

## **Guidelines for Skillful Conversation**

- 1. Listen and inquire for understanding. Listen to how you're thinking.**
- 2. Suspend judgment. This doesn't mean giving up your own point of view. Relax the debate inside your head and listen to try and understand the other person.**
- 3. Use "I" statements. Speak from your own experience.**
- 4. Share your thinking. Articulate your assumptions.**
- 5. Allow self and others to be inarticulate.**
- 6. Express and welcome divergent views. It's OK to challenge the status quo. Allow space for contentious viewpoints.**
- 7. Respect silence. Be aware of pace.**
- 8. Stick with difficult and important issues. This is a critical aspect of leadership.**
- 9. Respect confidentiality. Respect the sharing of sensitive information. When in doubt, ask before sharing.**
- 10. Take responsibility for your own participation.**
- 11. One conversation at a time.**
- 12. Assume good intent.**
- 13. Avoid over-generalizations and cultural stereotypes.**

*Originally written by Linda Pierce of Shell. Published in Leaven, June-July, 2002, page 50. The guidelines have been adopted by LLLI and USWD for use at meetings and in electronic conversations.*