

 **AIM:** The aim of this exercise is to provide participants with experience of what tolerance means. All participants should try to tolerate and even be tolerated. Then use these experiences as a starting point for discussions about tolerance and power.

 **Participants:** 5 - 30

 **Duration:** 20 – 40 minutes

 **Required Material:** board/flipchart and something to write with

 **Category:** Dialogue exercise / inter-cultural

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

This exercise may lead to strong reactions. It is best to carry out the exercise in full, and then talk about any feelings and conflicts that emerge.

## STEPS

### Preparation (5 minutes)

Ask the participants to team up in pairs of two.

### Activity (10 minutes)

The pairs is divided into a person A and a person B, and have them walk around the room. A will now comment on something that is visible on B without ascribing it value.

A will therefore not comment on someone's pretty shirt, fabulous hair or stylish shoes but rather just express certain exterior details. A then assures B that A tolerates and accepts this. For example: "I see that you have a brown sweater on and I tolerate that" or "I see you have a skirt on, and that is okay" or "It does not matter that you have a piece of jewelry on you today".

Then ask participants to switch roles so that everyone gets to try both to tolerate and be tolerated.

<p><b>Reflection</b> (20 minutes)</p>	<p>Take time to engage in a dialogue with the participants here. They may feel frustrated when acknowledging and understanding the different power structures within a society, especially when the focus is tolerance.</p> <p>A question for reflection might be: What is a norm and who decides the norms in a society?</p> <p>A norm is a constructed idea of specific normality within a society. The discussion of the question of who decides the norms might depend on the participants in the group. Norms are typically developed by the majority of a society, which could be both socially, politically, religiously, sexually etc. In northern Europe this might often mean a middle class heterosexual white man.</p> <p>A further question for reflection might be: What is the difference between tolerating and being tolerated, and is it a compliment to be tolerated? A way to discuss this question could be to invite all participants to say something about the exercise and how it felt to tolerate and be tolerated.</p> <p>It can be nice to use a "talking stick" so that each participant gets the "stick" when he/she speaks. This allows the participant to have the opportunity to speak uninterrupted. The "talking stick" is either passed on by the facilitator to the next person who has something to share or gets passed on to the next person in the ring.</p> <p>After the sharing: Draw two columns on the blackboard. One for what is good and one for what is bad about tolerance. Ask the participants and write down the comments. Which side got the most comments? Does everyone agree on the comments or not?</p> <p>Ask participants about the groups of people in society who tolerate others and the ones who are being tolerated. If necessary, you can suggest groups: Nationalities, youths, Jews, gays, mothers, feminists, blondes, Muslims, Christians, non-believers.</p> <p>Ask participants what they think about the concept of tolerance. What is tolerance? Is tolerance a good thing? Is there a difference between tolerance and respect?</p> <p>What do you think about hearing, "I tolerate that you believe in God. It is really stupid, but it is okay that you believe it."</p> <p>"Oh, you're Jewish? I don't know other Jews, but I can tolerate</p>
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	<p>that you are here."</p> <p>Try replacing the word tolerance with respect. Does it have a different meaning?</p>
<b>Conclusion/learning points</b> (5 minutes)	<p>Thank everyone for their participation, summarise what was learned.</p>