

PRESENT MOMENT SANGHA COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

PURPOSE: To enable safety and well-being, so that all members can share and express their thoughts and feelings, using 'I statements' free of any intention to fix or correct others.

The Mindful Guide to Straight Talk - Nine tips for engaging in meaningful communication. (sourced from <https://www.mindful.org/the-mindful-guide-to-straight-talk/> & edited slightly for group circle sharing)

1. Be present and welcoming

Be 100% present. Set aside the distractions of things undone from yesterday, things to do tomorrow. Practice hospitality. We all learn most effectively in spaces that welcome us. Welcome others to this group and this work, and presume that you are welcomed.

2. Listen deeply to learn

Listen mindfully to what is said; listen to the feelings beneath the words. Listen to yourself as well. Strive to achieve a balance between listening and reflecting, speaking and responding. You determine the extent to which you want to participate and share.

3. No fixing

Each of us is here to discover our own truths, to listen to our own inner teacher and to take our own inner journey. We are not here to “fix” or “correct” what we perceive as broken or incorrect in another. **Our sharing time, after a talk or teaching, is a time of sharing one’s personal experiences, thoughts and feelings in relation to that teaching. It is not a time of discussion and/or debate or cross talk.**

4. Suspend judgment and assumptions and seek understanding

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 are more informed. Our assumptions are usually invisible to us, yet they under-gird our worldview. By identifying our assumptions, we can set them aside and open our viewpoints to greater possibilities.

5. Speak your truth and respect the truth 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 another’s. Speaking your truth is not debating, correcting, or interpreting what another has said. Own your truth by speaking for yourself, using “I” statements.

6. Maintain confidentiality

Create a safe space by respecting the confidential nature and content of discussions held in the circle. What is said in the group stays here; what is learned in the group leaves here.

7. Respect silence

Silence is a rare gift in our busy world. After you or someone else has spoken, take time to reflect, without immediately filling the space with words. Look inward and listen to yourself in the silence.

8. When things get difficult, turn to wonder

If you find yourself disagreeing with another, becoming judgmental, uncomfortable, or shutting down try turning to wonder: “I wonder what brought them to this place?” “I wonder what my reaction can teach me?”

9. Trust the group

In the group, all voices are valued equally. All contributions are welcomed and respected. The group can be the genesis of connection, well-being and growth.