

A BOOK CIRCLE DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE NEW CIVIC PATH: RESTORING OUR BELIEF IN ONE ANOTHER AND OUR NATION

BY RICHARD C. HARWOOD

GROUND RULES AND INTRODUCTIONS

This Book Circle Discussion Guide is designed for small groups—either in-person or virtually—to hold a 60–90-minute discussion. Before you get started, read aloud the following ground rules for your time together.

- **Have a “kitchen table” conversation.** Everyone participates; no one dominates.
- **There are no “right” answers.** Draw on your own experiences, views, and beliefs.
- **Keep an open mind.** Listen carefully and seek to understand the views of those who may disagree with you.
- **Help keep the discussions on track; try not to ramble.**
- **It is okay to disagree, but don’t be disagreeable.** Respond to others as you would like them to respond to you.
- **Have fun!**

Then go around the circle and have everyone introduce themselves. Share your first name, where you live, and something you like to do in your free time.

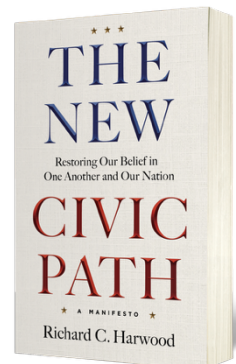
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The central issues for me today are these: How can we create a path forward where we tap into our innate goodness? How do we grow our belief that we can get things done together—not as Republicans or Democrats or Independents, but as Americans? How do we build together, such that we exercise a greater sense of control over our shared lives and put this nation on a better trajectory?



— *The New Civic Path* (p. 3)



QUESTIONS

1. Rich begins the opening “Entreaty” by asserting: “We suffer from a crisis of belief—and we must act.” Why is it so important to restore our individual and collective belief today?
2. During the “Fight or Flight” chapter, Rich relates a story of a man in Flint, MI, who asks, “What about us? What are we going to do?” Why do you think he said that? What would your response be?
3. On page 58, Rich notes that to get on a new civic path, we must “Turn Outward.” Why is that so important? What does Turning Outward mean for you?
4. On page 63, Rich notes the new civic path is not simply about “more talk.” Why do you think he says it must be rooted in “building” and “a bias for action”?
5. Across pages 80-85, Rich emphasizes that creating change today depends upon starting small and building momentum. What do you make of that?
6. Throughout the final three chapters, Rich repeatedly uses the phrase “We are meant to go together.” Why do you think he does that? Where do you find hope that people might go together these days?
7. The second-to-last chapter is dedicated entirely to raising up a “patriotism of devotion.” Why is this notion important to how we move forward?
8. In the conclusion, Rich notes that meeting this moment requires each of us to step forward in new ways. What might stepping forward look like for you?
9. When you get home, what will you tell someone we talked about? Why would you tell them this discussion was important?

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

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