



# Mission and Values

<https://peacefulscience.org/about/mission-and-values/>

**W**e are oriented around science, intending to support trustworthy scientists as they engage the public. We are rising into unique role in the societal conversation.

## Our Mission

*Peaceful Science's* mission is to advance a civic practice of science...

...by seeking dialogue in discord and understanding across disagreements,

...by fostering interdisciplinary scholarship engaged with science and the public, and

...by encouraging conversation around the grand question: *what does it mean to be human?*

## Trust, Questions, and Virtues

We are “peaceful” in that we seek in peace in areas of controversy, where different views are held and these differences matter. For this reason, we expect to encounter conflict. We navigate discord by building trust across disagreement, taking questions seriously, and inviting a community that aspires to virtues.

- **We aim to build trust across divides.** In contrast with the “knowledge-deficit” model of science communication, trust grows with trustworthy dialogue across differences and transparency about our own beliefs.
- **We emphasize questions over specific answers.** Science does guide our answers, but questions can open ways to new understanding. We can disagree on answers while still finding common ground in questions.
- **We invite a community of virtues.** Whatever our individual answers might be, together we find common ground in common virtues, which build trust with one another and grow our understanding.

Centering on trust, questions, and virtues, we are not bound to advocacy of any particular answer. We welcome new knowledge, new questions, and new people, in a community that can grow even when we disagree with one another.

## A Civic Practice of Science

We advance a **civic practice of science**, in which scientists engage in substantive dialogue with scholars from other disciplines and other communities in society, building trust by responding to questions with honesty and rigor.

1. By **honesty**, we mean forthrightness about what the scientific evidence is and is not telling us, including scientific findings themselves, along with their limits; we mean truthfulness about how science challenges us, and truthfulness about how it makes space for others.
2. By **rigor**, we mean scientific excellence and diligence in our public work, offering understandable explanations of how we come to our conclusions, and transparency about our own mistakes and errors.

## Taking Questions Seriously

We make space for others, build trust, and foster trust by **taking questions seriously**, receiving them with courage, curiosity and empathy, even when these questions are motivated by values different from our own.

3. By **courage**, we mean that questions come with risk; we might find new knowledge that changes our view, exposes a mistake, or serves someone with whom we disagree. Engaging questions is worth these risks.
4. By **curiosity**, we mean the pursuit of understanding is intrinsically good. Questions are valuable because they can increase our understanding, both our understanding of one another and of what science is discovering about the world around us.
5. By **empathy**, we mean to embrace the questions of others as our own, especially when they disagree with us; we make space for others by engaging questions, even when they arise from values not our own.

## Space for Differences

Science reshapes our understanding of the world, but it is also limited in its scope and its certainty. Science certainly challenges our beliefs, but a civic practice of science makes **space for differences**, aspiring to humility, tolerance, and patience.

6. By **humility**, we mean that we cannot convince everyone to agree with us, even if we are right and they are wrong. We are cautious to explain the limits and uncertainty of scientific claims.
7. By **tolerance**, we mean to create space for those with whom we disagree, where we can engage larger questions together, even as we explain our own point of view.
8. By **patience**, we mean endurance with one another across our disagreements, where we seek to understand others, and help them understand us.

## References

*Scientists in Civic Life* by AAAS. The AAAS is the worlds largest association of scientists. They articulate evidence-based guidelines for engaging the public with science, advocating a trust-building model over a “knowledge-deficit” model of engagement. The data clearly indicates that it is not enough to be right, we also have to be trusted.

*Confident Pluralism* by John Inazu. Dr. Inazu is a profess of law and Director of The Carver Project, specializing on the first amendment. This book discusses a response to a fracture society rooted in humility, tolerance, and patience, values we adopt in this document.

*Shaping Science with Rhetoric* by Leah Ceccarelli. Dr. Ceccarelli is a professor of rhetoric, specializing n the rhetoric of science. This book

articulates pragmatic principles in building rhetorical bridges between disciplines to foster collaboration and understanding.

*The Genealogical Adam and Eve* by S. Joshua Swamidass. Dr. Swamidass is a scientist and physician, and founder of Peaceful Science. Chapter 1, 2 and 18 of this explain our eight values and virtues in more detail. Chapters 1 and 18 are free to download for our patrons [here](#).

*USA Today Oped* by Nathan Lents. Dr. Lents is an atheist scientist, and he explains in this article why he endorsed *The Genealogical Adam and Eve*, in service of the common good. The values he articulates here are our values too, guided by the trust-building model of public engagement we advocate.

## Links

[https://discourse.peacefulscience.org/t/\\_/2443](https://discourse.peacefulscience.org/t/_/2443)

<https://peacefulscience.org/books/confident-pluralism/>

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