

Handout 4

Touchstones for Creating Hospitable Space

adapted from The Center for Courage and Renewal

1. Be 100% present, extending and presuming welcome.

Set aside the usual distractions of things undone from yesterday, things to do tomorrow. Welcome others into this place and presume you are welcome as well.

2. Listen deeply.

Listen intently to what is said, listen to feelings beneath the words. As Quaker Douglas Steere writes, “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.”

3. It is never “share or die.”

You will be invited to share in pairs. The invitation is exactly that. You will determine the extent to which you want to participate.

4. No fixing.

We are not here to set someone else straight or to help right another’s wrong. We are here to witness to God’s movement in the sacred stories we share.

5. Suspend judgment.

Set aside your judgments. By creating a space between judgments and reactions, we can listen to another person, and to ourselves, more fully.

6. Identify assumptions.

By identifying our assumptions, which are usually transparent, we can set them aside and open the sharing and learning to greater possibilities.

7. Speak your truth.

You are invited to say what is in your heart, trusting that your voice will be heard and your contribution respected. A helpful practice is to use “I” statements.

8. Practice confidentiality care.

We create a safe space by respecting the nature and content of stories shared. If anyone asks that a story shared be kept in confidence, the group will honor that request.

9. Turn to wonder.

If you find yourself disagreeing with another, becoming judgmental, or 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?”