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To me, civility means having courtesy for others around you even if you have different opinions. Being polite is a social construct that everyone should have because the world is filled with different people, and opinions that differ from your own. I consider civility to be the best form of conversation because it tends not to offend anyone, and you may connect with someone you would have never thought you would have. All around it should be common sense to have civility when having a conversation and not force your beliefs or opinions on anyone.

Civil discourse can apply in various situations like in a classroom, the workplace, in public, with family or friends. Typically, in a classroom is where you would find the most civil discourse because children "engaged in conversation intended to enhance learning"[1]. To me, I usually see civil discourse in English classes due to the amount of discussions about opinions of famous works such as, novels, plays, and poetry. English classes tend to focus on personal interpretation and this could have some negative and positive connotation in a classroom setting. For example, during my sophomore year of high school we read *"A StreetCar Named Desire"* by Tennessee Williams and it brought up issues that were somewhat controversial. Our class acted out the play and then discussed it afterwards. This play has a lot of sensitive content throughout it for high school students to act out, and it caused many discussions. Some scenes involved sexual and verbal assault toward women and it was very uncomfortable for people to read it to their classmates; however, our teacher understood how to discuss these scenes in a way where she could provide mini lessons about how to approach this type of content in an appropriate matter. She would let us engage in conversations where all of our opinions were expressed without being offensive or disrespectful. Throughout most of my English classes we had sensitive discussions where I had always felt we had equal civil discourse. So to me, civil discourse looks like a classroom setting.

The subconscious thought of "us" vs "them" is so ingrained in who we are because it is focused on how we see in-groups and out-groups. The in-group is determined by a majority

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[1] *Civil-Discourse Dictionary Definition | Civil-Discourse Defined*, www.yourdictionary.com/civil-discourse.

group of people who share similar traits, beliefs, and are considered popular. The out-group is considered the outsiders who do not fit the characteristics of the people in the in-group. People of the out-group tend to be stereotyped and discriminated against. In the third edition of Psychology, An Exploration textbook, it is said that "Conflicts between groups are usually greater when there are other pressures or stresses going on". I believe that the thought of "us" vs "them" is so ingrained in who we are because everyone wants to be liked or be on top. The thought process behind this is that by putting people in this out-group it causes other people to be ahead and feel like they are better than everyone else.

One situation where I felt the conversation was less than civil was when I was in the eighth grade at my Catholic middle school. I had gone to this school my entire life and never truly realized how harsh and offensive certain things were. This situation, that was less than civil, involved my friend Abby who I have known my entire life. She always portrayed herself with a "tom boy" persona. I never really ever paid attention to it because she was my friend and it did not matter to me. Toward the end of middle school she cut her long hair off and many thought it looked boyish. Our religion teachers always gave her looks, but never said anything until time for our health talk. All the girls came into one room and a teacher guided us through a powerpoint about every awkward thing you could learn as a 14 year old. The conversation took a turn for the worse when the teachers began to talk about transgender and homosexuality. Our teacher made it very clear that the catholic religion does not tolerate individuals who are transgender or homosexual. They explained that the church considers those individuals to be sinners. She then looked directly at Abby. This was heartbreaking because I could see the embarrassment and astonishment on her face. I asked her if she wanted to leave because she did not have to sit through this, but she responded no and kept listening. Our teacher went on for about 20 minutes about how God made us the way we are and we should not mess with it and that we are here to procreate. By the end of the entire spiel everyone in the class including Abby stood up and expressed our disagreement. Abby initially went to a Catholic high school where the bullying continued by both her peers and teachers. Abby, now Ben, transferred to a public

school where he finally could be himself. I felt this particular situation was less than civil because it discriminated against Abby and outcasted her to the religion.

During that situation I was more angry than I had ever been at those teachers. Religion is supposed to teach us to love one another for who they are, but if you truly express yourself at that Catholic school then they outcast you. This with many other class discussions contained opinions that I did not agree with. Eventually, I chose to no longer affiliate myself with that school. There were so many opinionated beliefs that I felt pressured to believe in while at that school that eventually I chose to pursue my highschool career in a more traditional setting.

To be a citizen leader means you bring people together to work towards a similar goal. In all, you must show that you want to be involved and be proactive about the goal you are working towards. Everyone should be included and courteous toward one another and be a role model. A citizen leader has to put their beliefs to aside and be open to other suggestions or beliefs.