

## Community of Trust Guidelines

JustFaith's Community of Trust Guidelines are Adapted by Anne and Tom Johnson from:

- Circle of Trust® Touchstones developed by Parker J. Palmer and the Center for Courage & Renewal [www.couragerenewal.org](http://www.couragerenewal.org) (primary source)
- JustFaith Group Guidelines [www.JustFaith.org](http://www.JustFaith.org)

**Give and receive welcome.** People learn best in hospitable spaces. In this community, we support each other's learning by giving and receiving welcome.

**Be as fully present as possible.** Be here with your doubts, fears, and failings, as well as your convictions, joys, and successes, your listening as well as your speaking. Listen intently in order to fully understand different points of view. Honor the space between "no longer" and "not yet."

**What is offered in our community is by invitation, not demand.** Share what your soul calls for, and know that you do it with our support. Commit to ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to speak. Invite others to speak before speaking again.

**Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.** Our views of reality may differ but speaking one's truth in our community does not mean interpreting, correcting, or debating what others say. Knowing that we are each created uniquely, and have different backgrounds, experiences, and views, we commit to honoring differences, knowing they add to the richness of the community's experience.

**No fixing, saving, advising, or correcting.** This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who like to "help." But it is vital to welcoming the soul, to making space for the inner teacher.

**When the going gets tough, turn to wonder.** If you feel judgmental or defensive, ask yourself:

- "I wonder what brought her to this belief?"
- "I wonder what he's feeling right now?"
- "I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?" Set aside judgment to listen to others — and to yourself — more deeply.

**Attend to your own inner teacher.** We learn from others, of course. But as we explore prayer, readings, questions, and silence, as well as engage with people both inside and outside our community, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. So pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, which are your most important teacher.

**Trust and learn from the silence.** Silence is a gift in our noisy world and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silence as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.

**Observe deep confidentiality.** Our community of trust depends on knowing that whatever we say will remain with the people to whom we choose to say it — whether in small groups or in the large circle — and will never be passed on to others without our explicit permission.

**Know that it's possible....** To leave a meeting of our community with whatever it was you needed when you arrived and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.