

# Mind Over Mocha Socials Etiquette Sheet

The polite cheat sheet for the dos and don'ts of a Get Philosophical social event

## Contact:

If you have any problems or concerns regarding our Mind Over Mocha social events, please feel free to speak to the facilitator who is present on the day of an event or email us at: [chris@getphilosophical.com](mailto:chris@getphilosophical.com)

## What is a Mind Over Mocha social event?

The Mind Over Mocha socials are a style of philosophical practice called “philo-café” short for “philosophical café”. They are small social gatherings, usually in a public place that sells refreshments, where people gather and have a conversation facilitated by a philosopher. They are informal events where persons from all walks of life regardless of their familiarity with philosophy or the particular topic at hand are welcome to listen and engage with an open discourse in a safe and non-judgmental environment. Mind Over Mocha socials are non-partisan (not affiliated with a particular movement or party) and therefore we accept everyone from any part of the political, sexual, gender and differently abled spectrum. As well as any race, creed or religion.

## What Mind Over Mocha is not:

Mind Over Mocha Socials are not a debate society. While we encourage people with opposing views to engage with each other and while we appreciate that sometimes conversations can get heated and emotions can rise when talking passionately about certain subjects, we would ask that all persons attending will do so in “good-faith” meaning that you arrive with your own views but willing to hear other people's perspectives, even if you do not agree with them, and that you are willing to learn. Effectively, you are willing to give everyone the benefit of the doubt. For example, if someone makes a point, but their point relies on a particular fact that you know to be untrue, you can ask them “*What about fact X? I'm confident that can't be true because of Y and Z. So, what does that mean for the other things you mentioned?*”

Arriving in “bad-faith” for example, would be attempting to challenge people's views by tying them up with rhetoric, trying to confuse people or arriving with lots of studies and citations specifically for the purpose of trying to make persons with opposing views look and feel embarrassed, ashamed or otherwise foolish.

To sum up, please be polite, don't try and debate/catch people out, and arrive with an open and positive mindset.

## Purpose:

The purpose of Mind Over Mocha socials is to offer a safe space for people to engage with philosophy in a fun and conversational style without having to sit down and read complicated philosophical texts or spend years gaining a philosophy degree. Instead, you can turn up, order a nice drink and get stuck in! The hope is that by creating an accessible space for people to engage with philosophy people will get the opportunity to engage with philosophy in a way that they may not have been able to do so before, to learn, to enrich their perspective and pool of knowledge around philosophical topics and to meet like-minded people in a casual setting.

## Dos:

- Do feel free to be yourself! We want you to be your authentic self and know that regardless of your views, you won't be judged, challenged or shunned. You are entitled to your opinion and Mind Over Mocha is not a place to judge others but to learn from each other.
- Do feel free to leave at any time. Often the topics discussed in a philosophical discussion can be distressing, particularly ethical conversations where topics such as abortion, sexual violence, relationship issues, human rights violations and similar such subjects may be brought up. Given the nature of philosophical discussions these upsetting topics cannot always be avoided and so if for any reason you begin to feel distressed, uncomfortable or otherwise like you wish to break away from the conversation you are more than welcome to do so and nobody will ask for you for an excuse. We understand that everyone is different, and some things can be upsetting to some and not to others. These socials are safe spaces, and you will not be judged or questioned if you choose to leave.
- Do feel free to discuss topics with may ordinarily be seen as “taboo”. In philosophy, taboo subjects are common place and philosophical socials are a great way to open up and discuss social taboos without fear of being judged. We do ask that when discussing a sensitive subject that you try to be as tasteful as possible and be aware that some people present may become upset by certain topics. But you will not be judged for bringing up the topic, so long as you are doing your best to be polite and respectful.
- Do feel free to let the discussion facilitator (the person leading the conversation of the social event) know about concerns you may have before the start of the social event. You can do this by getting the facilitators attention and having a private conversation, or by emailing us at: [chris@getphilosophical.com](mailto:chris@getphilosophical.com). Your emails are private and subject to general data protection regulations in accordance with the Information Commissioner's Office, of which Get Philosophical is a member.
- Do feel free to do some research before the session! The more information you can bring to the conversation, the better! It means there is more for everyone to learn!

## Dont's:

- Don't be abusive. Any form of verbal, physical or sexual abuse will not be tolerated.
- Don't belittle others. We won't tolerate bullying of any kind and belittling others for their views or their attempts to articulate their thoughts is impolite, unnecessary and will not be tolerated.
- Don't talk over others. We appreciate that in the heat of an exciting discussion, it can be hard to contain your thoughts, so we ask that you do your best not to talk over others. Sometimes use a "talking stick" where only the person with an assigned object is allowed to speak. This is usually used for larger groups.
- Don't be rude. We appreciate that swearing and jokes are part of adult conversations. However, we ask that you try to remain polite and cordial in these socials given that the venues are usually public and that certain words, phrases or senses of humour might be upsetting to others. We also appreciate that in larger groups it can be tempting to talk amongst yourselves, but the style of these socials is a group conversation and talking amongst yourselves while the session is in progress is considered rude and distracting, and we politely ask that you avoid this as much as possible. If for any reason you have something you need to discuss, we ask that you quietly excuse yourself in order to do so and quietly return when the matter is settled.
- Don't shout. We host our socials in mostly public venues, and we ask that you be courteous to other members of the public. We also ask that you avoid shouting, as we don't want anyone present to feel uncomfortable or intimidated. If you feel that your emotions are becoming dysregulated and that you have become angry or upset, please feel free to excuse yourself from the conversation and take all the time you need before returning. If this occurs, feel free to talk privately or email the facilitator of the session about what happened and how it can be avoided in future. For example, if certain words trigger you or certain topics are particularly upsetting, arrangements can be made to warn you or attempt to minimise the prevalence of that particular word or topic in future sessions, though it cannot always be guaranteed.

## Boundaries:

Mind Over Mocha socials are for adults and we expect everyone to behave accordingly. We do not ever want to ask someone to leave, but if someone repeatedly behaves in a way that upsets others or in a manner which is disorderly, intimidating or otherwise unpleasant then Get Philosophical maintains the right to ask said person to leave and likewise said person may be disallowed from future Mind Over Mocha socials. Although this is a last resort, and we expect this to be a rare (if ever) precaution that we take only for extreme cases.

## Conclusion:

Mind Over Mocha socials are the same as any other social event. As long as you are polite and open-minded, you should be in for a good time, a fun chat, a deep conversation and the opportunity to enjoy a nice drink with friendly company!