



Overcoming Ignorance and Indifference for Positive Growth

Intro – There are many behaviors that are commonly perceived as negative or undesirable by others that humans do more often than they should. These negative behaviors may be considered to be annoying, inconsiderate or downright rude or at times even worse. Two of the most common reasons people may act in this manner may be **ignorance** or **indifference**

- **Ignorance** - lacking knowledge or awareness in general; **(Person doesn't know better)**
- **Indifference** - without concern; not caring; apathetic **(Person knows but doesn't care)**

Both ignorance and indifference can be unhealthy and harmful* and these qualities can hold someone back from making positive change and progress. In a lot of cases ignorance is bad but indifference can be even worse. This exercise is focused on preventing and overcoming ignorance and indifference for personal growth

**It must be noted that there are times when it is a positive thing to be ignorant or indifferent. To ignore some things or to not care can be beneficial. (A good example would be to ignore or not care about gossip. Another example of ignorance and indifference being positive would be when someone is focused on a positive goal and they are ignoring distractions and "haters") – Still for the purpose of this exercise, the focus is on when ignorance and indifference are negative, which can be quite common and quite destructive*

Group Discussion: Review and discuss the following as a group:

What are some of the potential consequences of ignorance and indifference? To get the conversation started, consider how ignorance and indifference can fuel the things on the following list below, and if possible, come up with some of your own examples for each category on this list:

Ignorance and Indifference can cause... (Discuss examples for each below)

- Interpersonal Conflict
- Poor Decisions
- Resentment/Hate
- Injustice and Inequity (Lack of fairness)
- Lost opportunities
- Waste of time and resources
- Lack of progress:
 1. Individually (Personally)
 2. As a group or as a society

Are there any other consequences of ignorance and indifference not already discussed?

Why can indifference be even worse than ignorance? (Hint – What is worse, to not know or to know and then still not care?) Discuss some examples if possible

Can ignorance and indifference lead to even more ignorance and indifference? How so?



The Antidotes to Ignorance and Indifference

Directions: As a group review the following qualities that can prevent ignorance and indifference and then discuss and share personal thoughts on each positive quality

Open Minded – Able consider new ideas. Unprejudiced. Able to have your own ideas challenged

Nonjudgmental – Able to put aside one’s own biases and opinions before jumping to conclusions

Empathic – Understanding others even when we do not agree. Able to “put self in other’s shoes”

Humility – The state of being humble. Freedom from arrogance. Teachable

Modest – Not feeling the need to brag or try to make oneself seem overly important. Unpretentious

Willingness:

- Willing to listen (not just hear but to listen and apply)
- Willing to look outside of your own world to see new perspectives
- Willing to learn
- Willing to accept, adjust and adapt as needed

Self-Aware- Able to look at oneself honestly. Able to be introspective and reflect on self honestly. Insightful

Forgiving – Able to overlook mistakes and let go of anger and resentment for past wrongs

Compassionate – Caring about others pain with a desire to help alleviate it

Noncritical – Not prone to being critical. Able to refrain from negative opinions or fault finding

Supportive – Providing encouragement or emotional help

- **Are there any other qualities not listed here, that you can think of that will help prevent ignorance and indifference?**
- **What do you think are your areas of strength from this list?**
- **Being honest, what might you need to work on?**
- **What is at least one thing that you can start doing today to improve?**

“There is nothing more frightful than ignorance in action.”
– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

“The opposite of love is not hate. It is indifference.”
– Wilhelm Stekel,