



## Examples of Practicing Civity in Everyday Life

***You can create civity in your everyday life through:***

- Intentionally making small “I see you” gestures
- Sharing “heart” stories
- Listening to understand
- Remaining curious amidst unfamiliarity
- Simply being “present” for another person
- Offering the gift of emotional and physical presence and attention

***Here are some examples of ways to create civity:***

**Practice Civity with Friends and Family by taking the time to listen and be present when you engage in conversation**

- **When seated next to an older relative who has different political beliefs at a holiday gathering, you could ...**
  - Ask them to tell you a story about their first experience with politics.
  - Ask them to share when their beliefs first formed and who influenced them.
  - Reciprocate with your story and perspective.
- **For a friend who just had their first baby, you could ...**
  - Ask what kind of support they need from a friend.
  - Ask them how they are coping with the transition of their new addition.
  - Make the time and space to listen to how they’re doing.
- **When a friend or relative says something you disagree with, you could...**
  - Ask “Why is that important to you?”
  - Get more information by saying, “Can you say more about that?”
  - Stay rooted in the practice of listening, resisting the desire to debate.



- **When your cousin brings a new girlfriend from a different background to Thanksgiving you could ...**
  - Ask if her family has a holiday tradition that always makes her feel as though she belongs.
  - Be open to learning about and trying out different holiday traditions.
  - Offer stories about your own family traditions and memories and where they come from.
- **If you are seated next to your Vietnam veteran grandfather for dinner on Veterans Day, you could ...**
  - Thank him for his service and sacrifice.
  - Ask him if he is open to answering questions about his experience.
  - Proceed to say, "Tell me more..."
- **Following a family meal, you could approach the person who prepared the meal and ...**
  - Directly thank them for the time and care they put into the meal.
  - Ask a thoughtful question like, "Are there any family recipes that have been passed down through the generations?"
  - Offer them a chance to sit down and enjoy everyone's company while you clean up.

**Practice Civity in the Workplace by getting to know the people you work with and letting them get to know you.**

- **Before a meeting you could ...**
  - Start the meeting 10 minutes early to provide time for a brief "check-in." Ask attendees to share how they are doing, something important they have going on in their week, or the highlight of their day.
  - Center yourself with a few deep breaths, so you can feel settled to be present.
  - Give yourself a mental pep talk, encouraging yourself to share your perspective during the meeting - and to pay attention when others contribute.



- **During a meeting you could ...**
  - Make eye contact with other attendees as they speak so they know they have your attention.
  - Put your phone away so that you can be more present.
  - Consider offering the simple question, “Do you want problem-solving, or would you prefer I just listen?” The answer can suggest whether you should sit back and listen, or be a part of brainstorming solutions.
  
- **At a professional networking event you could ...**
  - Ask someone the question, “Why do you do the work that you do?”
  - Ask someone if they have ever experienced challenges in their work and if they’d be willing to share how they overcame them.
  - Be willing to be vulnerable and introduce yourself to new people.
  
- **At a fundraising event you could...**
  - Ask someone how they first got involved with the organization.
  - Ask what part of the organization’s mission resonates most for them.
  - Share your own responses for the first two questions with someone new.
  
- **Anytime, you could ...**
  - Thank someone who showed courage, authenticity, or vulnerability during a meeting. Send a follow up note of appreciation for their willingness to share.
  - Reach out to a colleague who is only an acquaintance for coffee or lunch to get to know them on a deeper level.
  - Stay quiet when someone seems reluctant to share, to show your openness to listening.

**Practice Civity in Your Community by bringing a sense of “I see you!” to the people you encounter as you move through your day.**

- **At a neighborhood association meeting you could ...**
  - Thank another attendee for showing up, to acknowledge the importance of their presence.
  - Ask attendees to share why they have chosen to live in this neighborhood.
  - Plan to listen more than you speak.



- **In the elevator you could ...**
  - Greet the person next to you to acknowledge that you “see” them.
  - Genuinely ask someone how their day is going.
  - Offer a compliment.
- **After a religious service you could ...**
  - Consider signing up for a service position.
  - Approach someone and ask how they’re connected to this specific congregation.
- **When you pass a stranger on the street you could ...**
  - Make eye contact with and smile, amidst the hustle and bustle.
  - Say “Good morning!” or “Hello!”
- **At your barbershop/nail salon you could...**
  - Ask the person if they want to talk, or if they would prefer the quiet.
  - Ask the person how their day is going.
  - Ask the person doing your hair/nails when they first discovered their passion.
- **At a cultural event you could ...**
  - Make a goal to interact 1:1 with someone who you don’t know.
  - Consider asking questions like, “What are you finding most enjoyable here?”
- **At your city council meeting you could ...**
  - Thank the mayor or council member for their willingness to listen.
  - Validate someone’s differing perspective by saying, “I hear you” or “I appreciate you sharing AND (instead of but) ....”
  - Affirm the effort that another attendee has made to be there.

**The fact is, there are infinite possibilities for making civity happen!**

- **In an online gaming forum, you could ...**
  - Ask someone how the virtual reality experience adds to their life.
- **At a coffee shop you could ...**
  - Ask the barista to share where their love of coffee came from.



- **At the grocery store you could ...**
  - Ask someone in line what they love about a specific product in their cart.
  - After unloading, offer to take someone's cart back for them
  
- **At the dog park you could ...**
  - Ask another dog owner about their pet's adoption/rescue story.
  
- **At the gym you could ...**
  - Ask a personal trainer to share the inspiration behind their health journey.
  
- **In a 12-step support meeting you could ...**
  - Ask someone to share their recovery story.
  - Ask what kind of support they need from someone as an ally.
  
- **At the airport you could ...**
  - Ask the person next to you where they're headed or how they feel about their upcoming trip.
  
- **Almost anywhere you encounter other people ...**
  - You can interact with them in a way that lets them know that you see them as a person.