



NonPartisan Coalition

- Strengthening Communities
- Advocating for Government that Serves the Community

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**Please visit our
web site at:**

www.NonPartisanCoalition.net

Contact us at:

NonPartisanCoalitionNPC@gmail.com

NonPartisan Coalition

Towards Civil Discourse: A Three Part Discussion

As community leaders, we are concerned with how to raise the level of discourse in our own communities. If we are going to successfully work with a spectrum of view points, we need to: 1) be sure to model “Best Practices” in how we speak, 2) facilitate cooperative dialogue within the members of our community who might have different perspectives, and 3) look for opportunities to educate others about how to raise the level of discourse leading to solution-based action.

In this newsletter, we’ll start with an analysis of our own habits. Are we modeling the world we want to see? There are subtle messages we may be sending that might not be helping. Why are these subtle messages so dangerous? To quote Stephen Sondheim’s lyrics from “Into the Woods”:

Careful the things you say,
Children will listen.
Careful the things you do,
Children will see.
And learn.

More lyrics on page 2

We Need to Be the Model for Civil Discourse on page 3

Steering Committee Report

- The steering committee has established the following goals:

Compile information that aids communities in using County services.

Increase constituent awareness and engagement in County government and services.

Hold elected officials responsible for serving constituents by making public the methods used to track and resolve constituent issues.

Web Site

- Thanks to Carol Relitz and Durward Womack, our web site has continued to improve and add useful content. Check it out at: www.NonPartisanCoalition.net

- Submit articles for our web site or newsletter to: NonPartisanCoalitionNPC@gmail.com

Our Leadership Team

Carol Jenkins- founder

Jeff Jenkins- co-founder

Anita Brown- recording secretary

Joseph Jones- vice president

Carol Relitz- web administrator

From Inclusion Advocate Anita Brown:

Did you know that 2-1-1 connects people in crisis to free intervention services?

"You can **dial 2-1-1** to speak with a Hotline Specialist. 2-1-1 is available from most land-line and cell phone providers. If you are not able to dial 2-1-1, you can dial our local number, **301-864-7161**. You can also dial the statewide crisis hotline at **1-800-422-0009**."

Did you also know that people with gender identity issues are at increased risk for bullying, depression, and suicide. Let's help get people the services they need.

Click here for more information:

Into the Woods by Stephen Sondheim

Careful the things you say,
Children will listen.

Careful the things you do,
Children will see.

And learn.

Guide them along the way,
Children will glisten.

Children will look to you

For which way to turn,

To learn what to be.

Careful before you say,

"Listen to me."

Children will listen.

Careful the wish you make,

Wishes are children.

Careful the path they take,

Wishes come true,

Not free.

Careful the spell you cast,

Not just on children.

Sometimes the spell may last

Past what you can see

And turn against you...

Careful the tale you tell.

That is the spell.

Children will listen...**We Need to be the Model for Civil Discourse**

Editorial by Carol Jenkins

As leaders in our communities, we are very aware of our responsibility to set a good example. It goes without saying that we want to avoid using confrontational language or any words that show bias. However, there are some subtle forms of stereotyping that often are heard in community meetings. If children are listening, then it is useful to take a few minutes to examine our own speech patterns- just to be sure we are setting a good example for the communities we serve.

Stereotyping: How often have you heard someone say, “Kids today...” followed by a disparaging remark? This statement may seem innocent enough, but it is stereotyping. Would we really feel comfortable with hearing someone say, “Old people today are so out-of-touch with reality.”

Yes, there are trends and every generation has new ways of integrating advancements and changing environments. But, every individual is unique and, as tempting as it is to make broad generalizations, we need to think about the impact of lumping all of **any** group into one sweeping statement.

Possible restatements might include: It seems like many kids today are... Or, statistics indicate that most ...

When we hear broad generalizations or stereotyping, a polite follow-up question might be something like: Why do you feel that way? Do you have grandchildren that are like that? Do you know some others who aren't like that?

The same type of questions might also be useful when you hear less subtle forms of stereotyping. Rather than trying to present a counterargument, asking someone why they feel the way they do helps model polite discourse and give us the opportunity to listen with the purpose of establishing a relationship that can lead to NonPartisan cooperation for the betterment of the whole community.