

# REQUIRE CIVILITY TO LEAD

## Shola Richards

Founder & CEO, Go Together Global; Workplace Civility Expert; Best-Selling Author



Shola Richards is a best-selling author and workplace civility expert whose work has been featured on the *Today Show*, *CBS*, *Forbes* and *Black Enterprise* among many others. Recognized globally as an authority on workplace happiness and engagement, Richards has shared his transformative message with leading healthcare organizations, top universities, the motion picture industry, on the TEDx stage and with the Department of Homeland Security. Richards is a best-selling author whose research is featured in his books, *Making Work Work* and *Go Together*.

Shola Richards is an advocate for the importance of creating more civility in the workplace. He defines civility as a demonstration of respect and explains how incivility (low level behaviors) can make you lose faith in humanity.

## Explore the Cost of Incivility

Richards cited a study that addresses the cost of incivility in the workplace. That study discovered that incivility in the workplace leads to employees that take their frustrations out on customers (25%), intentionally decrease their effort (48%) and lower their commitment to the organization (78%).

- Reflecting on your own leadership, how has incivility affected your attitudes and performance?
- As a team, share some ways that incivility is negatively impacting your organization.
- Richards reminds us that “what we allow is what will continue.” As a team, list some ways you are allowing incivility to occur within your team and/or organization:
- Take some time to list the ways this lack of civility is costing your team or organization:

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## Lead Others with Civility

Brennan Manning said, “In every encounter, you either give life or you drain it. There is no neutral exchange.” Richards challenges us to be more mindful of our civility with others by connecting to our “hire self.” This “hire self” is the foundation for being able to lead with civility.

Richards challenged us by saying that if you wouldn’t do it in job interview then do not do it at work. Reflecting on your last job interview, how did you describe yourself?

As a team, share with each other the ways your leadership does or does not measure up to the words you shared in your interview?

Shola says that “kindness” is much harder than being nice. Kindness includes demonstrating you care for someone by your actions. As a team, brainstorm below the ways your actions can demonstrate increased kindness:



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## Embrace the Five Values of Civility

According to Shola the five values of leading others with civility are:

1. **Value their work.** Respect the wisdom of the people closest to the work.
2. **Value their roles.** Appreciate the importance of everyone's unique contribution.
3. **Value their time.** Consistently honor their most precious resource.
4. **Value their skills.** Demonstrate you trust them and their ability to get the job done.
5. **Value their humanity.** Connect personally, recognize their effort, and show grace.

Take a few minutes to personally reflect on these five values. Write below one value in which you thrive, and one in which you need to improve.

What specific actions can you take over the next week to increase civility?



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## Lead Yourself with Civility

Richards implored us to be the buffalo (not the cow)—who faces the storm and so shortens his time in the storm *and* is made better by the experience.

Leadership is hard enough without self-sabotage. Most of us struggle with words and thoughts that weaken us—and we cannot give to others what we do not have ourselves. Richards revealed that he struggles with the “imposter syndrome”—thoughts that keep telling him, “I’m not good enough.” Take some time to reflect on the kinds of thoughts that weaken you:

As a counter to our weakening thoughts, Richards suggests we craft a “self-civility statement.” His statement is: “I belong in any room that I walk into.” Below, write your own self-civility statement:

If you’re comfortable, share it with your team.

## ACT

Richards ended by encouraging us to leave behind a civility legacy. He said that commitment is doing what you said you were going to do, long after the mood you said it in has left you. Write below one action step you will take as a result of this talk, and when will you take it: