take a leadership role to guide your community to a place of kindness and respect.

It's what the world needs _____.

One of the dangers of dealing with incivility is like the proverbial frog in a pot of boiling water.

If a frog jumps into boiling water, he'll jump right out.

Light the fire after the frog is in the pot, and he stays until it is too late.



With incivility we run the risk of ignoring the signs that we need to act, and act quickly.

The high costs of incivility?

We lose potential _____.

We lose employees.

We have more sick _____.

According to an American Psychological Association survey, on the job stress costs the US economy \$_____ billion a year due to sick days, work related accidents, and stress related doctor visits.

We endure the sabotage effect.

I also have this information in your free leadership training, Teaching Civility.

Our team experiences downhill performance.

Can your organization afford these costs of incivility?

Are you dealing with excessive sick days? High turnover. Low retention rates. Low enrollment.?

Inside the Teaching Civility course you can download a _____ to calculate your costs associated with sick days, turnover, tardiness, student retention and recruitment.

Remember, whatever your situation, it is _____ too late to teach civility.



In Summary.

We've considered that there are key questions we need to keep in the air every day:

Who do I want to be?

- Do you want to be a person who values others?
- Who helps others succeed?
- Who removes obstacles to success?
- Who creates a culture of kindness and respect?
- Who creates a place where people connect to their best selves?

As a community, there are key questions to address:

- How do we act as a member of a community, a place where people live, work and play together?
- What rules do we live by?
- What is our civic duty?
- How can we be kind?
- How can we give respect?

We've looked at personal strategies to deal with incivility:

- Don't go there.
- Use a stop sign.
- Make a plan.
- Put on your oxygen mask first.
- Set the tone. Act with courage.

There are high costs to incivility:

- The kick the dog effect.
- Loss of potential customers.
- Loss of employees.
- Excess sick days.



- The sabotage effect.
- Downhill performance.

You've learned that you can calculate your costs associated with sick days, turnover, tardiness, student retention and recruitment. Those numbers will help you figure out if your school is at the boiling point.

If your numbers are higher than the average, you have a big clue that you may be dealing with incivility in your community.

The power we wield as teaching leaders is not to be disregarded.

We may have more power to effect _____ change than protesters, lobbyists, or legislative bodies.

Our community members seek our leadership.

When we are with a child, a parent, a teacher, we can personalize the lesson to help that person learn to live with kindness and respect and to live a life of civility.

We can be the change we wish to see in the world, one person at a time.

It starts with choosing to treat every person

you meet with kindness and respect.

It begins with teaching civility.