

Covenant of Presence

1. **Be fully present.** Set aside the usual distractions of things undone from yesterday, things to do tomorrow.
2. **Listen generously.** Listen intently to what is said; listen to the feelings beneath the words. Listen to each other as you would listen to Scripture—attentively, mindfully, and open to the Holy.
3. **We come as equals.** No person's gifts, limits, or experiences are more or less important than another's.
4. **It is never "share or die".** You will be invited to share, but you will determine the extent to which you want to participate.
5. **No fixing.** We are not here to set someone else straight, right a wrong, or provide therapy.
6. **Suspend judgement.** By creating a space between judgements and reactions, we can listen to another person, and to ourselves, more fully.
7. **Turn to wonder.** If you find yourself becoming judgmental or cynical, try turning to wonder: "I wonder what my reaction teaches me?" "I wonder what they're feeling right now?"
8. **Be mindful and respectful of time.** The discipline of time invites us to focus and make a particular choice about what to share and how much to share so that we might hear others.
9. **Practice confidentiality care.** What is said here stays here, but what is learned here goes out.
10. **Welcome discomfort and dislocation.** Move against an instinct to construct a mental space of safety or to check out.
11. **Love the questions themselves.** Let your questions linger. Release the compulsion to answer them or to have them answered. As the poet Rainer Maria Rilke says, "have patience with all that remains unsolved within your heart."
12. **Believe that it is possible for us to emerge from our time together refreshed, surprised, and less burdened than when we came.** Expect that our work together can provide renewal, refreshment, and possibilities.

Adapted from "Touchstones" used in The Center for Courage and Renewal's Circle of Treat Retreats