

## TIPS TO REMAIN CURIOUS & OPEN ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a hard place to have good dialogue. It's tough to read a person's tone, impossible to see facial expressions, and sometimes you have no real-life relationship with the person in question. All that creates space where polarization flourishes.

The first remedy is to assess whether or not you want to enter the conversation at all. Ask yourself these three questions:

1. **Can I share a perspective** that might inform someone else's understanding? Do I have an insight or an experience that might help someone shift the way they are thinking?
2. **Is this already an argument** with an attack-and-defend dynamic, or are people really listening to each other?
3. **Are there things I'd like to learn** from people whose viewpoints are different than mine?

**If the answer to some of the above is YES, then by all means proceed.**

## COMMON ONLINE MISSTEPS (WE ALL MAKE THEM)

### **Belittling other people's hopes or fears.**

This will invite the same in response, escalating the polarized conflict. Every person's hopes and fears are grounded in their experiences.

### **Deploying statistics to "win the argument."**

Statistics and facts are useful to explain why you have come to a conclusion you have—but there is a good chance that someone who sees an issue differently has their own set of stats to back it up. Focus on your own values and experiences.

### **Generalizations about "people like you..."**

It can be hard to remember that you're interacting with an actual person online. Deploying stereotypes or generalizing about an identity will generally make people more defensive, more guarded, less open, less honest. It limits the person to a single identity and strips away all their complexity.



## TRY THIS SIMPLE FORMULA

**Summarize** what you heard or understood, naming what sounds most important to the other person

**Name the value** or dimensions most important to your own view

**Ask an honest, curious question** to help you understand the other person's perspective more deeply

**Ask about experiences or relationships** that led them to the values they hold

**Ask about tensions**, whether there are places where they feel conflicted or less certain of their perspective