



ROPES

Assumption: No one came here today to be insulted, ignored, ridiculed, labeled, invalidated, lectured to, or bored.

In order to ensure an organized and productive class, facilitators and participants will use these ropes/ground rules to govern the conduct of class. Select one for each letter.

Respect – we will respect everyone’s opinion and feelings. We can “agree to disagree”.

Responsibility – participants are responsible for what they choose to get out of this activity and what they choose to do afterward.

Roles – facilitators avoid taking sides.

Openness – we encourage candid comments and true feelings

Opportunity – to talk about important/difficult subjects and discover your own attitudes and prejudices

Ouch – used whenever anyone (facilitators too) is insensitive

Participation – you will benefit more if you participate

Personal stories – may need to limit if time is short

Pass – no one will be forced to participate or comment

Expectations – no magic, no miracles, this is a long process; expect disagreement, assume goodwill; there won’t be enough time

Empathy – “understanding” vs. sympathy “feeling sorry”

Safety – facilitators create a non-threatening environment

Stretch – use critical thinking; don’t defend/argue, listen; introverts speak out and extroverts hold back and let others speak

Say “I” – avoid saying “you”, “they”, “we”, focus on yourself

Can everyone agree to abide by these ROPES?!

Once having established these ground rules, we may need to refer to them throughout the course as necessary to maintain order.

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Note to the Teacher: For group discussion guidelines choose one criterion from each letter in the acronym – ROPES. Following five ropes for a discussion will provide an environment of respect and trust. Students may want to choose the group discussion guidelines themselves using a consensus system.