

## NESS's Living Rules of Engagement...it's alive and growing

To be a volunteer, employee, visitor, or member of the NESS Club, or any of NESS's programs or services, each of us must be willing to learn NEW ways to engage with others and avoid conflicts. Some of the ways we were taught (or what we have learned) from our parents, teachers, clergy, and politicians are not acceptable.

No one likes to be told what to do.

**Rule 1. Respect each person's autonomy:** We do not tell people what to do, unless there is an emergency. "Fire. Get out of the building."

Instead, we ask;

- Could you, please, help me do....?
- Will you do me a favor and...?
- I need a hand doing\_\_\_\_. Can someone help me?
- Are you willing to .....?

"Any evaluation of others that implies wrongness is a tragic expression of an unmet need."—Marshall Rosenberg

**Rule 2: Accept people as they are:**

- No shaming
- No blaming
- No criticizing
- Focus on what you *need* without expectations from others

Validate—means we value what a person says or is.

**Rule 3: Value what each person says, feels, believes or thinks.**

- No interrupting when another person is speaking
- Never give advice unless you're asked for it.
- No making fun of what someone says or feels
- No disagreeing as devil's advocate.
  - Instead, say, "yes, and..."
  - Or say, "I have a different opinion."
- No sarcasm: sarcastic remarks ridicule and demean others, we want to value each other.

When you're blaming someone, look inside and ask yourself what you need. Say, "I need my green beans cooked until they're soft," instead of "you fucked up the beans."

Focus comments on things and behaviors, instead of on individuals: Say, "the floor is wet" instead of "who spilled the water?"



"Belonging" is a basic human need. Inclusion creates feelings of belonging.

**Rule 4: Include everyone in activities and conversations**

- No whispering, it excludes others
- When extending an invitation, invite everyone

If we are not following these four rules, we may be **BULLYING** others. Although bullying is usually thought of as forcing someone to do something they don't want to do, (Rule 1), it also described as teasing, browbeating, excluding, dominating and invalidating. (Rules 2,3,4)

Rules of engagement are growing....

**Rule 5: Admire everyone; being alive is admirable, especially for Elders.**

- Show no contempt
- No rolling eyes in reaction to others behaviors
- No acting as if a person is beneath your consideration
- No “tsking” as if a person is worthless



Contempt is what you feel when someone fails to meet your standards.

<https://nottrivialbook.com/emotions/contempt/>

Treating people as if they are beneath you is another form of bullying.

