Embracing Civility and Self-Expression

P.M. Forni (2002). *In Choosing Civility: The Twenty-Five Rules of Considerate Conduct*

Civility is a necessity for achieving a balanced and happy life, and self-expression is a key part of embracing civility. When we think before we act, it is less likely that we will rush into an action and cause damage. Exercising restraint and not acting solely on our emotions can help us to navigate challenging circumstances.

When we want to rush into action it can be helpful to ask:
- Do I really want to do this?
- Is anybody going to be hurt by this?
- Will I like having done this?

Sometimes it might feel like restraint is a limitation of our self expression. While our immediate gratification might be limited, contentment can be reached. Contentment is the result of many good choices that we make while interacting with others.

The focus of our society has been on encouraging self-esteem, while paying much less attention to self-control. The imbalance of this focus breeds people who are self-absorbed. In order to be attentive, considerate, courteous and kind, self-control is in order. When people are only concerned about themselves and their own interests, hurt is bound to ensue for others.

. . . and Managing Rudeness

In another book by Forni, *The Civility Solution*, he offers eight "rules" that can help people reduce the rudeness that sometimes emerges from having a self-centered outlook in difficult circumstances.

1. Slow down and be present in your life.
2. Listen to the voice of empathy.
3. Keep a positive attitude.
4. Respect others and grant them plenty of validation.
5. Disagree graciously and refrain from arguing.
6. Get to know the people around you.
7. Pay attention to the small things.
8. Ask, don't tell.

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