

Dear Courage & Renewal friends,

In this eNews:

- [Exploring the Circle of Trust Touchstones](#)
- [Online links and resources](#)
- [Upcoming retreats in Australia and New Zealand](#)

Circle of Trust Touchstones

A key aspect of any Courage & Renewal program is the use of the Circle of Trust approach. Core to this approach is the use of a number of 'Touchstones' that help to define clear boundaries that help create safe space for the soul.

While these touchstones define how we relate to each other in a circle of trust, they can also be adapted to define how you work together in your organisation, community or network with integrity and trust — inviting the best of each person to show up and contribute.

One Melbourne-based facilitator has incorporated a number of the touchstones into her training organisation, particularly in the conduct of team meetings and conversations around performance reviews and goal setting.

Other Australasian facilitators are using the touchstones within their consulting work for cultural change and professional learning within a variety of organisations.

Courage & Renewal retreats and other programs are the ideal environment to deepen your experience and understanding of the Circle of Trust Touchstones.

Circle of Trust Touchstones for Safe and Trustworthy Space

- **Give and receive welcome.** People learn best in hospitable spaces. In this circle we support each other's learning by giving and receiving hospitality.
- **Be present as fully as possible.** Be here with your doubts, fears and failings as well as your convictions, joys and successes, your listening as well as your speaking.
- **What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.** This is not a "share or die" event! Do whatever your soul calls for, and know that you do it with our support. Your soul knows your needs better than we do.
- **Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.** Our views of reality may differ, but speaking one's truth in a circle of trust does not mean interpreting, correcting or debating what others say. Speak from your centre to the centre of the circle, using "I" statements, trusting people to do their own sifting and winnowing.
- **No fixing, saving, advising or correcting each other.** This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who make a habit of helping others. But it is vital to welcoming the soul, to making space for the inner teacher.
- **Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions.** Do not respond with counsel or corrections. Using honest, open questions helps us "hear each other into deeper speech."
- **When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.** Turn from reaction and judgment to wonder and compassionate inquiry. Ask yourself, "I wonder why they feel/think this way?" or "I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?" Set aside judgment to listen to others—and to yourself—more deeply.
- **Attend to your own inner teacher.** We learn from others, of course. But as we explore poems, stories, questions and silence in a circle of trust, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. So pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, to your most important teacher.

- **Trust and learn from the silence.** Silence is a gift in our noisy world, and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silence as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.
- **Observe deep confidentiality.** Safety is built when we can trust that our words and stories will remain with the people with whom we choose to share, and are not repeated to others without our permission.
- **Know that it's possible** to leave the circle with whatever it was that you needed when you arrived, and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.

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Online links and resources

1. Further explore the [Circle of Trust® approach](#)
2. The Center for Courage & Renewal [Blog](#) often features stories about ways in which the touchstones impact participants' lives
3. Sign up for the Center newsletter, [Words of EnCOURAGEMENT](#)
4. [Parker J Palmer](#)
5. [Courage & Renewal Australasia](#)

Upcoming Retreats

March 4-6: The Pilgrim Journey Home – A Courage & Renewal Retreat

ENROLMENTS CLOSING SOON

VIC: Pallotti College Retreat Centre - Millgrove

Facilitators: [Marg Brown](#) & [Greg Sunter](#)

Contact: Marg Brown: margbrown2012@gmail.com

[Download PDF flyer](#)

March 12: Still Waters – Rediscovering Your Well of Stillness in Busy Times

ENROLMENTS CLOSING SOON

WA: Notre Dame University Fremantle Campus

Facilitators: [Anne Courtney](#), [Michael Prince](#) & [Sharon Cooke](#)

Contact: Sharon Cooke: sharon@familyworks.com.au | 0403 761 870

[Download PDF flyer](#)

March 31-April 1: The Art and Spirit of Leadership: a *Courage to Lead*® retreat

ENROLMENTS CLOSING SOON

NZ: Houchen House Retreat & Conference Centre – Hamilton

Facilitator: [Mennie Scapens](#) & [Greg Sunter](#)

Contact: Mennie Scapens - scapens@xtra.co.nz | 027 686 7449

[Download PDF flyer](#)

April 8-10: StillPoint: Finding My Centre in a Busy World

SA: Largs Bay, Adelaide

Facilitators: [Leanne Nearmy](#) & [Noela Maletz](#)

Contact: Leanne Nearmy - engageconnect@bigpond.com | 0423 197 509

[Download PDF flyer](#)

August 13: *Courage to Teach*® - Single-Day program

QLD: Tranquil Park, Maleny

Facilitators: [Nerida Murray](#), [Lisa Albion](#) & [Greg Sunter](#)

Contact: Nerida Murray: neridamurray@me.com

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Thanks,

Courage & Renewal Australasia