

# Achieving Civility Through our Mindset



“I’m not allowed to get angry?” That’s a question that is raised in nearly every civility workshop we lead. Participants want to know how to have a mindset focused on civility when they’re feeling angry or frustrated. Our answer to that question is, “Of course you’re allowed to be angry. But, choose a mindset that helps you deal with the problem with civility.” It is our ability to understand the roles of emotions and mindsets that can help us maintain civility through everyday challenges.

While our emotions influence our mindsets, you can choose different mindsets for the same emotion. For example, if I’m feeling angry that my flight got canceled, I can choose a mindset that says, “This is the worst day ever! Why does this always happen to me? Nothing ever goes right.” Or, I can have a mindset that says, “I’ll get through this. There is a

solution here. I can get this fixed.” The emotion is the same in both scenarios, but the mindset changes. When we lose someone close to us, we can feel that sadness for the rest of our life, but our mindsets may change and evolve over time. We can be devastatingly heartbroken over someone’s passing (emotion) and think about how grateful we are for the memories we have (mindset) at the same time.

Choosing your mindset, no matter your emotional state is an incredibly powerful tool because our mindset impacts our response. A negative mindset makes it less likely that we will choose the best possible response.

Our response to any situation is always entirely within our control. No matter how angry or frustrated we get, we can choose any number of responses – from violence, shaming, and name-calling to asking questions, seeking connection, and working to understand the other person. It is the same emotion, but different mindsets produce different responses.

The next time you are struggling to choose the right response in an emotional moment hit pause and ask yourself three questions:

1. What emotion am I feeling right now and why am I feeling it? Acknowledge the emotion. Acknowledge the reason for that emotion. Feel what you feel.
2. What outcome do I hope to achieve in this situation? You can’t fix everything, but what outcome is within your influence?
3. What mindset and response give me the best chance to achieve that outcome?

*By Jeff Kluever, Director of Programs*

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# **Resilience(Grades 6-12)**

Students need opportunities to see success and triumph in the midst of struggle. This lesson provides a video that discusses resilience from a young man who faced a lot of trials in his life. The discussion will provide an opportunity for the classroom to share ideas about trust, growth, and overcoming obstacles while building resilience for all the changes that life throws at you.

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## **Resilience and Overcoming Obstacles (Grades 6-12)**

Students need to embrace resilience as they care for one another during conflict. This lesson focuses on the caring Pillar while supplying a resource to problem-solve and build resilience.

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## **Opportunities**

There are opportunities even in the most difficult moments. Character education quotations.

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# **Emotional Toughness (Grades 6-12)**

Students today need more opportunities to build their emotional toughness in a world that is as fast paced and ever changing. Thus, creating conditions that allow them to take responsibility for their behavior, emotions, and responses is important in building resilience for learning and development. This lesson will have students focus on their emotional toughness and highlight the need to be responsible for our responses in emotional situations.

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## **Good Stress Versus Distress (Grades 6-12)**

Not all stress is bad. Most, if not all of us recognize this simple fact, and yet when was the last time you heard anyone say, “I’m stressed” with a smile on their face or joy in their heart?

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## **Character During Crisis**

We are living through challenging and turbulent times. Americans are facing an international health pandemic, financial uncertainty, racial tensions, and civil unrest. It can be easy to feel helpless – wondering what possible impact

someone like me can have on such great problems?

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## **Recognizing Good Stress**

Recognize what is good stress in your life. What challenge are you currently facing that is making you better (whether you like it or not)?

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## **Managing Stress: Part 5**

It's important to set aside time to reflect on how you're managing stress.

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## **Managing Stress: Part 4**

Is your mind ready for stress?