Thoughts on UFM Email

While email is a tremendous benefit to us, at times it can be a burden. Care and Counsel Committee put together the following document to help fellow members. It is common when in the midst of an email problem that we feel the need to help the other person understand our position or make our points more firmly. In these guidelines below, we suggest another tack:

Whenever you feel the need to set things right, instead wait calmly. If after due consideration it is still necessary, briefly state your position once and move on.

Too Long

One strategy for long emails is to skim them looking for questions or requests. Limit your response to answering the questions or requests directly and briefly. This will greatly reduce how much must be read and understood, but still gives the other person a specific response. It represents a midpoint between ignoring an email and taking on the burden of reading and responding to an overly long missive.

Too Numerous

If you are receiving too many emails from another member, consider taking a break and filing for future perusal. Once your good feelings return you can limit the amount of mail you read from the other person by setting aside a period of time, say 10 minutes every Monday, to read and respond to their emails. Take the rest and file them for later.

Confusing

If the email is confusing and there are no requests or questions in it, then take whatever understanding you may have from it and move on. If there are requests or questions in it that you cannot understand, simply respond by letting the writer know that.

Unkind

A good rule of thumb is to read the first few sentences and ask yourself if you feel good about reading further. If continuing to read is digging a hole of bad feelings, then stop digging and move on. If you want, let the writer know that for you to read the email, he or she will need to rewrite it with kindness.

Writing Email

The other side of reading email is writing email. Kind, compassionate, and thoughtful emails that come quickly to the point and put any requests in the first sentence are the most likely to receive an audience. Put aside longer or heated emails until you have the chance to revise them to a paragraph or two of kind, compassionate, and thoughtful words.

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