

Five Characteristics of an Effective Interfaith Engager *

How many of these personal attributes you can muster to maximize your chances for a successful interfaith encounter?

1. **Humility.** No one has all the answers to the mystery of the Divine. Can you acknowledge there is much to know in the Infinite and that you may not know it all?
2. **Commitment.** Interfaith dialogue requires a loyalty to care for and honor your own religious tradition while appreciating another. Remaining rooted in personal faith without proselytizing. Is your commitment to your belief strong enough that you can talk openly and honestly without feeling threatened or under attack?
3. **Interconnection.** Connections to Holiness are everywhere. Many religions share common values like attitudes toward social justice or a strong sense of environmental responsibility. Are you open to discovering that the place where they meet is relevant or significant to you and your own religious practice?
4. **Empathy.** The heart often gets what the mind cannot comprehend. Can you put yourself in the spiritual shoes of someone else and feel what s/he/they are feeling? To the extent that you are willing to go beyond religious history, facts and information and instead experience the depth of your dialogue partner's faith, your own experience of the Divine will expand and personal transformation can occur.
5. **Hospitality.** To be hospitable is to be welcoming, generous, friendly and open. Are you open to the possibility that someone else's faith tradition has something to offer you? This characteristic above all else is the necessary ingredient to ensure meaningful interfaith dialogue.

***Adapted from *The im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue*, Catherine Cornille, Crossroad Publishing Company, 2008**