

Civility: Core of a Cooperative Community

“Civility” is not a word we hear often, but this particular word plays an important role in our everyday lives. According to *Merriam-Webster.com*, the simple definition of civility is “polite, reasonable, and respectful behavior.” Without realizing it, my grandfather has been instilling the idea of civility into me. With the increased use of cell phones, my family noticed a decrease in our respect for our family time. My grandpa once handed my younger sister and me a piece of paper that read: “There’s an app for that called respect.” As a result, cell phones were banned from the dinner table, and our family discussions increased immediately as a result. This same idea of civility is discussed in “The Power Of ‘Hello’” essay and Article 1 of the Student Code.

I am pleased with the Student Code that we, referring to students in the UIUC community, have the right to “free and open expression” as well as the right to “not be evaluated on opinions.” The freedom of expression and opinions allows for the opportunity to “encourage free discussion [and] inquiry” (Student Code). Similarly, each person has the right to be acknowledged and the freedom to interact with one another as Howard White, the author of “The Power of ‘Hello,’” demonstrates in his everyday life. I praise White for greeting each person that he interacts with and for making them feel important regardless of how “humble they may be or even how important” they actually are (White). I strongly agree that we should follow in his example of speaking with others.

Each person has rights, and in order to provide equal opportunity for everyone, responsibility steps into the spotlight. As a community on the UIUC campus, we are given various freedoms that we may express as long as we do not “disrupt the operation of the

University nor interfere with the rights of others” (Student Code). I personally believe that this is a fair and just responsibility as we are all attending here for the purpose of furthering our education. The responsibility to be respectful includes the “freedom to learn” and the way in which each individual learns (Student Code). I strongly believe in being open-minded on a highly diverse campus and respect the right to “reserve judgment about matters of opinion” as stated in the Student Code.

Comparatively, Howard White provided an equal opportunity for each person he encountered. He didn’t just say hello to his boss, but said hello “to the people in the cafe and the people that cleaned the buildings” as well (White). Howard White believes that “every single person deserves to be acknowledged, however small or simple the greeting,” and he even had full conversations with the people he talked to. Howard White asked the people in the cafe and the people who cleaned about “how their children were doing.” He bettered his personal community by building relationships with the people in his life and by being a friendly person.

I visualize a better community at UIUC established by the simple greeting of one another. In order to build a cooperative community, we should create relationships with each other that can form with just a simple hello. If we follow in Howard White’s footsteps, we will build stronger relationships with one another. As a result, cooperation and respect for the rights of each other discussed in Article 1 of the Student Code will become as simple as walking to us. For students who are not yet ready to fully walk in White’s footsteps, a community of peers are available to support them in the journey of getting there. We can change this campus if we take the simple step of saying one simple word, hello.

Works Cited

"Civility." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, 2015. Web. 25 January 2016.

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