

Across the Divide - Goals and Ground Rules

The Difference

The goals describe the kind of conversation we'd love to have.

The ground rules describe the minimum behavior needed to make that conversation possible.

Goals

Across the Divide is for people who want to have real conversations across political, religious, and philosophical differences.

We hope participants will:

- Be curious.
- Listen well.
- Explain their views honestly.
- Ask sincere questions.
- Try to understand before trying to persuade.
- Attempt to represent others' views fairly.
- Learn something new.
- Occasionally change their minds.
- Build friendships with people they disagree with.

These are goals, not requirements. Nobody does them perfectly.

Ground Rules

The ground rules are simpler. They're the minimum standards for participating. If someone repeatedly or seriously violates them, they may be asked to leave.

1. Don't make it personal.

Disagree with ideas. Don't insult, mock, or attack people.

2. No threats, harassment, or abusive behavior.

This should be a place where people feel safe speaking.

3. Don't put words in people's mouths.

Try to represent other people's views fairly, especially when you disagree with them.

4. Share the air.

Don't constantly interrupt, dominate, or derail the conversation.

5. Participate in good faith.

Don't troll, bait, or show up just to start fights.

6. Respect confidentiality.

If a conversation is understood to be private, keep it private.

7. Listen to the moderators.

Moderators may occasionally need to redirect the discussion or make judgment calls. Please work with them.