

Conversation Agreements

The goal of our conversation is for all of us to listen and learn about where we have different opinions and where we have shared interests, intentions and goals. To do this, we suggest the following guidelines:

Be curious and open to learning.

Conversation is as much about listening as it is about talking. Enjoy hearing all points of view. Maintain an attitude of exploration.

Show respect and suspend judgement.

Human beings tend to judge one another; do your best not to. Setting judgments aside opens you up to learning from others and makes them feel respected and appreciated.

Find common ground and note differences.

Look for common ground you can agree on and take an interest in the differing beliefs and opinions of others.

Be authentic and welcome that from others.

Share what's important to you. Speak authentically from your personal experience. Be considerate of others who are doing the same.

Be purposeful and to the point.

Notice if what you are conveying is or is not pertinent to the topic at hand.

Own and guide the conversation.

Take responsibility for the quality of your participation and that of the conversation. Be proactive in getting yourself and others back on track if need.



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3250 White Bear Road
Sedona, AZ 86336
www.sedonalibrary.org
(928) 282-7714



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Facilitated by Paul Friedman Ph.D.

What's our core American Creed?

Tired of seeing America so divided?

What unites us?

On what do we agree beneath our political differences?

Instead of partisan bickering, let's dig down to what matters most to us.



5-part Series

February 18 to June 16

3rd Tuesdays

Fire Place Area

6:00 - 7:15 pm



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AMERICAN CREED: COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

A Series of Fireside Conversations Hosted by Dr. Paul Friedman and The Sedona Public Library



Paul Friedman

For the past 15 years, Paul Friedman, Ph.D. has facilitated many local programs to increase understanding among people with diverse views for OLLI, the League of Women Voters Greater Verde Valley, the Library, and the Livingroom Conversations project. He is a Professor Emeritus of Communication at the University of Kansas, where he taught for 35 years. He directs the Sedona Mediation Service, and is an author, workshop leader, and international speaker.

These stimulating theme-centered discussions regarding American values will be based on thought-provoking documentary film clips from the PBS Learning Media's American Creed Collection.

Each session may be enjoyed by itself, or you may wish to gain the depth of participating in the entire series.

Session #1

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN AMERICAN?

We will explore whether shared commitments have the power to bring us together as a nation, such as commitment to service and volunteerism, the pursuit of education, and the kind of respectful civil conversation that facilitates the free and open exchange of ideas.

February 18, 6:00-7:15 p.m.

Session #2

WHAT IS YOUR AMERICAN CREED?

We will investigate how well ideals like education, diversity, dialogue and action define the collective American experience--drawing from the experiences of individuals who (re)affirm an American creed built on community engagement.

March 17 , 6:00-7:15 p.m.

Session #3

HOW DO WE BUILD BRIDGES ACROSS DIFFERENCES?

We will learn from examples of people who are able to meaningfully connect with one another despite ideological differences through dialogue that builds understanding across political, racial, economic and other divides in American life.

April 21, 6:00-7:15 p.m.

Session #4

WHAT IS YOUR FAMILY'S AMERICAN STORY?

We will engage with the filmed stories of different individuals and then consider our own family histories and what makes each history characteristically American.

May 19 , 6:00-7:15 p.m.

Session #5

HOW DO AMERICANS FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS UNDERSTAND AND SHAPE THE AMERICAN CREED

We will delve into how citizen-activists address the gaps between their own ideals and country's reality. With them we will discuss the importance of education, community action and technological empowerment in preserving the American Creed.

June 16, 6:00-7:15 p.m.