

## TOUCHSTONES

*Ideas, concepts and practices used in a Circle of Trust®*



**Be 100% present, extending and presuming welcome.** Set aside the usual distractions of things undone from yesterday, things to do tomorrow. Bring all of yourself to the work. We all learn most effectively in spaces that welcome us. Welcome others to this place and this work, and presume that you are welcomed.

**Listen deeply.** Listen intently to what is said; listen to the feelings beneath the words. “To ‘listen’ another’s soul into life, into a condition of disclosure and discovery—may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another.” -[Writer Douglas Steere] Listen to yourself also. Strive to achieve a balance between listening and reflecting, speaking and acting.

**Always by invitation.** It is never “share or die.” You will be invited to share in pairs, small groups, and in the large group. The invitation is exactly that. *You* will determine the extent to which you want to participate in our discussions & activities.

**No fixing.** Each of us is here to discover our own truths, to listen to our own inner teacher, to take our own inner journey. We are *not* here to set someone else straight, or to help right another’s wrong, to “fix” or “correct” what we perceive as broken or incorrect in another member of the group.

**Suspend judgment.** 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, decisions and actions are more informed.

(Touchstones cont.)

**Identify assumptions.** Our assumptions are usually invisible to us, yet they under-gird our worldview and thus our decisions and our actions. By identifying our assumptions, we can then set them aside and open our viewpoints to greater possibilities.

**Speak your truth.** 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, what another in the circle has said. Speaking your truth is not debating with, or correcting, or interpreting what another has said. *Own* your truth by speaking only for yourself, using “I” statements.

**Respect silence.** Silence is a rare gift in our busy world. After you or another has spoken, take time to reflect and fully listen, without immediately filling the space with words.

**Maintain confidentiality.** Create a safe space by respecting the confidential nature & content of discussions held in the circle. What is said in the circle, remains there.

**When things get difficult, turn to wonder.** If you find yourself disagreeing with another, becoming judgmental, shutting down in defense, try turning to wonder: “I wonder what brought her to this place?” “I wonder what my reaction teaches me?” “I wonder what he’s feeling right now?”

