

## Adlai's Core Ideas: **THINK**

### **Adlai E. Stevenson II believed in the power of careful thought.**

Jokingly referred to as an “egghead,” he embodied the belief that problems can be solved if approached creatively and intelligently. He respected others’ opinions and welcomed the benefits that come from a serious and honest debate of complex issues. Adlai recognized that we are all capable of understanding difficult issues and that quick and easy solutions to social problems won’t work.

#### **4 ways Adlai put this core value into action — THINK:**

- Engage in thoughtful dialogue.
- Consider multiple perspectives.
- Act with integrity and honesty.
- Understand history and culture.

#### **THINK: Engage in thoughtful dialogue.**

##### **Adlai Stevenson had faith in intelligent discourse. He believed in the power of reason.**

Stevenson never “talked down” to the voter. He disliked TV political advertising, believing it oversimplified the issues and reduced candidates to celebrities. In the 1952 campaign, Stevenson promised to “talk sense to the American people.” He said that there were no quick fixes to the nation’s problems, and that solutions required shared sacrifices.

#### **THINK: Consider multiple perspectives.**

##### **Adlai Stevenson welcomed differing opinions. He appreciated hearing multiple perspectives.**

Stevenson believed in the United Nations, where multiple perspectives were shared. He had empathy when dealing with other nations and peoples. He was always willing to listen to the other side, even those who expressed anti-Western or anti-American opinions.

#### **THINK: Act with integrity and honesty.**

##### **Adlai Stevenson adhered to the principles of integrity and honesty. He valued honest expression and the right to free speech.**

Although it cost him votes, Stevenson defended the right to free speech. As Illinois governor, he vetoed a bill requiring public employees and candidates to submit to loyalty oaths. During the 1952 campaign, he criticized the anti-communist “witch hunts” of Senatore Joseph McCarthy. “Too often sinister threats to the Bill of Rights, to freedom of the mind, are concealed under the patriotic cloak of anti-communism,” he said.

#### **THINK: Understand history and culture.**

##### **Studying history and culture helped Adlai Stevenson gain a broader perspective about the world.**

One of Stevenson’s strengths, especially as ambassador to the UN, was his curiosity. He traveled widely to the far-flung corners of the globe. He was curious about different cultures and different economic and political systems. He was curious about how people lived today and in the past. This helped him understand why other nations and other peoples did not always agree with the United States.

*Sometimes in the deafening clamor of political salesmanship, I've thought that the people might be better served if a party purchased a half hour of radio and television silence during which the audience would be asked to think quietly for themselves.*

— Adlai E. Stevenson II