

Circle of Trust[®]

Touchstones for Safe and Trustworthy Space

- 1 *Give and receive welcome.***

People learn best in hospitable spaces. In this circle we support each other's learning by giving and receiving hospitality.
- 2 *Be present as fully as possible.***

Be here with your doubts, fears and failings as well as your convictions, joys and successes, your listening as well as your speaking.
- 3 *What is offered is by invitation, not demand.***

This is not a "share or die" event! Do whatever your soul calls for, and know that you do it with our support. Your soul knows your needs better than we do.
- 4 *Speak your truth in ways that respect others' truth.***

Our views of reality may differ, but speaking one's truth in a circle does not mean interpreting, correcting or debating what others say. Speak to the center of the circle using "I" statements, trusting people to do their own sifting and winnowing.
- 5 *No fixing, saving, advising or correcting each other.***

This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who make a habit of helping others. But it is vital to welcoming the soul, to making space for the inner teacher.

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6 *Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions.*

Do not respond with counsel or corrections. Using honest, open questions helps us “hear each other into deeper speech.”

7 *When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.*

Turn from reaction and judgment to wonder and compassionate inquiry: “I wonder why they feel/think this way?” or “I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?” Set aside judgment to listen to others—and yourself—more deeply.

8 *Attend to your own inner teacher.*

We learn from others, of course, but in a circle we have a special opportunity to learn from within. Pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, to your most important teacher.

9 *Trust and learn from the silence.*

Silence is a gift in our noisy world, and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silence as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.

10 *Observe confidentiality.*

Safety is built when we can trust that our words and stories will remain with the people with whom we choose to share, and are not repeated to others without our permission.

11 *Know that it's possible...*

... to leave the circle with whatever it was that you needed when you arrived, and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.