

PALMS Colloquium Code

"the code is more what you'd call 'guidelines' than actual rules"

--Cap'n Barbossa of the Black Pearl

Attendance: Attendance is not required. Feel free to attend only those colloquia that fit your schedule and match your interests. If you generally bring children and are not able to attend on a particular evening, please call Nickie so she can appropriately schedule sitters.

Preparation: Although participants may benefit somewhat from a colloquium for which they have not attempted the reading, more preparation leads to a better learning experience. A major part of the colloquium experience is sharing what insights were learned from the reading and hearing what others have learned. We each bring unique backgrounds to the readings and will have different insights: sharing what we have learned in the reading is the very heart of the colloquium experience. However, one should not stay away for not feeling fully prepared. The more prepared the better, but always feel free to "come as you are."

Facilitation: Part of the development that comes from colloquia participation can only be achieved through filling the role of facilitator. For some, taking the lead on a discussion can be an uncomfortable experience; however, our group is collegial and will support the timid facilitator. While the group will never force an individual to serve in this role, participants *should* take the opportunity to sign up at least on occasion.

Discussion: During a discussion, participants should keep several principals in mind. First, everyone should take the opportunity to express thought and feelings. Some individuals are timid and find it easier to remain quiet and listen; however, sharing helps that individual develop and may give voice to an idea that would otherwise remain unexpressed. Second, individuals should not dominate the discussion. While we do not want to allocate a certain portion of the meeting to each individual, those with much to say should be sensitive to allow others time to express their thoughts as well. Third, get to the point. We meet for only an hour, so try to express your ideas directly—say it once (or maybe twice if you really botched it on the first delivery), then let others comment.

Tolerance for Diversity: Diversity is critical to maintaining a healthy group. Without diversity, we have little to offer each other. Members of our group have varied religious beliefs. While we do not discourage the expression of religious ideas, we should be sensitive to the idea that all of our beliefs are not held in common. We have varied educational backgrounds and do not subscribe to a common educational ideology. Although the roots of our group are in leadership home education, it is not expected that participants are home educators nor that they follow the leadership model. It is not the goal of the group to convert others to a particular educational philosophy.

Respectful Interactions: All of our communication (in colloquium as well as out) should be marked by respect and courtesy. While it is appropriate, even expected, to disagree with

what others may say, we should present contrary ideas in a manner that is neither demeaning nor condescending. As seekers of truth, each must accept that beliefs may be changed and new ideas embraced, for this is the nature of learning. Arrogance with regard to one's beliefs should be minimized.

Schedule: Our schedule is created by the participants. Each is encouraged to make suggestions for reading and guest speakers. We strive to keep the discussion topics and reading assignments posted at least four months in advance. The schedule is not handed to us by some group of "experts;" we collectively decide the direction of our group.