

# REDI AGREEMENTS

## **Stay engaged.**

To stay engaged is a refusal to let your heart and mind “check out” of the conversation, while leaving your body in place. It is a personal commitment each person makes, regardless of the engagement of others. It means remaining morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially involved in the dialogue.

## **Speak your truth.**

To speak your truth, you must be willing to take risks and to be absolutely honest about your thoughts, feelings, and opinions — not just saying what you perceive others want to hear. Until we can become completely honest, the dialogue will remain limited and ultimately ineffective.

## **Experience discomfort.**

To deal with the reality of race in an honest and forthright way, we ask participants to agree to experience the discomfort that is to be expected due to the problematic state of racial conditions in our society. (If colleagues experience division as they deal with issues of race and equity, we suspect that they were already silently divided. Although discomfiting, giving voice and meaning to this divide can begin the process of healing and transformation.)

## **Expect and accept non-closure.**

To engage in courageous conversations about race is to recognize that you/we will not reach closure in our racial understandings or in our racial interactions. There is no “quick fix” or solution to the challenge of our racial struggle as individuals, or as a society. Therefore, we must commit to an ongoing dialogue as an essential component of our action plan.

*Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools (2006). Glenn E. Singleton & Curtis Linton*

## **Grace with ourselves. Grace with others.**

We agree that this work is difficult, and we acknowledge that each of us is approaching it from different points in our personal journey and education. As such, and in pursuit of authentic and meaningful courageous conversations, we must be open to discovering our own thoughts and beliefs and hearing those of others, even with those with which we disagree vehemently. It is also important to remember that in the many facets of our lives, we have all held beliefs that we no longer hold, articulated thoughts or opinions poorly, and underestimated the impact of our words. While we are all accountable for the things that we say and do, remember to give yourself and others the time and space to grow.

**CONTINUED >>**



## Observe the 24- to 48-hour rule.

To make sure we are being honest with ourselves and others, we must practice sharing things that affect us directly with the other person (not with others). We agree to speak directly to one another within 24 to 48 hours of recognizing that something said or done has bothered us. It could be weeks or even months before you recognize the emotion being felt, but when you do realize it, speak directly with that person within 24 to 48 hours.

## Notice patterns of participation.

To support each other in our risk-taking, we agree to participate fully. Everyone's voice is important and is a valuable contribution to the conversation. This includes watching our air time, "stepping up" if we tend to process silently in our heads, and "stepping back" if we are verbal processors to allow ourselves to do some internal reflection. Identify which category you might fall into and monitor your participation throughout our time together.

## Respect confidentiality.

To support each other in our risk-taking, we agree to respect the privacy of each individual's identity and life experiences, but we reserve the right to share ideas and content publicly.

## Intent vs. impact.

When someone does something hurtful or offensive to another person, the perpetrator's intent is not what's most important when gauging the appropriateness of an action -- in fact, many would say that it is inherently privileged to redirect the focus of a conversation to the perpetrator's (presumably harmless) intentions, rather than focusing on the feelings and experiences of the person who has been harmed (Melanie Tannenbaum, *Scientific American*).

## Consider power dynamics.

We must recognize how we are situated from a wide variety of perspectives, both formal and informal. These can be as clear-cut as our place in a top-down hierarchy or as foggy as our ability to influence decision-making through social capital. We are not always perceived as we might hope, even after displaying vulnerability or articulating open-mindedness. This principle does not advocate low participation for those with power; rather, it encourages an awareness of the weight of your words and how they may be understood.

## Recognize the danger of a single story.

"The single story creates stereotypes and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story."

– Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Danger of a Single Story*

Our background and biases shape our experiences in ways that cannot be replicated, nor copied and pasted onto another because of any shared grouping. The truths that we speak are valid, and they are ours alone.

