

Tips for Study Circle Participants

Our goal in a study circle is to understand the issue better. We don't have to learn a lot of new facts and figures. We also don't have to agree with each other. We will look at different viewpoints, and we will talk to one another as equals. How we talk to one another is as important as what we say.

The following tips will help you and your study circle succeed.

Listen carefully to others. Make sure you are giving everyone a chance to speak. Don't interrupt people. When you show respect for other people, it helps them show respect for you.

Keep an open mind. This is a chance for you to explore ideas that you have rejected or didn't consider in the past.

Do your best to understand other points of view? It is important to understand what other people think and why they feel the way they do. This will help you find solutions that work for everyone.

Help keep the discussion on track. Make sure your remarks relate to the discussion.

Speak your mind freely, but don't take over the discussion. If you tend to talk a lot in groups, leave room for quieter people. Being a good listener shows respect for others. This makes it easier for quiet people to speak up.

Talk to the group rather than the leader. Try to look around the group when you talk. That will help others to know what they are part of the conversation.

Talk to individuals in the group. A study circle should feel like a conversation. Try to involve everyone. If you feel someone has something to say, draw them out. Ask them questions about their ideas.

Tell the leader what you need. The leader guides the discussion, sums up key ideas, and helps to make things clear, ask the leader about this. Others might have the same concern.

Value your life stories and opinions. Everyone in the group, including you, is special. No one is the same. All our lives have been different. This is what makes the study circle interesting. Make sure your voice is heard. Your wisdom and ideas are important.

It's OK to disagree. Even when we all come from the same group or culture, we are still different. These differences keep the group lively. If you do not agree with an idea, ask questions. But don't get carried away. Be respectful.

Remember that humor and a pleasant manner will help. When you keep your sense of humor, people will like listening to you. You can disagree with someone without making a personal attack. When you talk, your body "talks, too. Pay attention to your "body language."

