

## APPENDIX 1

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS  
CLASS AND SMALL GROUP SAFETY GUIDELINES

These guidelines are intended as a distillation of the class's suggestions at our last meeting. I have not included any suggestions that related "safe" discussions to "safe" topics, because most of the topics we will be discussing will not have been chosen because they are safe ones.

I want to reiterate the point I made in class last time. I consider these guidelines to be very important. This class is not about impressing anybody or scoring against anybody. It is about self-expression and self-exploration among equals. It will be much more difficult to engage in that behavior in a competitive, dangerous, or hostile atmosphere.

Here we go.

1. Respect one another. Let each person who wishes to speak do so. Do not interrupt another speaker.
2. Really listen to what other speakers have to say. Pay attention not only to what words they speak but also to the emotional content of those words. If a speaker says something that appears troubling to you, give them the benefit of the doubt. Try to understand what experiences have led the speaker to hold the view he or she holds.
3. Respect each person's right to "pass"—that is, to decline to participate in a particular discussion. Remember that active listening to others as just described is a worthwhile activity in itself. If the work of the group is carried out as intended—with caring, compassion, and kindness—the requisite trust to speak may develop later. And even if it never does, bear in mind that each person is the best judge of what is and isn't safe to surface.
4. If you wish to respond or react to the remarks of another, so in a way that is not accusatory, judgmental, or confrontational. One way to accomplish this is to avoid statements that attribute a particular state of mind to the person making the statement. That is, avoid statements "you've got to be—to feel like that" or "only a—would say

that.” Instead, response in terms of your own feelings and reactions to the statement, and do so in ways that reveal something about you instead of ascribing traits to the previous speaker. For example, you might say, “when you said that, I felt—because I was raised --,” or “what you said was just the way things were done in my family, but I always resented that because it made me feel --.” Statements like these show that you accept the value of the other person’s views even if you disagree with them, and it does so in away that will tend to deepen the intimacy of the group rather than inhibit it. Remember: the difference is not simply between “you” statements and “I” statements. Responses like “I think you’re an idiot” are not what we’re looking for.

5. Discussions should not turn into debates. Understanding another is the goal, not conversion to your point of view. Agreeing to disagree is fine. Along the same lines, resist the temptation to “fix” the problem identified by another speaker unless that person has specifically asked for help with it. It can be very irritating to be told that something that has been a big deal for you for a long time could be handled very easily by following a certain course of action. Maybe other persons want to hear that, but maybe not. Let them ask. Then you’ll know.

6. Maintain absolute confidentiality concerning matters brought up in class. Statements made in small groups should stay there, unless the person making them indicate it is all right to share them with the large group (either specifically or anonymously). Statements made in the large group should not be shared with others not in the group. I fell very strongly about this, in part for selfish reasons. There may come to be times in the class when I’ll want to make statements about my personal life because I think they will contribute to the overall discussion or the progress of the class. I will not want to hear about those remarks from someone who is not part of the process we’ll be undergoing.

Following these guidelines can take some getting used to. When we have conducted this class in the past, I have asked for someone to volunteer to be a “facilitator” for the group—that is, to be a person whose job it is to make sure that others follow the rules by calling violations to their attention. Some groups have felt that such a position is unnecessary. Others have felt that it works against the idea of equality among group members. My suggestion is that you talk

about the need for that position and, if you decide to institute it, that you have it rotate among group members on a regular basis.

N.R., R.P.S.