

Book Group Discussion Guidelines

Share responsibility for including all voices in the conversation. If you tend to have a lot to say, make sure you leave sufficient space to hear from others. If you tend to stay quiet in group discussions, challenge yourself to contribute so others can learn from you. Listen without formulating a response.

Listen respectfully. Don't interrupt, turn to technology, or engage in private conversations while others are speaking. Use attentive, courteous body language. Please mute your computer when others are speaking

Be open to changing your perspectives based on what you learn from others. Try to explore new ideas and possibilities. Think critically about the factors that have shaped your perspectives. Seriously consider points-of-view that differ from your current thinking. In short, do not enter conversation with the idea that your ideas are set, or with the idea that the other person is right or wrong.

Understand that we are bound to make mistakes in this space, as anyone does when approaching complex tasks or learning new skills. Strive to see your mistakes and others' as valuable elements of the learning process. If something being said is offensive to you, share what you found offensive and why.

Understand that your words have effects on others. Speak with care. If you learn that something you've said was experienced as disrespectful or marginalizing, listen carefully and try to understand that perspective. Learn how you can do better in the future.

Understand that others will come to these discussions with different experiences from yours. Be careful about assumptions and generalizations you make based only on your own experience. Be open to hearing and learning from other perspectives.

Be aware that while everyone's opinions are valid, overtly racist, or disparaging comment will not be tolerated.

Personal stories shared in this group are assumed to be confidential. IF you wish to use a story in another forum or conversation you must get permission.

Sample Guidelines for Social Justice Education Contexts (Sensoy & Diangelo p. 8)

- Strive for intellectual humility. Be willing to grapple with challenging ideas.

- Differentiate between opinion--which everyone has--and informed knowledge, which comes from sustained experience, study, and practice. Hold your opinions lightly and with humility.
- Notice your own defensive reactions and attempt to use these reactions as entry points for gaining deeper self-knowledge, rather than as a rationale for closing off.