

Joint Ethical Statement: a compass for behaviours and discourse as we navigate the future

Foreword

The dialogue style and process used to generate this evolving document is called 'design conversation'. This style of discourse incorporates the ethics and checks we have jointly agreed in being together and in any future projects we may undertake.

We realise that we will not always be able to live up to our Declaration. However, all of us, working together through mutual inquiry, open dialogue and conversation, can contribute to making the Group safer and fairer, now and in the future, and to making a significant contribution to social cohesion in the larger community. To meet this community goal and to help us review our progress as we go forward, we agree to define our mutual freedoms in the following behaviours and style of dialogue with others.

Design conversation serves as an alternative to debate, which is presented in terms of winners and losers. Design conversation focusses on finding common ground, a co-imagining and generating shared solutions through accommodations and compromise. This foundation to mutual freedoms and entitlement to participation in decisions as-far-as-possible, is not simply altruistic. It brings the benefits of maximising collective intelligence in dealing with threats.

Draft Declaration of Interdependence offered by St Ives Cambs

- a Statement of Ideals which will continue to evolve in light of lived experiences

We, the members of a U3A Philosophy Group, sharing a common interest and therefore valuing and caring for one another and for the education and flourishing of the communities in which we live and work, do recognize, accept, and **declare our interdependence** in the following key values and ideals we share.

DECLARATION OF COMPASSION

Equality begins here, with me. I will treat everybody else in the Group in the way I would like to be treated. I will actively practice compassion with everyone, including those who are not like me. I will seek to listen, first, to understand, then to be understood.

DECLARATION OF DIVERSITY

Our strength and unity as a group flows out of our diversity. We learn from each other. We support and are supported by each other. We need and encourage diversity. Our joint effectiveness and power derive from our differences as members of an organic whole. I will respect each person's right to be different from me, whether or not I understand or like the difference. I will not discriminate against members of the Group because of their ideas, beliefs, or cultural behaviours.

DECLARATION OF DEVELOPMENT

Change begins with me. I will respect each individual and support his or her development. We will warmly welcome new members and we will work to incorporate their views in this Statement of Ideals. I will take responsibility for the shaping of the culture within the Group. I will make a conscious effort to encourage positive, constructive development in the Group whilst recognising others right to disagree. I will support an environment which is free of aggression and hostility. I will make an effort to respond firmly but politely to behaviour that I find inappropriate. I will support open communication aimed at establishing common goals and common ground, while remaining open to challenge and correction.

DECLARATION OF EXCELLENCE

We strive for excellence. I am proud of the contributions that all of us make to the Group and to the wider community. The Group and I are valuable assets to the community.

I realise that I will not always be able to live up to this Declaration. However, all of us, working together through mutual inquiry, open dialogue and conversation, can contribute to making the Group safer and fairer, now and in the future, and to making a significant contribution to social cohesion in the larger community. To meet this community goal and to help us review our progress as we go forward, we agree to define our mutual freedoms in the following behaviours and style of dialogue with others.

Mutual Rights	Mutual Responsibilities
1. <i>Freedom of expression</i> Freedom to think and communicate one's views without fear. Privacy in communications. Equal opportunity to express one's views.	Be willing to tell one's sincere belief and provide reasons for it. Hear another's sincere belief. Not to interpret privacy as the right to make private deals with another member of the group to further personal interests. Appreciate and bring out the many sides to every issue, practicing active listening. see the good in others and express it.
2. <i>Freedom of learning</i> Freedom of inquiry. Grow in one's personal potential, developing one's knowledge and competence.	Be open, curious, persistent and aware. Learn from past failures and successes. Seek to develop relevant skills in myself and others, in order to keep learning and growing together.
3. <i>Participative democracy</i> Equal opportunity to participate	Listen to others and support their rights. Stand for what one believes in. Not to coerce, manipulate or dominate. Encourage and recognise service to the Group and the wider community. Devolve decisions to the lowest possible level.
4. <i>Community of difference</i> Full participation in the Group. A community that cares for one's welfare. A Group with clear and relevant ethics.	Neither show nor tolerate bias or prejudice. Balance the common good and self-interest. Work toward worthwhile common aims and values. Find value in diversity.

5. Safe physical/ecological environment and safe psychological/ emotional environment Feel safe and at home in the group	To contribute to the stewardship and safety of the local environment. Never knowingly take action which endangers the lives of others.
6. Freedom to act Participation in choice of projects. Equal opportunity of action. Take individual decisions while taking full account of possible effects on others.	Commit to something worthwhile. Set realistic achievable goals. Act with courage and integrity. Respond to the needs of the group as well as self. Face up to the possible consequences of individual decisions. Recognize that actions will be seen as inappropriate if they place others in a position of vulnerability.
7. Freedom of personal networks Freedom of association. Choice of friends. Freedom of choices. Freedom to make commitments and to honour commitments.	Make commitments wisely. Deliver one's commitments. Be considerate of and use others' time wisely.
8. Freedom to act as subgroup Freedom of subgroups to undertake projects and make decisions within their mandate from the Group.	Recognize the possible consequences of subgroup decisions and face up to them if required. Care for subgroup members, building and using the capabilities of every member.
9. Justice and the rule of law Freedom and rights within the law.	Obey the law in letter and in spirit. Fight injustice.