

Standards of Presence: Group Guidelines

The Approach: Co-creating a Productive Environment

We have found that groups that come together for any purpose, including learning or working together, benefit from an environment of security. A truly safe group atmosphere provides the basis for personal and professional resourcefulness and transformation, for accelerated learning, and for inspired collaboration. These guidelines provide a container of safety for any group.

The Underlying Principle: Acceptance

The primary underlying principle of the Standards of Presence is acceptance. Acceptance of ourselves, of others, and of any situation allows for the expansion of the skills and qualities we want to develop.

The Practice: Intention

Each person in the group agrees to practice these standards to the best of their ability. We establish these standards for each situation, and the group decides if any standard needs to be edited to fit this particular group. The co-creation of this group's environment for exploration begins with intention.

It is my intention to . . .

1

. . . maintain confidentiality.

- What I see and hear that is personal or specific to another within the group will stay here.
- When sharing the essence of someone else's story, without the names and specific details, I agree to share in an honoring manner that recognizes the original person's unique merit.

2

. . . have a beginner's mind.

- I remain open to new ideas.
- I see every interaction as a possibility for learning.
- I allow myself to try on information for a while, as it stands.

3

. . . focus on what's working.

- I focus on the 98% (or more) that is working.
- What I focus on expands.
- What I perceive in others I strengthen in myself.

4

. . . connect at a deep level.

- I practice opening to the essence of what is being conveyed.
- I practice opening my creative and life-affirming mind.
 - I get out of my limiting and judgmental mind.
 - I release the need to evaluate and judge, at least for now, in the moment.
- I am fixed firmly in my body as I connect with others.

5

. . . claim my experience as my own.

- I speak in "I" statements.
- I focus on the parts that are excellent, particularly in myself and particularly when learning or exploring new areas.
- I release telling others what they should do, feel, or believe, how they should act, etc.

Adapted from *The Standards of Presence* by permission of Coach For Life and the Foundation for Inspired Learning.
Original available at www.inspiredlearning.org.

6

... listen deeply and with honor.

- I am 100% engaged and focus my positive attention on the person speaking.
- I refrain from side talk, cross talk, or interrupting when someone is contributing.
- I refrain from formulating my response until the person sharing is complete.
- I refrain from making repetitive comments or drawing attention to myself and away from the person speaking.
- I re-spect, I look again with new eyes.
 - I release anticipating what the person is going to say.
 - I see it as an opportunity to be fascinated by another.
 - I look for the gifts being contributed – their intentions, authenticity, ideas, etc.
- I allow the person sharing to indicate that he or she is complete.

7

... give only authentic and positive acknowledgment and support.

- I am authentic while giving only positive feedback.
- I keep it simple and speak to the essence of what I experienced.
- I maintain contact (eye contact if possible) with the person to whom I am giving support, while remaining fully present in my body.
- I allow this session to stand on its own, and I release comparing it to past sessions, experiencing each moment from a fresh perspective.
- I notice when I want to give unsolicited advice, criticism, counseling or consulting, then release it without sharing it.

8

... fully receive acknowledgment and support.

- I am open to receiving acknowledgment as the gift it is, and I really let it sink in.
- I maintain contact (eye contact if possible) with the person acknowledging me while remaining fully present in my own body.
- I respond with a simple “Thank you,” and I refrain from lengthy comments back to the person acknowledging me.

9

... practice self care and self responsibility, and allow others to do the same.

- I maintain a safe space for myself. I listen to and respect the wisdom of my body, heart, and mind.
- When something feels like a judgment or advice, I ask that it be reframed.
- When I have a judgment, I thank the voice inside me for sharing, and I choose a more resourceful thought and focus.
- I allow others to take care of themselves.

10

... be fully present.

- I maintain these agreements in and out of the learning space.
- I am here on time to start and after all breaks.
- I stay for the entire course.
- I wear my nametag in a visible place. (In a conference call, I state my name when speaking.)
- I am free from the effects of mind altering substances.
- I allow my intuition and my multiple intelligences to guide me.