



Statement of Principles for Peaceful Contact

Psychological Preparedness, Mutual Respect, and the Responsible Pursuit of Understanding

Humanity's response to the possibility of contact with nonhuman intelligence should include scientific inquiry, responsible safeguards, and psychological preparedness. Questions about detection, technology, and defense deserve serious attention. So do questions about fear, trust, communication, dignity, and our capacity to respond thoughtfully to profound uncertainty.

PATH proposes the following principles to guide public discussion, preparedness, and any future response to independently verified contact.

These principles do not presume that extraterrestrial visitation has occurred or that unexplained phenomena establish the presence of nonhuman intelligence. They express a commitment to careful inquiry and peaceful conduct should credible evidence emerge.

1. Establish evidence before interpreting intentions.

Uncertainty calls for investigation. Observations should be evaluated through rigorous analysis, independent verification, and consideration of alternative explanations. An unidentified phenomenon does not, by itself, establish intelligence, origin, or hostility.

2. Make peaceful engagement an explicit goal.

Humanity should prepare for the possibility of communication grounded in curiosity, restraint, and mutual respect. Protecting people and pursuing peaceful understanding are compatible responsibilities. An unfamiliar presence alone should not justify aggression.

Principles for Peaceful Contact

3. Treat psychological preparedness as essential infrastructure.

Preparedness should help people tolerate uncertainty, distinguish evidence from speculation, and manage strong emotions without impulsive action. Mental health professionals, educators, community leaders, and trusted institutions should participate alongside scientists, diplomats, and security professionals.

4. Protect dignity across the full range of human responses.

People may respond with wonder, skepticism, fear, grief, excitement, or indifference. Those reactions should be met with respectful dialogue. Neither belief nor disbelief should become grounds for ridicule, exclusion, or assumptions about a person's mental health. Support should respond to distress and impaired functioning with compassion.

5. Communicate clearly, honestly, and without sensationalism.

Public information should distinguish what is confirmed, what is provisional, and what remains unknown. Communicators should acknowledge uncertainty, correct errors promptly, and explain the basis for changing conclusions. Reassurance should remain proportionate to the evidence.

6. Recognize that no single institution speaks for humanity.

Decisions about consequential communication should involve broad international consultation. Scientific expertise is indispensable, and deliberation should also include diverse cultural, ethical, religious, and community perspectives. Particular care should be taken to hear populations whose histories include coercion, displacement, or exclusion.

7. Approach unfamiliar intelligence with humility.

If contact were verified, humanity should avoid assuming that another intelligence shares our language, senses, social structures, motives, or understanding of peace. Interpretation would require patience and repeated testing. Silence or unfamiliar behavior should not automatically be treated as evidence of either goodwill or danger.

8. Respect autonomy, consent, and boundaries.

Any proposed engagement should seek conditions that protect those involved and allow time for understanding. A responsible approach would favor gradual, reviewable steps, with opportunities to pause or reconsider. Humanity should seek reciprocal respect for boundaries without assuming it has already been established.

Principles for Peaceful Contact

9. Protect people who need additional support.

Preparedness should include developmentally appropriate information for children and adolescents, accessible communication for people with disabilities, and practical support for anyone experiencing significant distress. Families, schools, healthcare settings, and community organizations should have resources that preserve daily routines, connection, and safety.

10. Favor restraint and proportionate responses.

Encounter planning should prioritize observation, safe distance, identification, and de-escalation where circumstances permit. Protective action should be guided by credible evidence of danger and accountable decision-making. Fear deserves attention; it should not become the sole basis for consequential action.

11. Demonstrate peaceful intent through human conduct.

A message of peace gains credibility through cooperation, respect for human rights, care for other living beings, and responsible stewardship of Earth. Preparing for contact offers an opportunity to strengthen these commitments within our own communities.

12. Revise preparedness as knowledge develops.

Plans should remain open to new evidence, independent review, and correction. Exercises should clearly distinguish hypothetical scenarios from established events. Responsible preparedness includes the capacity to change course-and to acknowledge when a suspected encounter has an ordinary explanation.

Our Commitment

PATH advocates an approach to possible contact that brings compassion together with critical thinking. We seek to help humanity remain psychologically grounded while asking difficult questions, evaluating evidence, and considering unfamiliar possibilities.

We do not need certainty about who or what we might encounter to decide how carefully we wish to behave.

Our aim is a humanity capable of protecting itself, listening thoughtfully, and extending peace with discernment.

Be skeptical... but have a plan.