

Promoting Civility at Public Meetings

Part II: Practice



Right Versus Right

October 2003

Question:

Okay, so now we understand what civility is and the role it plays. What specific strategies have local officials used to promote greater civility at their meetings?

Answer:

We polled various local official listserves and received some helpful ideas. The strategies fall into three major categories:

1. Measures agencies can take generally to promote civility;
2. Strategies for dealing with specific controversial items or instances of incivility; and
3. Thoughts on gadflies.

These generally deal with civility between elected officials and the public. Techniques for promoting civility among elected officials could be considered as another category.

Quote Unquote...

The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.

– KENNETH BLANCHARD

Am I not destroying my enemies when I make friends of them?

– ABRAHAM LINCOLN

We learn more from welcoming criticism than rendering judgment.

– ATTRIBUTED TO JIRI JELINEK

The Importance of the Presiding Official

Many of the elected officials responded by emphasizing the role of the presiding official at meetings. Here are some of the experiences people shared:

- The City of Pleasanton, in conjunction with the Pleasanton School District, developed a “Community of Character” program. The elements are: integrity, honesty, responsibility, respect, compassion and self-discipline. At the beginning of each council meeting, the mayor points to a plaque that describes our Community of Character and goes through the elements. He then goes on to say, “This forum is not a place to attack neighbors or each other. With self-discipline and respect, keep to your five minutes of time to speak.” “This has worked out very well, and our meetings have been very civil.”— Council Member Steve Brozosky, Pleasanton
- “At our council meetings, we ask folks before ‘Matters From The Audience’ (which we do at the beginning of our meetings) and public hearings not to applaud, boo or otherwise make remarks about other people’s testimony. I try to appeal to their sense of fairness by saying that we know how hard it is to get up to speak at council meetings, and out of respect for each person’s feelings, we should allow them to have their say without comment from the public. I have found in my 11 years in office that if you ask nicely and explain it as a courtesy to others, almost everyone complies.”— Former Mayor Bev Perry, Brea
- “The presiding officer controls the emotions of the crowd a great deal. He or she sets the tone for public comments by reflecting an openness and interest in public input, and by setting ground rules for time and constructive discourse. The mood turns ugly if the public thinks: 1) the matter has already been decided; 2) the council doesn’t care about public input; or 3) the council is

being impolite or inconsiderate of the public it serves.” – City Manager Kevin Northcraft, Tulare

In this regard, it is important to remember that the presiding official is the protector of the process. His or her role is to make sure that all viewpoints are heard, decision-makers have all the information they need, and the public feels its input matters to the decision.

Some agencies have
discussed and adopted a
more specific commitment
with respect to civility.

Valuing Dissension Is an Important Element of Democracy

One Bay Area community has made a point of recognizing that differing opinions are the cornerstone of the democratic process. Dana Whitson, city manager of Sausalito, writes:

- Our city council has worked very hard to embrace dissension as a civic right. Part of that tradition means that our citizens treat everyone respectfully and honor other citizens’ right to have a viewpoint that is different than their own. The mayor usually reminds citizens to be respectful, including the withholding of applause or catcalls. This nearly always works, but we have found that simple peer group pressure (citizens “shushing” those who are impolite) works wonders.

- ...Each community develops a culture around its public life. A council cannot change a culture based on incivility overnight, but its members can create a climate where trust and respect can flourish. In that type of climate, civility will grow. Unfortunately, many communities shun dissension, which is viewed as impolite and as a breakdown in the deliberative process.
- ...Because dissension has become more widely embraced as a community value [in Sausalito], our public meetings have become more inclusive, respectful and harmonious. The public regularly comments that democracy is alive and well in Sausalito, and citizens from all walks of life and economic circumstances (from the homeless to wealthy individuals) feel equally comfortable and accepted in the council chambers. As a result, lack of civility is rarely a problem for us.

Santa Cruz Council Member Ed Porter emphasizes that it is important to respect what the public is saying. He says that when elected officials give short shrift to someone's input, it can be devastating to the speaker and can result in a hateful reaction. Part of this respect, according to many of those who responded, is making sure that the public comment periods are appropriately timed.

For example, according to former Mayor Audra Gibson of Mt. Shasta, that council's practice is to make sure the public has adequate time to be heard and allow for lengthy discussion of issues so long as everyone maintains a mutually respectful attitude.

On the respect issue, two city attorneys counsel that it is important to remain aware of body language, both positive and negative. Facing the speaker, sitting still and making eye contact all indicate that you are listening. Crossing your arms, rolling your eyes, grimacing and turning your chair away from the speaker all signal that you are not listening.

These thoughts were shared by Michael Jenkins and Michael Colantuono, each of whom have

Pledge of Civility

This pledge is adapted from the Pledge of Civility adopted by the California Public Employee Retirement System Board.

- The manner in which we govern ourselves is often as important as the positions we take.
- The organization's collective decisions will be better – and truer to our mission – when differing views have had the opportunity to be fully vetted and considered.
- All those who appear before the organization's board and committees have the right to be treated with respect, courtesy and openness. We value all input.
- Accordingly, we commit to conduct ourselves at all times with civility and courtesy, to both those with whom the board interacts and to each other. We also pledge to endeavor to correct ourselves, should our conduct fall below this standard.

served as counsel to a number of cities and special districts.

These attorneys also noted that it is always best to treat the audience with respect and in the manner that responsible adults wish to be treated. In general, it is better to serve as an

example than to be perceived as a bully or an object of ridicule. As Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "You do not lead by hitting people over the head -- that's assault, not leadership."

Codes of Civility

Some agencies have discussed and adopted a more specific commitment with respect to civility. For example, Professor Craig Dunn at California State University, San Diego, shares that the governing boards with which he has worked find the Pledge of Civility useful (see "Pledge of Civility," on page 71).

Dan Hentschke, general counsel to the 34-member San Diego Water Authority, also has observed that such pledges or codes can make a difference. The authority's commitment to civil behavior was the product of a series of facilitated workshops (see "Commitment to Civil Behavior," page 75).

Another approach is to adopt rules of decorum. Sample rules are posted on the League of California Cities website at www.cacities.org/samplerules.

It can be frustrating for the public to be told to keep their remarks brief and to the point, when it appears that council members are not endeavoring to do the same.

Dealing With Controversial Items On the Agenda

Mayor Liz Harris of Big Bear Lake finds it useful to meet in advance with the city manager to discuss strategies for presiding over the discussion at difficult council meetings. Such meetings are an effort to anticipate the kinds of issues that are likely to be raised and what the appropriate response should be. Is the speaker raising an informational issue that staff can help clarify? Can/should an issue be separated into parts, to identify what there is reasonable consensus on and what are the points of controversy? Are there some issues that may need further work or that can be postponed if an unexpected development occurs?

Others suggest that it can be helpful for staff to meet with stakeholders on a particular agenda item to make sure that:

- 1) The public has all of the information that the agency has;
- 2) The public knows that the agency understands their concerns; and
- 3) Possible resolutions to the controversy can be explored.

Staff can also sometimes play a role in encouraging the public to respect the agency's elected officials. It can be useful to take breaks in discussions that get too heated.

Mayor Ed Henderson of Napa reports that sometimes self-deprecating humor can defuse a tense situation at a meeting. He explains that the humor should not be at anyone's expense and that elected officials should conduct themselves with the grace and dignity befitting their office.

More Assertive Techniques

One city attorney reported a situation involving the award of grants, noting that there were always more grant-seekers than funds. The recommendations on grant recipients were made by a committee of volunteers, who became the objects of verbal attacks by disappointed grant-seekers. Some volunteers resigned rather than continue to endure the lack of civility. In response, decision-makers let it be known repeatedly that such outbursts would affect their decisions on the worthiness of organizations to receive city funds, both now and in the future. According to the city attorney, this seemed to cause the uncivil behavior to simmer down.

City attorneys Jenkins and Colantuono note that disruptive people can be ejected from meetings if necessary. They recommend establishing a record that the disruptive people were given ample warnings and opportunities to leave or reform their behavior voluntarily. Calling in the sergeant-of-arms should be a last resort.

Reaping What You Sow

Tulare City Manager Kevin Northcraft believes that the way in which council members treat each other makes a difference. He observes, "The civility provided in the council chambers by staff and council helps set the tone. We do annual team building for both groups to make sure that disagreements on issues don't get personal. The staff always formally addresses council members as 'Mr./Mrs. Mayor and Council,' uses their own titles and last names at meetings and avoids interrupting the council during their discussions. Our council is respectful to each other, the public and the staff and avoids negative comments about any of them."

Others suggest that council members abide by similar time limits for comments set for the public, keeping their remarks on a given matter brief and limited to the merits of the

Values at Stake in This Dilemma

- Trustworthiness
- Responsibility
- ✓ **Respect**
- Loyalty
- ✓ **Compassion**
- ✓ **Fairness**

issues – not the personalities involved. It can be frustrating for the public to be told to keep their remarks brief and to the point, when it appears that council members are not endeavoring to do the same.

On Gadflies

Virtually every community has them: individuals who show up at every meeting to voice their complaints, often repetitiously and sometimes with a tenuous grip on reality and the facts. No one responding to our query had a magic solution to the problem that these individuals' contributions to public meetings create, often by crowding out others who have more specific and constructive reasons for wanting to share their views with the council.

Rich Holmer, city manager of Riverbank, however, shared a chapter from a book he is writing, called *City [Silly] Hall*. The chapter is on gadflies. One particularly poignant account is of Jake, a longtime community resident who ultimately fell on hard times. Here's an excerpt:

The Institute for Local Government website has a section to assist local agencies in learning some of the ins and outs of participating in the process as it relates to land use matters. The site explains the land use decision-making process (including a glossary of terms) and includes a "public hearing checklist" to assist members of the public in preparing for public hearings. Visit www.ca-ilg.org/publicparticipation.

As for Jake, we saw less and less of him [over the years]. His attendance at council and historical society meetings became less frequent. He looked withered and thinner, many times un-shaven, and wearing the same wool shirt. The chief had told me his officers had roused him on more than one occasion for sleeping in the parks or in his truck.

It was a crisp December night and I had just exited early from a transit tax meeting....I began the 10-mile drive home [and]... Starbucks...beckoned to me....As the door

closed behind me, I was taken aback to see Jake...sitting at a table, newspapers covering its top, and a large cup of coffee sitting precariously at its edge. He looked up and our eyes met. I walked over and gave him an obligatory handshake. We exchanged small talk and he mentioned that the police chief should let people sleep in their automobiles. I said it was good seeing him. I excused myself to purchase coffee and...started to pay the cashier when Jake rushed over and said he wanted to buy the coffee. I protested; here was a homeless person buying me a cup of coffee. It didn't feel right...but I stepped aside and said, "Thank you, Jake."...When I turned around, he was gone.

As I gazed out at the clear night sky, I remembered the second meaning of a gadfly: "A person who rouses you from complacency."... I knew I had been presented a precious gift that evening.

Gadflies undoubtedly have many different motivations. One theory is that there is a sense of personal importance and belonging that goes with their regular participation in public meetings. Another is that they truly believe that there are wrongs that need to be righted – and, of course, sometimes the gadflies are right.

The bottom line is that gadflies are an intrinsic aspect of democracy, and there really is no "solution" to gadflies except to try to understand what motivates them and appreciate the underlying democratic principle they represent. The worst strategy, of course, is to allow yourself to respond in kind to the type of angry, personal attacks gadflies are known to make. In addition to having your meetings sinking to the lowest common denominator, responding in kind also hands control over your behavior to others.

Commitment to Civil Behavior

To maintain a cohesive, productive working environment, the members of the San Diego County Water Authority Board of Directors have committed to:

1. Support the authority's mission;
2. Bring authority-related concerns, issues and conflicts to the authority board for discussion;
3. Offer alternative solutions when addressing a problem or issue;
4. Show respect to each other as appointed representatives of their member agencies;
5. Promote civility during board meetings and tolerate nothing less;
6. Maintain the confidentiality of material discussed during closed board meeting sessions. Similarly, do not disclose the content or substance of confidential or privileged communications relating to authority business; and
7. Limit the length of comments during board meetings to three minutes per director per item and do not repeat points that already have been stated by other directors.

More on Public Comment and Participation

Some governing bodies have a suggested time limit for public comment, noting that it is not a reflection of a lack of interest by the elected officials but a matter of mutual respect among all speakers, to make sure their key points are heard.

Coaching the public on effective techniques for participating in public hearings may be helpful. It is possible that some members of the community learned to try to persuade others by force of emotion and conviction (and possibly intimidation) rather than reason.

Is it Me or Is It You? Creating a Culture of Civility



Speaker: Michael G. Fann, ARM-P, MBA

THE
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Why Should YOU Care About Civility??

*Be kind, for everyone you meet
is fighting a hard battle.*

- Plato

Workplace Civility

I. The Law & Liability

- Hostile Work Environment
 - Title VII “Protected Classes”
 - Unwanted & Unwelcome
 - Discriminatory Behavior

- Productive Workplace Policy

Protected Classes

1. Race
2. Color
3. Religion
4. National Origin
5. Sex
6. Age
7. Disability

EEOC Guidelines

Hostile or offensive work environment

- *when the harassment is so **pervasive** that the working conditions are **unduly oppressive***

Quid pro quo

- “this for that”
- Applies to sexual harassment

Incivility & Harassment can take various forms:

VERBAL *Be respectful in what you say*

VISUAL *Be respectful in what you show*

PHYSICAL *Be respectful in what you do*

II. Civility Defined

What is “Civility”??

- 1) A polite act or expression
- 2) Formal or perfunctory politeness
- 3) The act of showing regard for others
- 4) A courteous act or acts that contribute to smoothness & ease in dealings, and social relationships

Your Personal Attitude and Outlook

“Life-enhancer” or “Well-poisoner”

Are the messages you’re sending positive or negative??

Are your words & actions lifting people up or tearing them down?

Are others hearing... ??

What you **can’t** do

or What you **can** do

What you **don’t** have

or What you **do** have

What **won’t** work

or What **will** work



Half EMPTY

Half FULL

What is “Civility”??

P.M. Forni –

Civility is a form of benevolent awareness that contains:

- Respect
- Restraint
- Consideration

What is “Civility”??

Clearly, civility has to mean something more than mere politeness. The movement will have accomplished little if all it does is get people to say, “excuse me please”, while they (figuratively) stab you in the back. Civility also cannot mean “roll over and play dead.”

- *The Meaning of Civility*
Guy & Heidi Burgess, 1997

Characteristics of “Civility”

- Politeness
- Respect
- Affirmation
- Morality
- Connection
- Accountability
- Assertiveness
- The Golden Rule
- Manners
- Tolerance
- Self-Restraint
- Focus
- Public Health
- Quality of Life

“Civility” and its Impact on the Workplace

- Recruitment and retention are difficult.
- Right skills and right personality traits are not easy to find, and can be life or death to your organization.
- Work/Life balance is critical: Care for employees at all levels so they can best provide client-centered service.
- “It’s the little things that count”

For external clients & internal staff:

- Communication
- Care
- Acknowledgement
- Courtesy
- Service

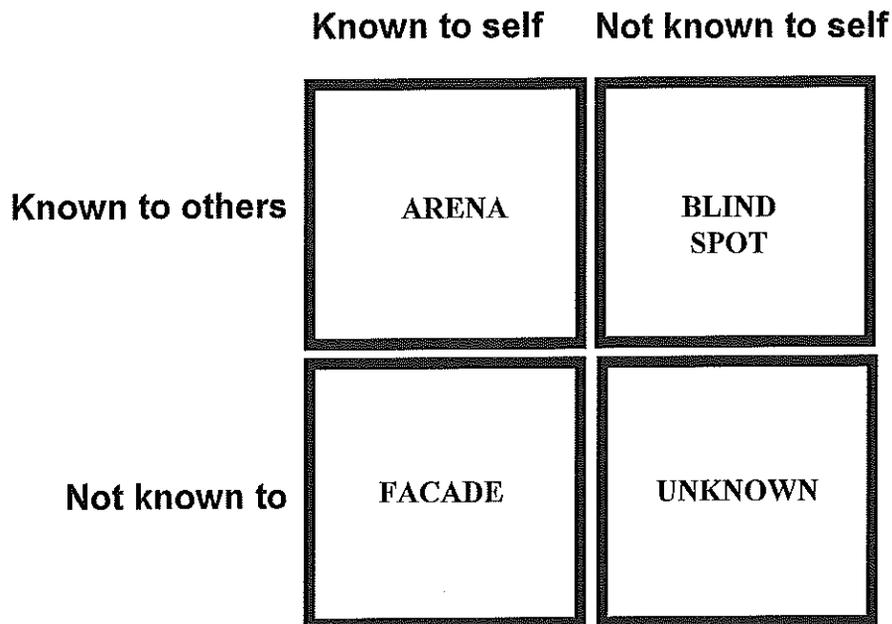
Development Dimensions Int’l
HR Consulting

III. Is it “me” or is it “you”??

Civility Survey (U.S. News)

- 89% of people interviewed said that it was a serious problem in today’s society.
- 90% of these people said they were not personally rude.

“Johari Window”



[Joseph Luft & Harry Ingham, 1955]

To thine own self be true.
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou can not then be false to any man.

[Hamlet, Wm. Shakespeare]

-- Unless we can be true to ourselves first, we cannot be true to others. --

IV. What is Workplace Incivility?

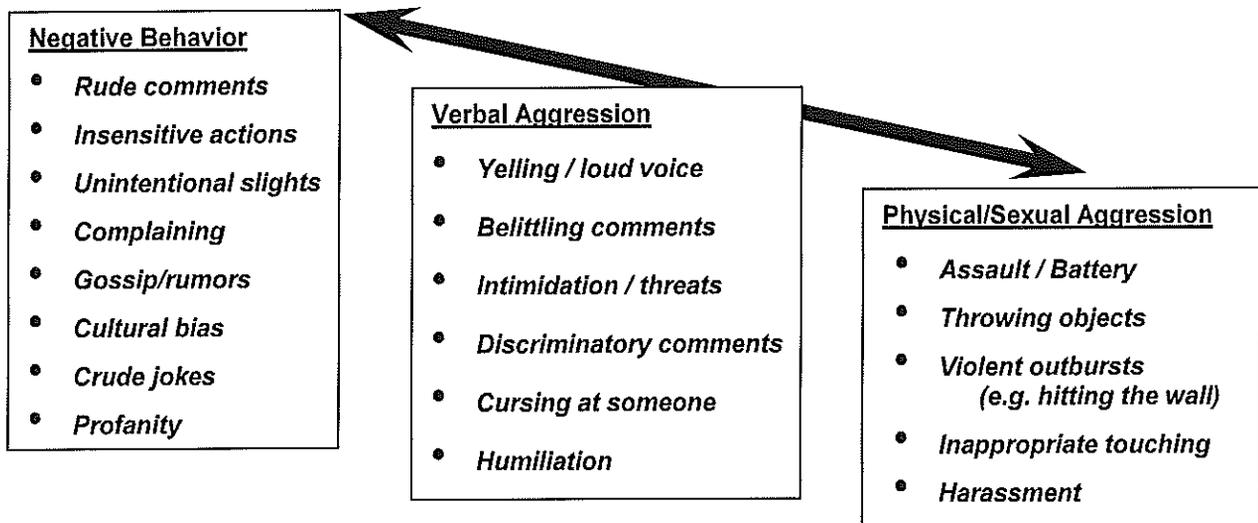
Behaviors with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect.

Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others.

Negative Behaviors

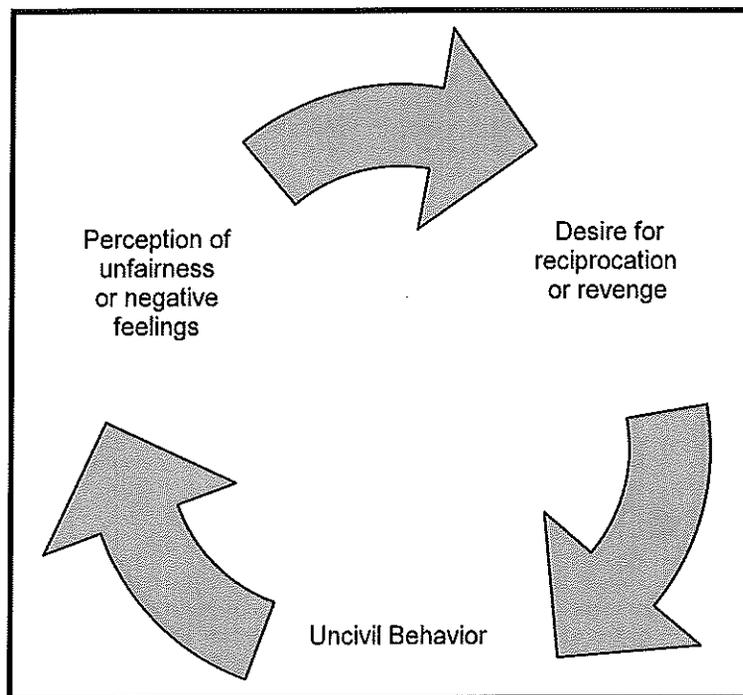
- **Behavior whose purpose is to control, insult, humiliate, denigrate, embarrass, or injure the dignity of colleagues**
- **Scape-goating**
- **Backstabbing**
- **Constant complaining**
- **Perpetuating rumors**
- **Being expected to do another's work (clean up after them)**
- **Behaviors which undermine team cohesion, staff morale, self worth and safety**
- **Unethical or dishonest behavior**
- **Ineffective, nonproductive forms of conflict resolution,**
- **Repeated failure to respond to requests**
- **Lack of respect, and/or**
- **Cultural bias**

The Incivility Continuum



The Incivility Spiral

(adapted from Andersson & Pearson, 1999)



Effects of Workplace Incivility

- Lowered morale of employees
- Reduced workplace citizenship behaviors (littering, carelessness with handling equipment and facilities, not taking care of others, etc.)
- Reduced team effectiveness
- Being uncivil to customers, clients, or others outside the immediate organization, office, or facility

Costs of Workplace Incivility

- Lost work time and productivity
- Lost employees/ high turnover
- Decrease in feelings of teamwork
- Work avoidance
- Lowered job motivation
- Health costs due to stress
- Legal costs from increased litigation
- Lost revenue due to losing members/ clients

V. Workplace Civility

TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT

● Causes

- Authoritarian Management Style
- Inconsistent or unpredictable supervision
- Acceptance of disrespectful behavior
- No conflict resolution process or training
- Individual staff members with personal insecurity
- Fear of change

● Results

- Morale _____
- Productivity _____
- Public image _____
- Workplace Injuries _____
- Employment Liability claims _____
- Exposure to Workplace Violence _____

● Organizational Communication

- the “**Grapevine**” and the “**Rumor Mill**”
 - Pro’s & Con’s
- Perception v. Reality
- Maturity, Pettiness & Personality Conflicts
- Are you “Open for Business”??

VI. “Open for Business”

- **“Open-mindedness” & Opening Lines of Communication**

- **Trust**

- **Respect** is an act of Humility and Confidence
- **Entitlement** is an attitude & worldview born of Selfishness and Arrogance
- **Insecurities** – To violate a trust due to your own insecurities is to invite distrust and a poisonous culture. Personal insecurity is the mortal enemy of “trust”...

**To “trust” is to risk loss...
To fail to the trust is to risk everything.**

- **Risk Management**

- *“Trust but Verify”* - Ronald Reagan
- *“Can” v. “Should”* - *“authorized” v. “right thing to do”*
 - Wisdom, Discernment and Moral Judgments

**Just because you can
does not mean that you should.**

- **Further Benefits of Civility**

1. Increased awareness will bring **greater respect and consideration** for all employees.
2. **Morale** will increase when everyone feels acknowledged, respected, and valued.
3. Employees will feel they truly have equal opportunities for advancement based on **competency** and **experience**.
4. **Productivity** will increase... better results & service will increase efficiencies; increased revenues will bring more resources and benefits for all employees.

● **Action Steps**

A. Policy

B. Training

C. Culture

- i. Top-Down Commitment
- ii. Core Value
- iii. “We talk about it all the time...”

from Randy Pausch’s *The Last Lecture*

- Have dignity, play fair, be charitable, and encourage creativity & enthusiasm.
- There is a skill set called “leadership.” (He) knew how to delegate, had the passion to inspire and ... established the vision, the tone. He was in charge of morale... He knew what he didn’t know, was perfectly willing to admit it and didn’t want to leave until he understood.”
- “The kind of people I want on my team are those who will help everyone else feel happy to be here.”

● **Exhibit Understanding**

- People are difficult because they either have too high or too low an opinion of themselves.
- *Arrogance and/or insecurity* are the enemies of workplace civility.

**You don’t see things as they are.
You see things as you are.**

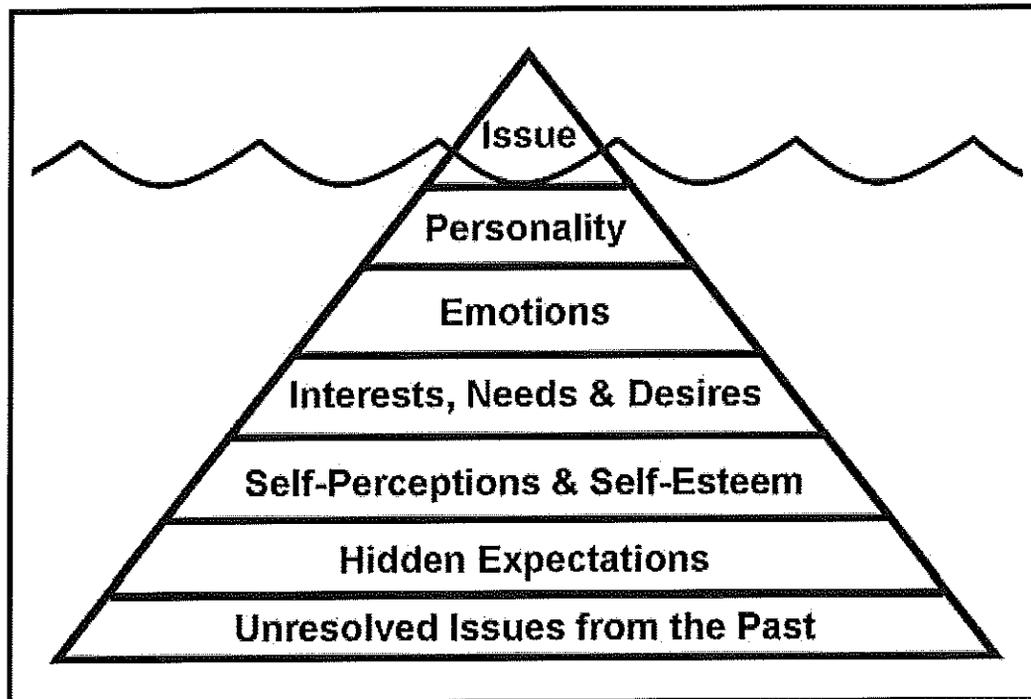
- The Talmud, Compilation of Jewish Oral Tradition, 5th Century A.D.

● **Own the Change**

Everyone cherishes the illusion that you can somehow force someone else and not do it yourself - which would be lovely - but you can't.

- Miss Manners

The Iceberg of Conflict



● **Communicating Civility**

- Remember pleasantries
- No interrupting
- Be open-minded
- Say what you mean
- Be aware of your tone and volume
- Don't argue for the sake of arguing / **PICK YOUR BATTLES**
- Be respectful, even in disagreement
- Address conflicts in private when possible
- Be aware of your own defensiveness
- De-personalize your comments
- Avoid accusations / ask questions instead
- Allow others to respond and give them your attention
- *Consider that you could be wrong*
- Use active listening skills

VII. Creating a Culture of Civility

● Clearing the Air

- Appreciate
- Inquire
- Respond

● A Culture of Civility

- Have a cooperative approach
- Be aware of underlying needs
- Recognize individual differences
- Be open to adapting position
- Leaders model civility for others
- Clearly define expectations for how employees are to treat each other
- Reward civil behavior
- Encourage stress management

● Critical Elements

- Teamwork
- Collaboration
- Trust & Risk

*If you can't bring yourself to risk and trust others,
then it's just a matter of time until they will not trust you.*

Once this happens, what happens to organizational loyalty?

- Constructive Controversy

Open-minded discussion occurring within a strong cooperative context, of various perspectives that allows disagreement, exploration and adjustment

*Think not those faithful
who praise all thy words and actions,
but those who kindly reprove thy faults.
- Socrates*

● **Parting Thoughts**

(that apply both personally & organizationally)

- **This didn't happen overnight...
and it won't be fixed overnight.**
- **Every major change takes place
with one initial first step.**
- **Obstacles are what you see
when you take your eye off the goal.**
- **You are either part of the solution,
or part of the problem.**

● **Final Thoughts**

- **Don't wait for someone to be nice to you, and
avoid "keeping score"...**
- **Don't be afraid to put yourself in "Time Out" so you
can 'cool off' before expressing yourself.**
- **Consider letting some things slide, especially
slights that you know to be unintentional.**
- **The biggest risk for your organization is not creating
a culture of anger & incivility, but rather
creating a "culture of indifference."**

**You must be the change
you want to see in the world.**

- Mahatma Gandhi

Helpful References:

- **Choosing Civility: The Twenty-Five Rules of Considerate Conduct (2002) by P.M. Forni**
- **Conflict Resolution (2001) by Daniel Dana**
- **People Styles at Work (1996) by Robert Bolton & Dorothy Grover Bolton**
- **Resolving Conflicts at Work (2005) by Kenneth Cloke & Joan Goldsmith**
- **Rude Awakenings: Overcoming the Civility Crisis in the Workplace (2002) by Giovinnella Gonthier**
- **Workplace Wars and How to End Them (1994) by Kenneth Kaye**

Additional Acknowledgments:

- **Civility in the Workplace by Kirsten W. Schwehm, PhD, University Ombudsperson, Louisiana State University**
- **Civility in the Workplace (2008) by Daniel Buccino, JHBMC/JHUSOM, Johns Hopkins Institutions, presentation for the Baltimore Psychotherapy Institute**

**Until he extends the circle of
his compassion to all living things,
man will not himself find peace.**

Albert Schweitzer

French philosopher, physician, musician & Nobel Peace Laureate

Sample Policy Language

Please ensure that any changes to your current organizational policies are reviewed completely by competent legal counsel prior to adoption.

Productive Workplace: Professionalism, Civility and Conflict Resolution

Verbal or physical conduct by any employee that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance or that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment will not be tolerated.

Employees are expected to maintain a productive work environment free from harassing or disruptive activity including threats of physical violence. Behaviors that insult, belittle, demean, disparage, aggravate, humiliate, embarrass, and/or injure the dignity of another person are considered harassing behaviors. No form of harassment will be tolerated, including sexual harassment and harassment based on race, national origin, religion, disability, pregnancy, age, military status, sex or other protected category, as provided by law. Further, employees are expected to exemplify professionalism and civility at all times when representing _____ *(city or agency)* in their interaction and discourse with fellow staff members, other representatives of the organization, and the general public.

The _____ *(city or agency)* recognizes that conflicts and disagreements will occur, therefore, employees are expected to participate in a professional conflict resolution process whenever conflicts or potential adversarial situations arise. This conflict resolution process should include the following:

When seeking to resolve conflict with another:

Be professional, polite, courteous, and respectful

Listen to what others have to say

Take into consideration that you may be wrong

Be positive and suggest ways that the situation may improve

Be willing to sincerely apologize if you have said or done anything that may have offended the other person

Understand that if the issue can't be resolved, you can always take your concerns to your immediate supervisor, department head, or human resources office

Civility in City Hall

Facilitator:

Kevin Helms, City Manager, Oak Hill, Tennessee

Panelists:

Steve Bryant, ICMA Oregon Senior Advisor, Albany, Oregon

Steve LeDoux, Town Manager, Acton, Massachusetts

Francine Ramaglia, Assistant City Manager, Wellington, Florida

Michael G. Fann, Director of Loss Control, TML Risk Mgmt Pool, Brentwood, Tennessee



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- Setting the "Civility Example" for the Community

ICMA

- **8 in 10 Americans are frustrated by the tone of political discourse**
 - <http://www.civilityinamerica.org/en/>
- **How does the public see us behave?**
- **Three video examples—As you watch consider these questions:**
 1. **Does your governing body have a code of conduct?**
 2. **What is the manager's role when things get out of control?**
 3. **What actions could the manager suggest to the governing body in anticipation of a contentious meeting?**
- **Search "Council Code of Conduct" and "Promoting Civility" in the ICMA Knowledge Network for examples**

ICMA

Steve LeDoux

Town Manager
Acton, Massachusetts
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- **Civil Interaction with the General Public**

ICMA

Today's Challenges

Today's customers:

- Are always in hurry
- Seek instant gratification
- Have higher expectations
- Are short in patience
- Feel entitled due to paying for services
- Expect technology to solve all problems

Municipalities are experiencing:

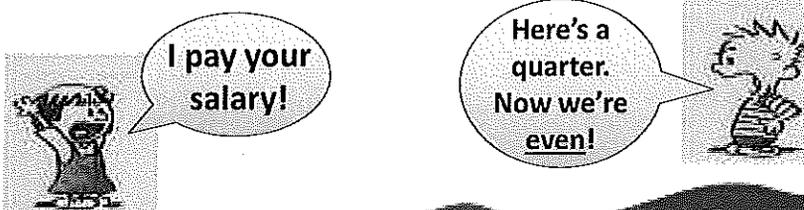
- Budget cuts
- Staff shortages
- "Piling on" of job responsibilities
- Technology growth bringing higher demands for services
- Population growth bringing new customers
- Increased accountability

IGMA



Visitors Code of Conduct

- Most policies deal with internal issues among staff
- Staff need support with situations that go beyond the definition of dealing with a “difficult customer”
 - Empowers staff to know when a line has been crossed and that the Town supports enforcement
- Provides transparency to visitors



IGMA

What Brought Us Here

- **Self-Assessment and Employee Training**
 - Met with Employee Assistance Program advisors
 - Staff overwhelmed by growing number of “difficult customers”
 - With departments understaffed, their time is more valuable
 - Conducted customer relationship training
 - When can we say “enough?” Where is the line?
 - Staff needed to be able to point to a policy, removing emotions
- **Drafting the Visitors Code of Conduct Policy**
 - Representatives from Administration, Public Safety and Social Services authored draft policy
 - Department Heads provided additional input

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What Brought Us Here

- **Approval and Acceptance**
 - Town Attorney
 - Board of Selectmen
 - Employees
- **Community outreach**
 - Announced at televised Board of Selectmen meeting
 - Posted in Community Newsletters and on Town Website
 - Prominently displayed in all municipal buildings



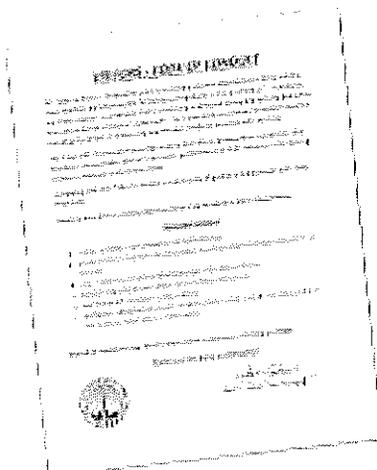
"Instead of teaching our team how to be better salespeople, maybe we should teach everyone else how to be better customers."

© Family Challenges
www.familychallenges.com

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Our Policy

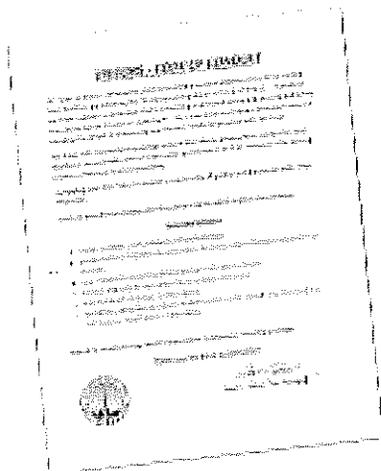
- The Town of Acton's employees **strive to provide a positive experience** for those visiting Town facilities, by following the "Professional Standards of Conduct Policy."
- In addition, the Town supports a workplace that is **conducive to personal safety and security** and is free from **intimidation, threats or violent acts.**



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Our Policy

- The Town **does not tolerate workplace violence** including the threat of violence by anyone who conducts business with the Town.
- Complying with this code of conduct is **required by all people doing business with Town employees.**
- Violators who do not comply with this policy **may be asked to leave the premises.**



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Expected Conduct

- Avoid causing **disturbances or disruptions**
- Show **respect** for others, **building facilities** and **personal property** of others
- Use **common courtesy** when interacting with others
- Do not engage in any **lewd or offensive behavior**
- Any form of **violence** is prohibited
- **Smoking, drinking alcohol** or **appearing to be under the influence** of any illegal substance is prohibited

Repeated violations may result in permanent suspension of facility privileges

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Benefits for All

- **Benefits for Visitors**

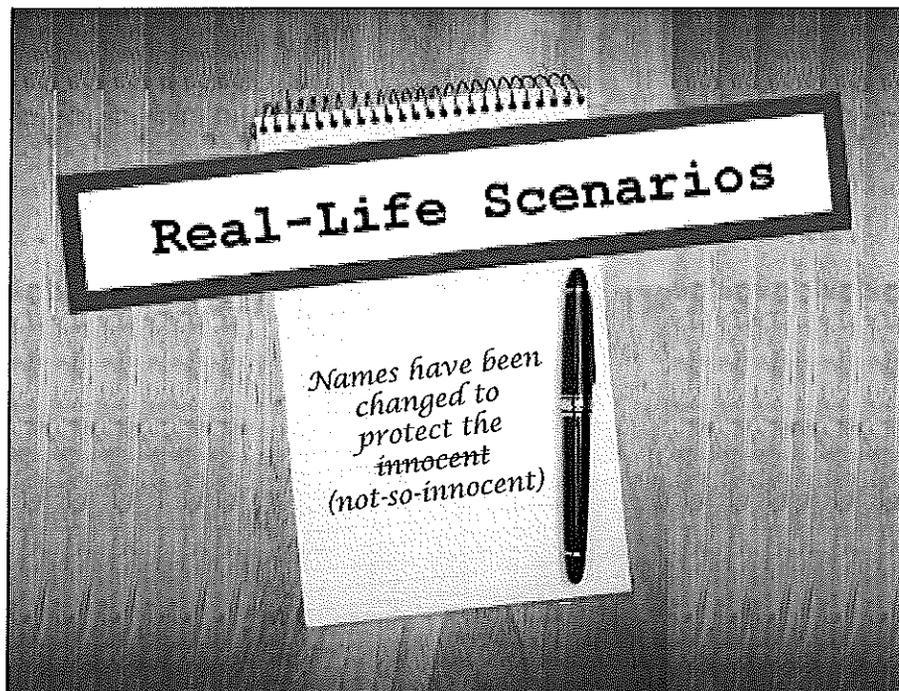
- Promotes fair and consistent utilization of staff and resources
- Reduces cost to the Town and taxpayers
- Alleviates bystander discomfort



- **Benefits for Staff**

- Improves employee morale and instills confidence
- Increases productivity and decreases stress
- Addresses safety concerns
- Provides an expectation of civil behavior
- Breaks the “enabling” cycle and reduces susceptibility to bullying

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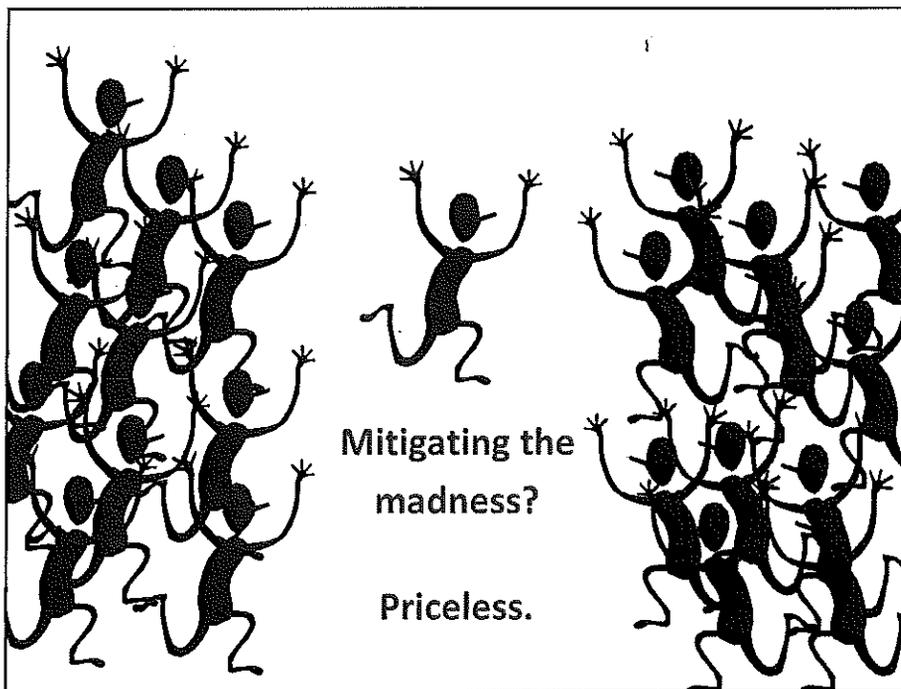






Cost Implications

10 customers over the course of 5 staff hours @ \$35/hr
Total Cost: \$1750
Total Cost: \$175
This continues each week for a year
Total Cost: \$91,000

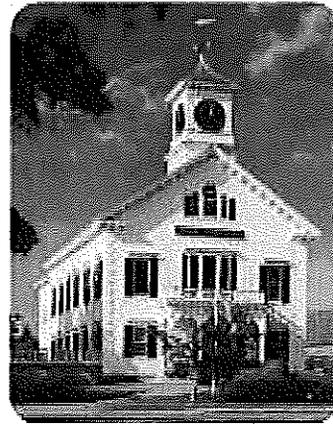


Mitigating the madness?

Priceless.

Code Of Conduct Allows For:

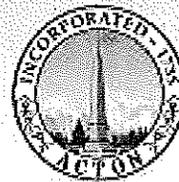
- A safe work environment
 - An expectation of civil behavior
 - Professional interaction between staff and customers
- A welcoming Town Hall experience
 - Equal and fair treatment of all customers
 - Efficient time management for staff
- Upper Management support



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Questions/Comments?

Steven L. Ledoux
Town Manager
Acton, Massachusetts
manager@acton-ma.gov



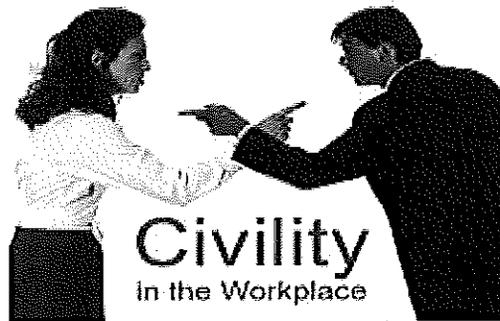
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99th ANNUAL CONFERENCE
BOSTON
NEW ENGLAND
September 22-25, 2013

Francine L. Ramaglia

Assistant City Manager

Wellington, Florida

framaglia@wellingtonfl.gov



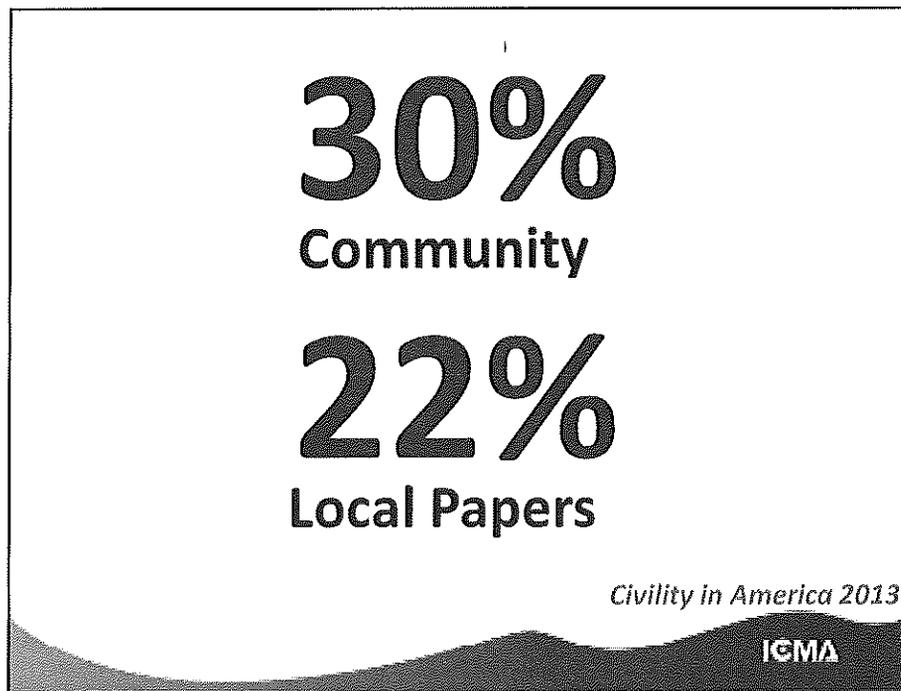
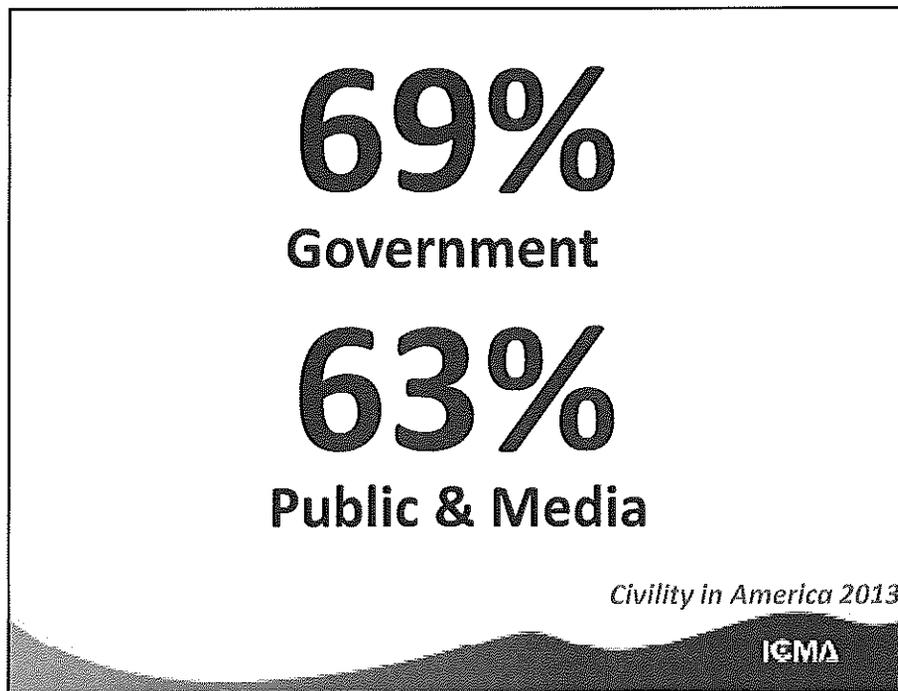
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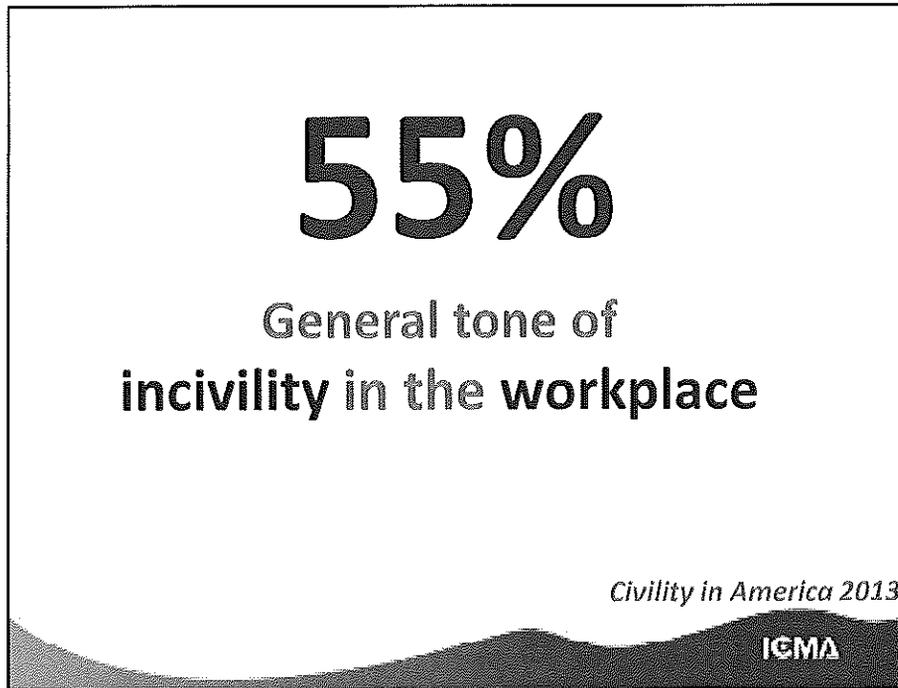
68%

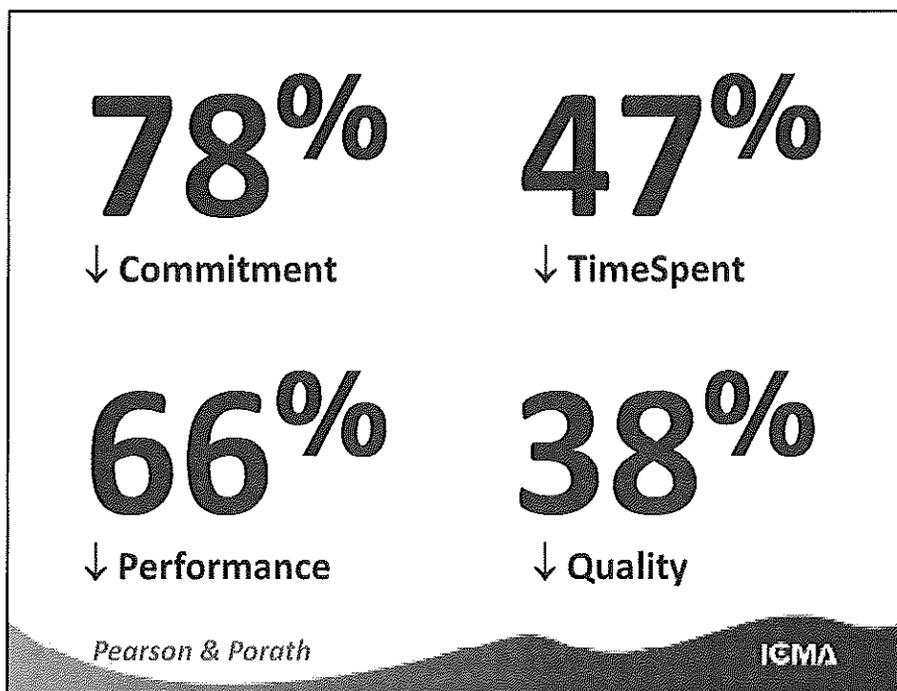
Political incivility deters
qualified people from
working in public service

Civility in America 2013

IGMA







25%

**Admit to taking frustration
out on customer**

Pearson & Porath

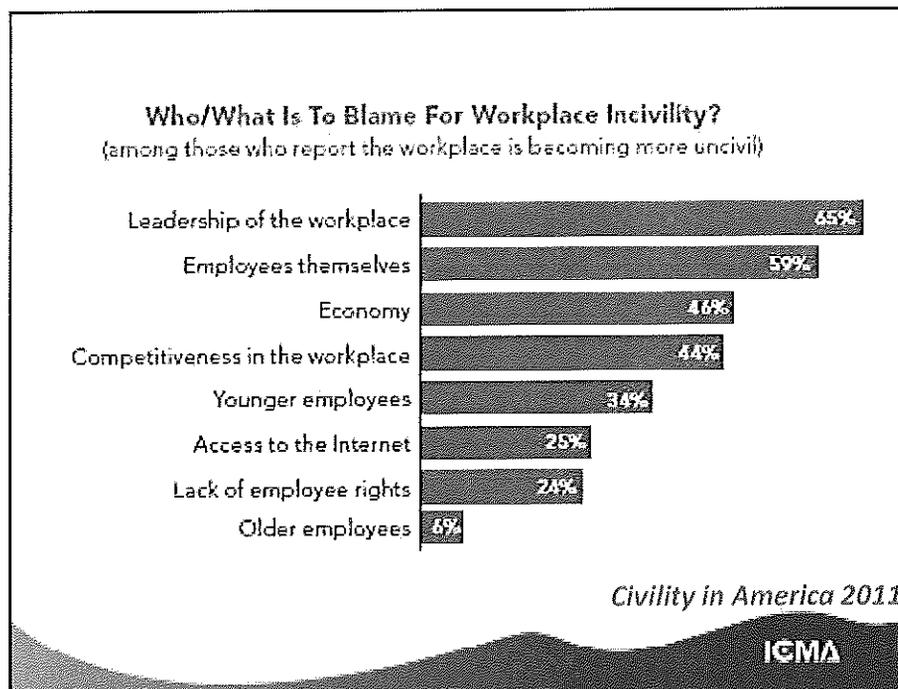
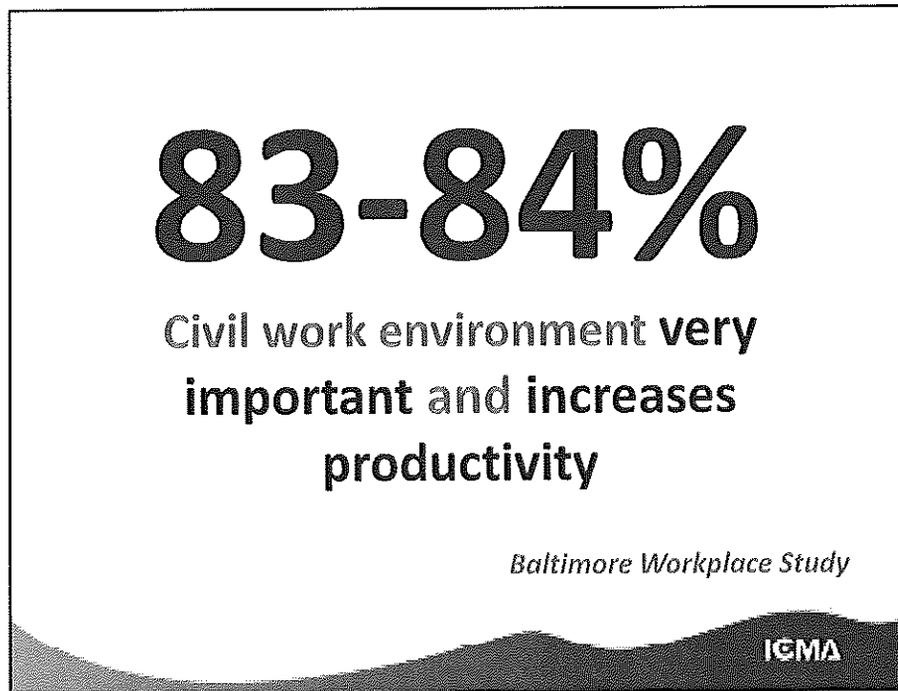
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40%

**Workers leaving jobs as a
result of being treated rudely**

Boston Globe

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**THE
NO ASSHOLE
RULE**

*Building a Civilized Workplace
and Surviving One That Isn't*



ROBERT I. SUTTON, PHD

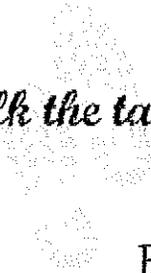
Are you a Certified ARSE?

*Find out with an easy online
24 question self assessment:*

<http://electricpulp.com/guykawasaki/arise/>

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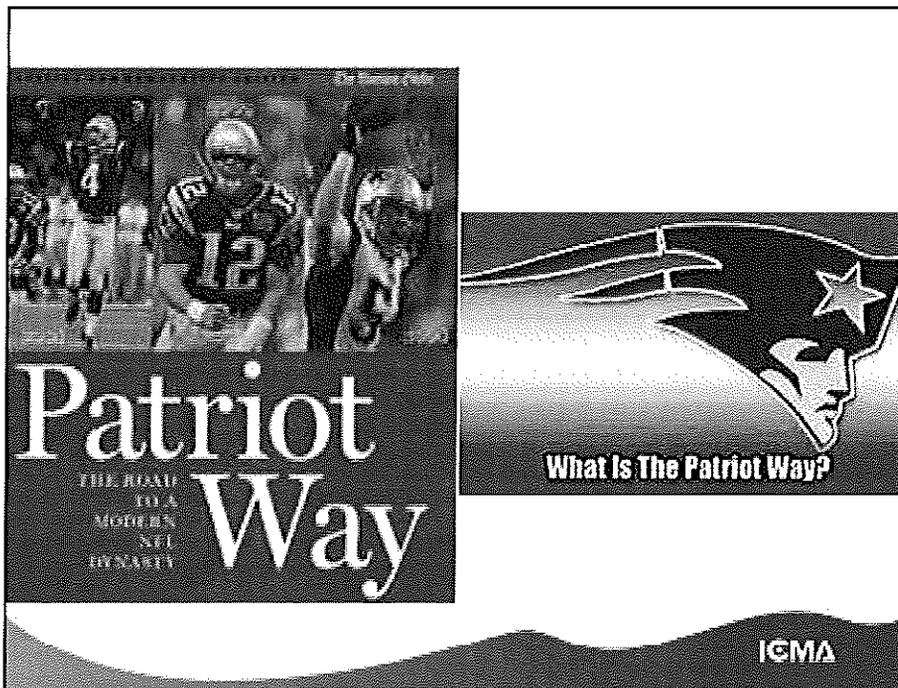
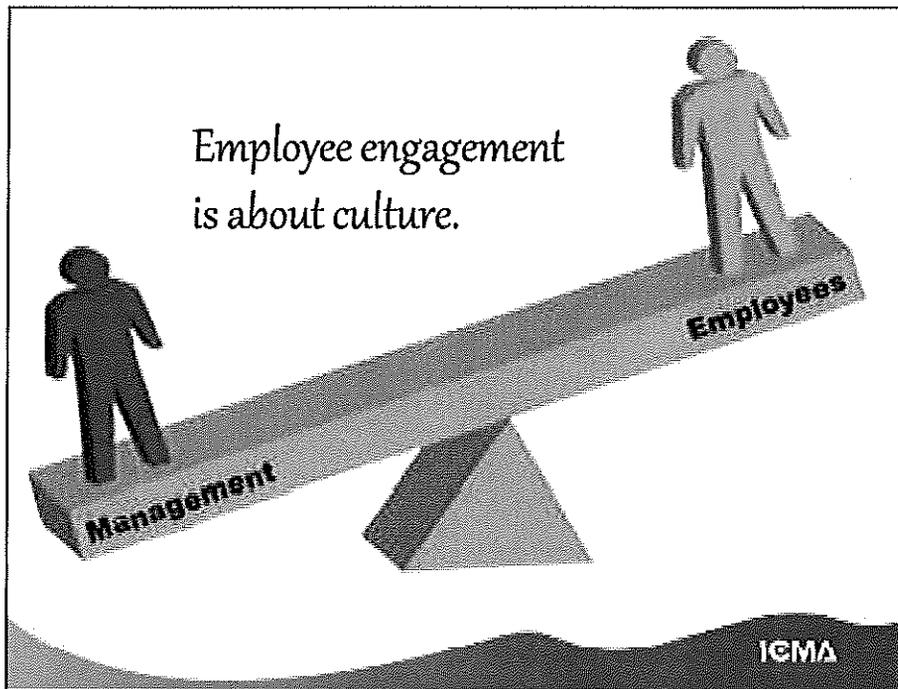
walk the talk.

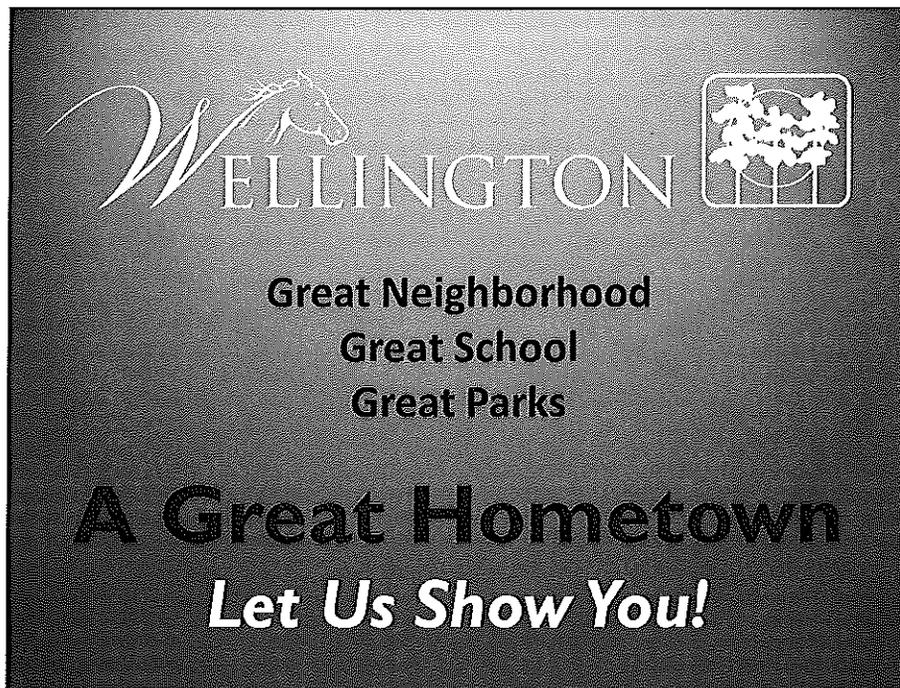
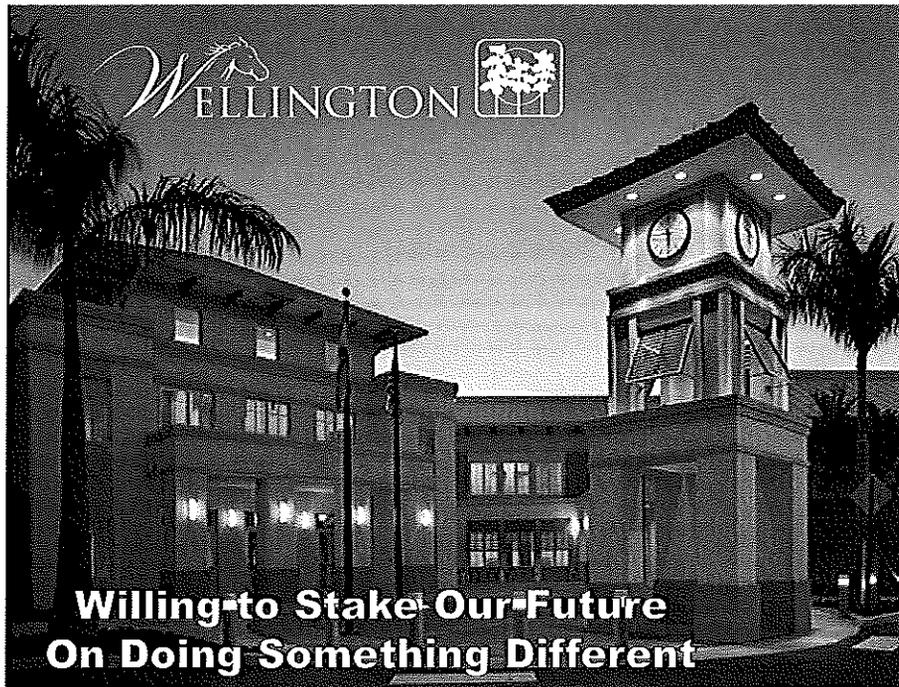


Example is not the main thing in
influencing others, it is the only thing.

-Albert Schweitzer

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VALUES

Excellence and Innovation

Integrity and Professionalism

Community and Accountability

CORE COMPETENCIES

Customer Service

Communication

Teamwork

Leadership and Development



Bringing It All Together

The graphic is set against a dark background. At the top left, a house-shaped diagram is divided into three sections: the roof is labeled 'Neighborhood Renaissance & Engagement'; the main body contains the text 'Protecting our Investment', 'Respecting the Environment', 'Economic Development', and 'Responsive Government'; the base is a box labeled 'A Great Hometown'. To the right of the house are two newspaper clippings and a photograph of a large group of people. Below the house is a pyramid with 'MORE' in the top section and 'CORE' in the bottom section. To the right of the pyramid, the text reads 'Providing Services the Community Wants, Needs and are willing to Pay for'. At the bottom right is the Wellington logo, which includes the word 'WELLINGTON' and a small crest.

Neighborhood Renaissance & Engagement

Protecting our Investment
Respecting the Environment
Economic Development
Responsive Government

A Great Hometown

MORE

CORE

Providing Services the Community
Wants, Needs and are
willing to Pay for

WELLINGTON



You're So Rude!
New #1 iPhone & iPad Etiquette App

Hi, we're the Etiquette Patrol and we're here to make it easy for you to tell someone that he/she is being rude (or polite!). In fact, WE DO IT FOR YOU! Not only that, here's what else we have for you:

- Own 50 tags to help you get your etiquette points
- Works by text
- Etiquette tips that will surely turn you into a pro
- And more!

Best of all... The app is FREE!
Get It Now!

Download on the App Store

IGMA

Michael G. Fann

Director of Loss Control
TML Risk Management Pool
Brentwood, Tennessee
mgfann@thepool-tn.org

- Civility on a Personal Level
- Is It Me, or Is It You?

**Why should
you care
about civility
on an
interpersonal
level?**



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**Be kind, for everyone you meet
is fighting a hard battle.**

-- Plato

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Policy On Workplace Civility

In summation:

Be respectful in what you say (*verbal*)

Be respectful in what you show (*visual*)

Be respectful in what you do (*physical*)

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What is Civility??

- **Definition**
 1. A polite act or expression
 2. Formal or perfunctory politeness
 3. The act of showing regard for others
 4. A courteous act or acts that contribute to smoothness & ease in dealings, and social relationships
- **How you treat people...**
- ***Life-enhancer* or *Well-poisoner*?**

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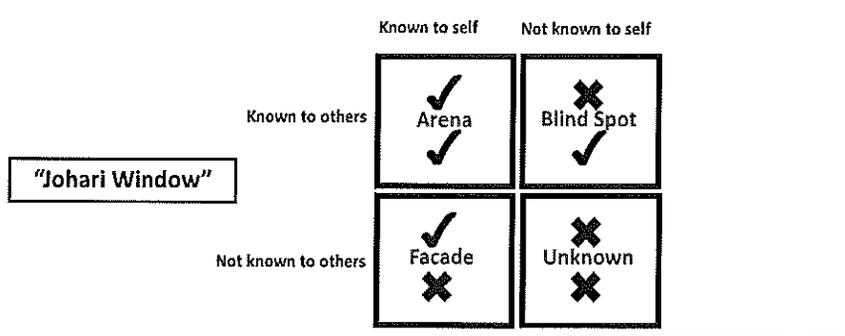
US News: Civility Survey

- 89% of people interviewed said that it was a serious problem in today's society.
- 90% of these same people said they were not personally rude.
- 50% say it is extremely serious.
- 78% said civility has deteriorated considerably over the past ten years.
- 90% of those polled believe it contributes to the increasing violence in this country.
- 85% believe it contributes to eroding crucial values such as respecting others.



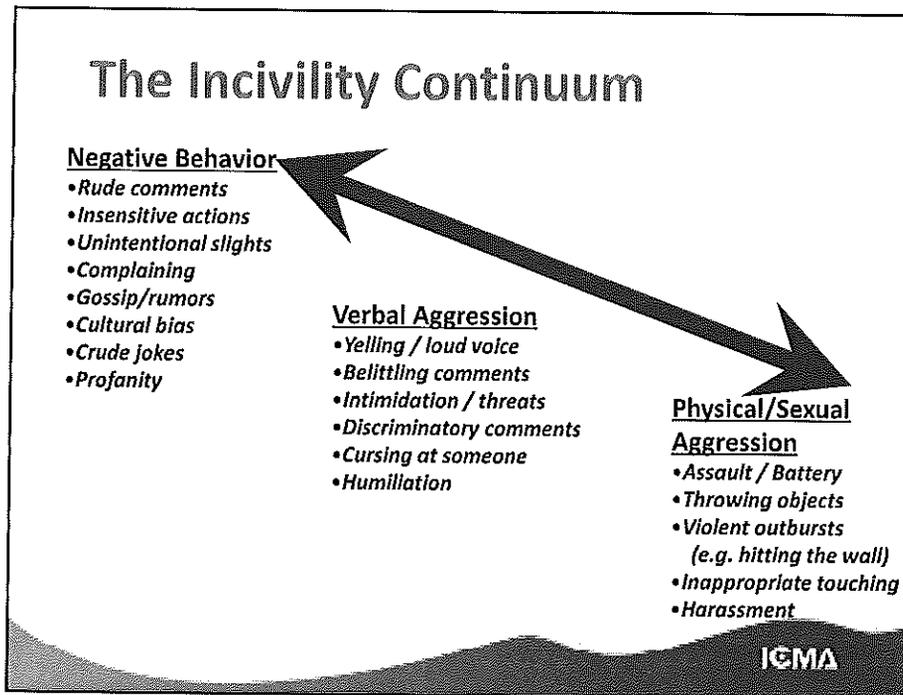
Civility between you and me...

- Is it you, or is it me?



Joseph Luft & Harry Ingham, 1955

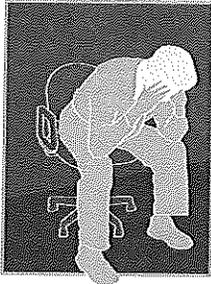




Civility in City Hall

TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Results
 - Morale..... ↓
 - Productivity..... ↓
 - Public image..... ↓
 - Workplace Injuries..... ↑
 - Employment Liability claims..... ↑
 - Exposure to Workplace Violence..... ↑



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Clearing the A – I – R

Appreciate

Explicitly tell others you want to hear their point of view...
"I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this problem with you"

Inquire

The other person has the floor – be an active listener...
"Let me make sure I understand your position..."

Respond

Now you have the floor...
"Now that I have a sense of your point of view,
let me try to explain where I'm coming from..."

from Workplace Wars

IGMA

Final Thoughts



- Don't wait for someone to be nice to you, and avoid "keeping score"
- Don't be afraid to put yourself in "Time Out" so you can 'cool off' before expressing yourself
- Consider letting some things slide, especially slights that you know to be unintentional
- THE biggest risk: "Culture of Indifference"

You must *be* the change
you want to see in the world.
- Mahatma Gandhi

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At age 14, George Washington compiled a list of
"110 Rules of Civility & Decent Behaviour"...



Rule #110 –
Labour to keep alive in your breast
that little celestial fire
called “conscience.”

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Questions/Comments?

Additional Information...

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