CIVIL SOCIETY

Who do you want to be? This one question will define your professional success more than any other, because how you treat people means everything. Either you lift people up by respecting them, making them feel valued, appreciated and heard, or you hold people down by making them feel small, insulted, disregarded or excluded.



What is incivility? It's disrespect. It includes mocking or belittling someone to teasing people in ways that sting to telling offensive jokes to texting in meetings. We may not mean to make someone feel disrespected, but when we do, it has consequences.

Incivility is a bug. It's contagious, and we become carriers of it just by being around it. It affects our emotions, our motivation, our performance and how we treat others. It even affects our attention and can take some of our brainpower. Researchers in Israel have actually shown that medical teams exposed to rudeness perform worse not only in all their diagnostics, but in all the procedures they did. This was mainly because the teams exposed to rudeness didn't share information as readily, and they stopped seeking help from their teammates. Does civility pay? Yes, it does. And being civil doesn't just mean that you're not a jerk. Not holding someone down isn't the same as lifting them up. Being truly civil means doing the small things, like smiling and saying hello and listening fully when someone's speaking to you. Of course you can have strong opinions, disagree, have

conflict or give negative feedback – but civilly, with respect.

Why does civility pay? People will see you as warm and competent, friendly and smart. In other words, being civil isn't just about motivating others. It's about you. If you're civil, you're more likely to be seen as a leader.

So where do you start? How can you lift people up and make people feel respected? Small things can make a big difference. Thanking people, sharing credit, listening attentively, humbly asking questions, acknowledging others and smiling all have an impact.

Try the 10-5 way, where if you're within 10 feet of someone, you make eye contact and smile, and if you're within five feet, you say hello. Be tough-minded on standards and tender-hearted with people

Civility lifts people. People give more and function at their best if we're civil. Incivility chips away at people and their performance. It robs people of their potential, even if they're just working around it. When we have more civil environments, we're more productive, creative, helpful, happy and healthy.