The Art of Mindful Facilitation Handbook

Creating Community in the College Classroom

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"We are really only one question away from being connected; from learning about one another's journey. And that one question only comes about when we are willing to be open to hearing another truth outside our own."

Lee Mun Wah

Contents

Exploring the Roots of Our Disconnection

Ways to Connect and Rebuild Trust

Mindful Techniques That Create Community

Exploring the Roots of Our Disconnection

21 Ways to Stop a Diversity Conversation

(Circle the ones you've said and put an X by the ones you can't understand why they would stop a conversation on diversity)

1. I don't see color. We're all just human beings.
2. We have more similarities than differences.
3. I think deep down we're all the same.
4. Racism/sexism happens all over the world.
5. I think some people use diversity as an excuse.
6. I think identifying into groups only further divides us.
7. There are lots of other diversity issues besides race and gender.
8. I've never seen that happen before. Are you sure it happened?
9. Why does everything have to be so politically correct?
10. I was just joking.
11. Things are a lot better than they used to be. Don't you agree?
12. We'd hire more women and people of color, but are they qualified?
13. I love everyone.
14. Do you really think it's that bad?
15. I'm so glad you're not like one of them.
16. You know, you're a credit to your people.
17. You don't see other races complaining.
18. I think it's reverse racism/sexism.
19. America is the best place to live.
20. Some of my best friends are colored.
21. You speak such good English, where did you learn it from?

Unhealthy Ways of Communicating

1. Saying nothing and appearing emotionally detached
2. Taking it personally, rather than being curious and empathetic
3. Statements/questions that cause the speaker to become defensive
4. Questioning the validity and veracity of what is being shared
5. Lacking compassion
6. Not responding by changing the subject
7. Interrupting the speaker by talking over them and/or yelling
8. Not acknowledging/validating what has been shared
9. Being defensive, blaming or adversarial; not willing to take responsibility
10. Threatening to leave or staying, but unwilling to listen
11. Searching for the exception
12. Demanding a solution or defined outcome
13. Needing proof
14. Generalizing to trivialize the importance or relevance of what is being shared

How We Have Failed Our White Students (Part 1)

As has happened in classrooms all across this country, when racism is brought up, often white students become defensive, adversarial and in many cases, in denial that racism even exists. I would like to propose that rather than labeling them as racist, that we look at how educators and society as a whole have failed our white students. A society that is too often ready to blame others, rather than to look at ourselves and how we might be a part of the problem. Here are some of my thoughts on how I believe we have failed our white students:

A society preoccupied with our similarities and not our differences

When I have asked audiences to define what 'diversity' means to them, they almost always say 'honoring our differences'. Yet, when I pair everyone into dyads as a way for them to get to know each other, in the debrief they only mention what they had in common, never about their differences. Why? Because as a society, we have never really integrated our cultural, social and economic differences into our workplaces, our schools, or even into our business practices. We are better at honoring and celebrating our differences than putting them into practice. That's why I believe we are more multi-holidayed than multi-cultural, because there is more emphasis on our commonalities. However, in the United States, that 'commonality' often means adopting a 'white, male, Christian, English-speaking (without an accent), heterosexual, upper class model' to be fully accepted as an American. The consequence of that model is that many white students are unconsciously taught to see themselves as the 'norm' (real Americans) and all others who are different as 'those people' or immigrants or non-whites.

By not identifying with their European heritage

Often, when the issues of whiteness and white privilege come up in classrooms, many white students often become defensive and nervous, even irritated and angry. Why? Because most of their lives, having lived in predominantly white communities, they have not seen themselves or been seen by their parents or friends as being 'white' or Euro-American, let alone had prolonged and intimate discussions about their white privileges or whiteness. What has compounded this 'bubble' is that most of their instructors and role models are also white and have rarely had these experiences and discussions, either. So, when they enter into new environments, like college or a diverse neighborhood or workplace, they lack the wider perspective, experience and words to relate to others who are different from themselves. They do not know what they don't know. Like a fish doesn't know it's in water, thinks this is the whole world. And so, to hide their fear of not knowing and no longer feeling in control, they are taught by other whites to be defensive, adversarial and in denial. Hence, a vicious circle of wanting to know, but not wanting to know too much.

How We Have Failed Our White Students (Part 2)

As has happened in classrooms all across this country, when racism is brought up, often white students become defensive, adversarial and in many cases, in denial that racism even exists. Faculties of color and even white instructors have often talked about being accused of 'reverse racism' and creating 'divisiveness' for even bringing up the issue of race or racism. I would like to propose that rather than labeling these white students as racist, that we look at how as educators and society as a whole have been a part of the problem. Here are some of my thoughts on how I believe we have failed our white students:

We only talk about inclusion and not exclusion

As a society we are constantly talking about inclusion—that we are "one people" and "one nation". We have been trained and rewarded not to talk about exclusion—what divides us and how our schools, neighborhoods, workplaces and government play a part in that daily exclusion. So, when white students are faced with the discussion of slavery and the institution of white privilege and racism, their first reaction is that this is 'dividing us' or a 'thing of the past'. Many white students become defensive and adversarial, as they have been taught to see themselves as having earned their privileges as individuals and not because of their skin color or as the result of a white-dominated society. Someone once said, "When the truth becomes too hard to bear, we make up another." The work here is to help our white students see that even though they didn't actually create these inequities of privilege, they benefit from them every day and so will their children, simply by virtue of the color of their skin, their gender, their religion, their sexuality and their class status. As Virginia Wolf once wrote, "We are all different. It is the value we place on those differences that divides and separates us."

White students have not been taught how to emotionally connect or to be aware when they are disconnected

Many white students are often not taught how to emotionally connect or to notice when they are disconnected from their feelings in moments of grief, anger or hurt. As a consequence, they often do not understand the relevance in their own lives of empathy, self-reflection, and taking responsibility. They haven't learned how to authentically apologize, to notice the intent and impact of their communications, or to be curious about how they have been dipped into their 'whiteness' by society, their families and teachers. This lack of knowledge keeps them from fully participating in diversity conversations and relationships because they have often been taught to be defensive, in denial or adversarial when confronted with what is missing in their relationships, especially with those who are different from themselves. Will Amado Syldor-Severino has labeled this the 'privilege of numbness': the ability to objectify and detach from the emotional trauma of racism by simply going 'emotionally numb' or by saying, "I don't know."

How We Have Failed Our Students of Color (Part 3)

A growing number of students of color drop out of college every year, not just because of finances or grades, but because of a lack of 'connection' with other students, faculty and the community around them. I believe that before we can 'remedy' this situation, we must first explore the ways we have failed our students of color:

A lack of color on campus

One of the major ways we've failed our students of color is that they often can't 'see them- selves' in the student population or within the faculty or administration. When students of color can't see professionals looking like them, they lose in many ways. First, they are taught that leadership is a 'white privilege' and that few professionals of color qualify. Secondly, they come to realize that white administrators and faculty rarely 'understand' what it is like to be a minority in a sea of whites nor are they willing to bring the issue up. When students of color attempt to breach this veil of silence, they are often trivialized and told that there just aren't enough qualified faculty of color to choose from or that as whites, they too, are
'concerned'. However, that 'concern' seldom leads to any change or sense of responsibility. The third loss is that in not seeing and experiencing faculty of color, students of color often emulate whites in terms of their ways of being 'professional', their speech, dress, and ways of seeing the world, including folks of color. This 'loss of self' is profoundly sad because folks of color can never be 'white' enough or lose themselves. There is no PhD that can shield a person of color from the inevitable pain of racism.

Not knowing how to create a 'safe container'

Most white faculty do not know how to create a 'safe container' to talk about diversity because they have not been trained on how to mediate conflicts or how create a sense of community amongst diverse groups. Students relate about how when white students become defensive and adversarial with students of color who try to talk about their experiences, their instructors often change the topic or end the discussion because it's becoming too emotional and appearing 'out of control'. Another failure is that most white faculty are unprepared to talk about white privilege as it affects people of color on a daily basis because they have seldom had to look at their own white privilege. They often relate to diversity through a 'white lens', which is often about celebrating, eating, or dancing. Another 'blind spot' occurs when white faculty often view discrimination as an individual rather than as a group or institutional experience. Much like a student of color once observed- when talking to another white student about racism, the white student demanded that he see him as an individual, but insisted on seeing, the student of color, as a group. This disconnect often goes unnoticed and leaves both groups feeling frustrated and incomplete.

The Privilege of Numbness

Recently, I led a workshop in which I shared a very personal life experience as a Chinese American child growing up in Oakland, California. After I finished sharing, a European American man, Michael, in the front row, raised his hand and declared that he had a story he wanted to share. I was surprised and shocked. Like so many other minorities in a predominantly white audience, I hesitated. Why? Because at that one moment I had to decide: Do I tell him truthfully how I felt about what he said or do I play it safe and listen to *his* story? Each of these scenarios carries a price to be paid both personally and professionally for someone who is a minority. If I tell the truth, I might be labeled as overly-sensitive or, at the very worse, invalidated, trivialized, or not invited to return. If I listen to his story, I leave feeling not heard and angry at myself for not telling him the truth. The latter experience is not my first reaction, but rather one that has been ingrained in me as a means of survival from my family and the history of being a minority in this country. There is a price to be paid if a white male is made to feel uncomfortable, out of control, irritated or angry.

For those of you who know me, you know that I chose to tell him the truth. I told him that before he shared his own story, I needed to hear how he felt about my story. He was obviously surprised and explained that his story would illuminate how he felt. Once again, I felt unheard. But I also felt he was being evasive. I could also feel the discomfort of the group and the sense that we were entering uncharted ground. But I persisted. "No, I want to hear how you felt about my story as a child." He paused and looked upward trying to 'think' about how he felt. After what seemed like forever, he said, "I don't know how I feel about what you said." I shared with him that not knowing how he felt was a white privilege. That perhaps his not knowing revealed a white history of being able to go "numb" whenever the pain or experiences of minorities are shared. And then just as I finished, a white woman blurted out, "I still want to hear his story." Once again, I was at a crossroads and it took all my courage to tell her that before I could hear his story, something was missing for me as a person of color--how did she feel about what he said or what I had shared? How did the rest of the group feel about what either of us shared?

It was at this point that Michael interjected and thanked me. He shared that he had never thought about how he, as a white man, had often bypassed how he felt. And that perhaps what he was really hiding was that he had difficulty sharing his emotions and maybe even hearing someone become emotional. That this numbness was something he seriously needed to look at. He also thanked me for my courageousness in confronting him. His admission was the turning point of the discussion, because soon afterwards, two women from South America shared that they had similar experiences to mine when Michael wanted to share his story and how often they, too, had been 'talked over.'

This 'disconnect' is something I have often experienced time and time again whenever whites are confronted with reflecting upon their own racism. There is either a long silence, a change of subject, questioning the integrity of the speaker, or wanting to interject with their own story.

What is needed from whites is an authentic emotional response to what they've heard from people of color, an acknowledgement of what has been shared, a sense of genuine curiosity, taking responsibility and a willingness to reflect and to change. Maya Angelou once said, "Some may never remember what you said or did, but they will always remember how you made them feel." The truth is always there. Saying it out loud…that's the hard part.

Ways to Connect and Rebuild Trust

Cycle of Change

What Escalates

1. Being Emotionally Disconnected
2. Defensive
3. Attacking/Blaming
4. In Denial
5. Saying Nothing
6. Unwilling to Change

What De-Escalates

1. Being Emotionally Responsive
2. Staying Open
3. Being Curious
4. Self-Reflective
5. Taking Responsibility
6. Willing to Change

Transformation happens when people feel:

1. Heard
2. Valued
3. Understood
4. Believed
5. There is a willingness to change

What Would Make the Dream Real

For a long time now, I have pondered about what it would truly feel like had the world changed according to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Dream. So many times, I have heard whites ask people of color what they want from them and what they could do or say to make a real difference. And so, I would like to put forth a list, not a dream, that would help me feel that change can actually happen.

It's my belief that, for change to occur, there must first be a shift in the way we perceive what is *real* inclusion, not just in the form of holidays, foods or costumes or the election of one black man or woman as president. For me, inclusion is also an attitudinal and behavioral shift that is based on the quality of our connection and our willingness to be in a truthful and transformative relationship with each other.

Inclusion means…

1. Not only having equal representation, but a desire for a meaningful relationship based on the mutuality of our trust, curiosity, and authenticity with each other.
2. Beginning where someone is, not where you want them to be.
3. Being open to hearing and experiencing different perspectives, ways of relating, and communicating.
4. Noticing the intent and impact of all our communications. In other words, noticing where and when we are connecting and/or feeling disconnected from others.
5. Noticing and taking responsibility about how we exclude others:
    a. by trivializing, devaluing and invalidating their perspectives.
    b. by valuing only what others have in common with us.
    c. by not noticing the subtleties of our privilege and the lack of privilege for others.
6. By asking and wanting to hear the answers to:
    What does inclusion mean to you?
    In what ways are you excluded?
    In what ways do I contribute to your feeling excluded?
7. By discussing: What parts of another culture do we value and what parts do we not. What kinds of stereotypes do we carry and how that affects how we relate or don't relate to others and to each other.
8. Desiring to embrace diversity because it will enhance our life, not take away from it.
9. A willingness to go beyond tolerating someone to truly wanting to have a meaningful relationship based on honesty and respect.
10. Noticing how often we use 'but' or 'have you ever thought maybe...' and realizing how those comments and many others shut down a conversation on diversity.

Someone once said, "We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when we are afraid of the light." Having a black president doesn't ensure that we are 'beyond racism'. What is needed is an openness to experiencing someone who is different and a willingness to learn and to grow from that opportunity.

The Art of Mindful Inquiry

1. “What I heard you say was....”
2. “Tell me more about what you meant by...”
3. “What angered you about what happened?”
4. “What hurt you about what happened?”
5. “What’s familiar about what happened?”
   (How did that affect you? How does it affect you now?)
6. “What do you need/want?”

9 Healthy Ways to Communicate

1. Reflect back what is being said. Use their words, not yours.
2. Begin where they are, not where you want them to be.
3. Be curious and open to what they are trying to say.
4. Notice what they are saying and what they are not.
5. Emotionally relate to how they are feeling. Nurture the relationship.
6. Notice how you are feeling. Be honest and authentic.
7. Take responsibility for your part in the conflict or misunderstanding.
8. Try to understand how their past affects who they are and how those experiences affect their relationship with you.
9. Stay with the process and the relationship, not just the solution.

The Art of Listening

"To die, but not to perish, is to be eternally present."
~Buddhist Proverb

1. Listen to what is being said and what is not.
2. Observe the language of the body.
3. Notice *how* something is being expressed and what *words* are used.
4. What you *feel* is as important as what you hear and see.
5. Be willing to adapt and to adjust to the moment.
6. Notice how your body and words express your projections.
7. Notice when you are asleep and why.
8. Keep breathing. Allow space for humor, warmth, and grief.
9. Compassion is one of the highest forms of being present.
10. Acknowledge and utilize the wisdom that is in each person.
11. Accept and validate the truthfulness of each person's perception.
12. Notice where someone begins and ends.
13. Notice what is in the middle of the room.
14. Model the acceptance and openness to conflict, anger, and pain.
15. Acknowledge the courage and intimacy of being vulnerable.
16. Be kind to yourself and others.

In Search of a Real Apology

In light of the abusive and violent experience that Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez had with Rep. Yoho, I wanted to revisit one of my earlier articles, *In Search of a Real Apology*. In so many ways, it was once again an issue of what was not acknowledged and also putting the burden of 'misunderstanding' on the part of one who is victimized. And, once again, if a Hill reporter had not also heard what Rep. Yoho said, I wonder if Rep. Ocasio-Cortez would have been believed. Time and time again, we witness seeing this type of scenario played out again and again, as we see police officers blaming the victim, white women like 'Karen' who call the police under the 'false' racist narrative of feeling threatened or the fear of being attacked by a person of color, particularly by black men. How quickly the police come with the assumption that a person of color is a 'threat'. I wonder if that same sense of urgency would have transpired if the person calling the police were a person of color feeling 'threatened' or feeling endangered by a white person.

But, what was equally disturbing about this exchange was how quickly so many males in government were ready to accept Rep. Yoho's apology and urging Rep. Ocasio-Cortez to 'move on' without checking in to see how she felt. In her emotionally eloquent response before the House, she shared a litany of things that Yoho had left out in his apology and how the implication and impact of his behavior would have on other women and even his daughters and wife. I wonder how many even 'noticed' what was missing in his apology, let alone even feeling the need to apologize and acknowledge to Rep. Ocasio-Cortez for 'not noticing'? When people tell me that this is 'not how we treat people' I am confused and surprised because this type of behavior, as Rep. Ocasio-Cortez pointed out, has become all too 'normalized' in this country. The real question that should be entertained is: How pervasive is this type of behavior and what part do I play in pretending not to see it, and in what ways am I also complicit by my silence and unwillingness to act and speak up?

9 MEANINGFUL WAYS TO APOLOGIZE

1. Communicate what you are apologizing for and what you've learned.
2. Reflect on your stereotypes/biases *prior* to the incident.
3. Take responsibility for the 'impact' of your actions, words and perceptions Avoid defending your good intentions or past history.
4. Be curious about the 'impact' of your actions and remain *open* to hearing reactions from others.
5. Feel and express sincere remorse, empathy and compassion.
6. Follow through by changing your behavior/attitudes at home, in your community and at work.
7. Share what you've learned with your family, colleagues, and community.
8. If possible, apologize to that particular group you've offended and enter into on-going conversations with them.
9. Be willing to hear from those groups that were targeted by validating their concerns, experiences, hurt and anguish.

"*If you acknowledge and accept your mistakes, what I see are not your faults, but your goodness. If you make excuses for your mistakes by claiming your goodness and good intentions, then all I see are your faults."* (Author Unknown)

Time to Get Real

In one of our recent Berkeley trainings, a white man who was confronted by a black woman on his racist remarks, was surprised that she even said good morning to him the next day. This same type of 'surprise' has occurred time and time again in my workshops all around this country. What I find intriguing is that many whites are still mystified by what it means to be authentic, partly because it is rare that they have such authentic relationships with people of color. So, I would like to attempt to demystify some of the most prevalent myths by whites about race relations in the United States:

Myth #1 ***Whites have to be hypervigilant so that they don't retraumatize people of color by what they say or do.***

First of all, we've had five hundred years of Don't Ask, Don't Tell…so the odds of whites hurting someone by what they do or say are really good. Second, people of color have been far more traumatized from racism than whites will ever be able to comprehend, so saying something racist is very low on the trauma scale. What angers and hurts the most is the denial, blaming and defensiveness, which is all too familiar to people of color. You see, when whites are afraid of hurting people of color by what they might say or do, what happens is that there's no engagement, no equal risking. As a young black woman once said to two white women, "So, I get hurt, even pissed. So, we work it out. I'm not going to die if you say something racist and neither will you. But when you get scared and say nothing about how you're feeling and keep your distance, then there's no chance of us even having a relationship or even a conversation." Or as David Lee said in my book *Let's Get Real*, when asked what advice he'd give to white people: "Get over yourself."

Myth #2 ***Once people of color discover that a white person has racist attitudes and behaviors, they won't want to have anything to do with them.***

In my newest film, *If These Halls Could Talk*, a white female student, Tyanne, tells the black male student, Will, that he speaks too conceptually, needs to stop saying 'we' and start using more 'I' statements. Will, disturbed, looks at her and says that those are the exact types of statements that shut him down because it seems as if he is being interrogated. Instead, he would prefer that she be curious about why he speaks conceptually to whites…that perhaps it is because this is the only way they will take him seriously as a black man. Also, that her being a white woman might affect how Will relates to her. When she hears this, she quickly replies, "Well, I have issues with you being a black man." Will looks at her laughing, "I already knew that. Now we can talk." Tyanne is shocked. She could not imagine that Will would still want to engage in conversation about race after their exchange, let alone strive for a deeper connection.

You see, I think many whites have a deep-seated need to view themselves as 'good people' and that good people aren't racists. The truth be told, that is exactly the type of 'liberal' that people of color most distrust. In my film, *Last Chance for Eden*, a white man named Sandy says to the group that if he found out he was a 'racist' he would want to kill himself. I think that is because whites view a racist as someone who burns crosses and wears a white hood or is a redneck living in the deep South. The real truth is that we all have deep-seated racist attitudes and behaviors that we've learned living in this racist society. Even people of color struggle with their own internalized racism. It is an ongoing battle to differentiate what is real and what is learned.

What is often missing in the process of creating authentic relationships with each other is curiosity, ownership, self-reflection, and the willingness to change. When that happens, which is extremely rare, a much more intimate and honest relationship emerges.

Myth #3 ***Seeing everyone 'the same' or being colorblind is a compliment to a person of color.***

We've all heard someone say, "I'm colorblind." Or maybe even "Little children don't see color." How sweet and how *false*. You see, little children do see color, only they run towards it. It is only when they have been taught to be afraid of color, that they pull back.

Whenever I hear someone say that they are colorblind, I always ask them two questions: *Where did you learn that from? What would it mean if you did see color?*

You see, I love who I am. Being Chinese is very important to me. My culture and my family traditions and history are very much a part of my being me. When whites share that they are colorblind, they miss out on the very essence and beauty of who I am. I don't believe we are multicultural, but rather multiracial, because we know almost nothing about one another's cultures. To many folks of color, assimilation has often meant accommodation—leaving yourself and your people at the door and 'blending in' with whites.

Honoring my people and who I am is more than something you can read about, eat, wear or dance to. If you really want to get to know the real me, then it requires time and curiosity, patience, perseverance, and the willingness to begin where I am, not where you want me to be.

Myth #4 ***People of color are tired of educating white people all the time.***

There is some truth to this, but not entirely. Whites need to understand that so often they want to hear the truth from people of color, but only if there's no expression of anger or hurt and if they (whites) don't have to talk about white privilege and aren't held responsible or accountable to change. That is why people of color hesitate about educating whites about racism, because when they do, they are often faced with being blamed, labeled, demoted, isolated or invalidated.

Another common complaint, is that people of color are often viewed as a history lesson during certain ethnic holidays and are asked to speak for all their people. Not only is this dehumanizing, it also does not allow people of color to speak as individuals or to have a unique voice based on their particular experiences and perspectives.

As someone once said, "If you are here to save our people, then you can go home. If you are here because your liberation is connected to ours, then you are welcome."

Myth #5 ***In a discussion around racism, if we all stay calm, meditate, don't raise our voices, remember that we are all 'one', and all use 'I' statements, everything will be fine. (singing Kumbaya is optional)***

For many people of color, all these conditions are really more about how whites relate to each other, and because of that, they are just further examples of how people of color must once again accommodate to how whites express themselves and wish to experience the world only through their own lens and at their own comfort level. To truly have a multicultural relationship means to be open to hearing other ways of expression, being able to be passionate without being labeled as violent or abusive and seeing differences as a good thing, not something that is negative or divisive.

As "At the Intersection" podcast host Jaleesa M. Jones recently shared during a recent episode:

"We aren't allowed to waver ... we're either demons or saints," she said. "And I think that sort of superhuman -- that sort of Super Negro narrative is really still harmful to us because it's been so heavily indoctrinated into American culture."

Whenever I hear whites say that we are all 'one', I remember the words of Martin Luther King, Jr.: *"The only time we are 'one people' is during war, taxes, and election time."* For many people of color, to be 'one' often means giving up who we are in order to be make whites feel comfortable and safe with us.

I am reminded of a line from the *Horse Whisperer*:

"The truth is always there. Saying it out loud, now that's the hard part."

How to Have a Successful Town Hall Meeting Part 1

(Now that we've, hopefully, learned how not to have one!)

When the mayor of Ferguson declared that there was no race problem in their town, despite the killing of Michael Brown by Deputy Darren Wilson, as well as deep racial divisions between the city government, law enforcement and black residents, I knew it was going to be all downhill from that moment on. Sadly, I was right. Weeks later, after continuous protests and daily confrontations with police and residents, the mayor finally declared that there would be a town hall meeting to find a way to calm things down and to allow residents to voice their concerns. He set up some guidelines that would eventually be his downfall and further polarize the city. Here are some of the reasons why the town hall meeting failed and also some ways it could have succeeded:

Panels are distancing and often not representative of the community. In the case of Ferguson, the panel was comprised of almost all white men. The use of tables immediately gave the impression of "them versus us." Get rid of all the tables. Have everyone sitting together in the audience. Request that there be no uniforms and invite everyone to bring their families. In short, make the main objective equal voices and provide the opportunity for all involved to speak. Now, how do you assure that hundreds of people have equal time to speak? Simple–everyone pairs up with someone they don't know and who is different from themselves. Now what? Read on….

Hire a professional Diversity Facilitator/Mediator who understands diversity issues, can create a safe container for community discussions, and has mediation experience to deal with any conflicts that might arise. Once everyone is paired up, have them share their real name, what it means and where it came from, their ethnicity and their favorite ice cream. After both have shared, allow time for the pairs to talk to each other.

Before you begin the next exercise, provide questions on a card that encourage curiosity and caring instead of adversarial and defensive statements, as they are discouraging and create distrust. StirFry Seminars has created "The Art of Mindful Inquiry" cards, which are available for purchase, with the following questions and statements: 1) "What I heard you say was…" 2) "Tell me more about…" 3) "What angered you about what happened?" 4) "What hurt you about what happened?" 5) "What's familiar about what happened?" 6) "What do you need/want?"

Now, you can have the pairs play the Assumptions Game. Each participant thinks of three assumptions that they've made about the person in front of them. Then each person shares one of their assumptions and checks to see if it is true or not. Each person only shares one assumption at a time until they have both finished their lists. The listener can respond or ask any questions that might come up, such as, "Tell me why you thought that." Or, "I can't believe you said that!" The objective is to have everyone 'check out' their assumptions instead of holding them in and making judgments that 'stereotype' someone or keeps them from getting to know who someone really is.

This is Part One of a two-part series on how to have a successful town hall meeting. In the coming months, StirFry Seminars will be conducting Town Hall Community Gatherings all over the country in an effort to create a national conversation on race. Don't you think it's time we have this conversation, not just because someone has been shot, but because we need to find a way to generate a more authentic and honest relationship, to face our fears of each other and to embrace our differences as a community and as a nation? James Baldwin once said:

"If I love you, I have to make you conscious of the things you don't see."

How to Have a Successful Town Hall Meeting Part 2

(Now that we've, hopefully, learned how not to have one!)

One of the most glaring mistakes that the Mayor of Ferguson made during his famous Town Hall Meeting debut was telling the audience that he and the rest of the panel would only listen and not respond. I remember a CEO of a top oil company telling me that communicating across cultures was easy – all you had to do was listen. That is one the most popular misguided myths in diversity work: that all it takes is active listening. My sense is that this one-sided perspective allows white males and well-meaning new age groups to avoid having to deal with the deep emotions and rage that talking about diversity issues can often engender. It also silences any conflicts or anyone having to take responsibility or to have to self-reflect about any of their actions/comments. Here are some suggestions that might help:

Curiosity is the Gateway to Empathy

What this Buddhist saying conveys is that curiosity helps us to have more compassion once we learn more about the context of another's life and experiences. The only way that can happen is to notice two very important aspects of curiosity: learning about the person in front of us and how that enhances our learning about ourselves in the process. Being curious about another person requires asking questions and being open to hearing the answers. It also means noticing if we are trying to understand from their perspective rather than trying to make sense of their world through our own biases and cultural lens.

What can help in this process is noticing the impact of our words and actions as well as our intentions. When we enter into this relationship, is it an equal one? Do we value their perspectives in the same way as we value our own? And if we do not, then are we willing to explore why and how that might affect our level of trust and intimacy with each other?

Some of the ways to 'open up' a conversation from the perspective of curiosity:

a. Tell me more about what happened….
b. What makes it unsafe for you to tell the truth to….?
c. What would you have liked to have said?
d. What do you leave at the door when you come to work/school?

Or maybe even using empathetic responses such as:

a. That must have been so painful to see…
b. You were so young to have gone through all that….
c. As you were sharing, I couldn't help but feel for you as a parent myself, how hard that must have been to see your child…
d. How frustrating that must have felt to see that no one did anything or said anything….

Perhaps the secret to all good communication and relationships is to begin with ourselves. As I wrote many years ago…

"To become connected with each other, we need to be truly alive to what is happening around us - to notice what lies before us, within us and in the moment. The clues are all around us, in the words that are spoken and in the silences that deafen a room."

If Your Halls Could Talk

Recently, in a neighboring city near my home, a group of concerned families held a school rally in response to a racial incident at their mostly white, affluent high school. Several students of color had been targeted on Instagram by someone posting their photos in a highly derogatory and racially offensive manner. In response, parents and students declared the need for tolerance and a stance against discrimination. Many parents were in shock that racism was even taking place at their school, because they felt their school practiced inclusiveness and had made social justice one of its core tenets. One parent shared with the reporters that the rally served as a way of healing for the school. However, some parents of the targeted students spoke, and demanded further support in making sure this incident didn't happen again. One parent whose daughter's picture had been posted said (of the photos), "…they were horrible, horrible graphic pictures of racism. Not just racially charged, but shocking." The superintendent called the incident horrifying and the images disgusting. She said, "Some students have been disciplined based on their level of involvement."

One of the students shared with a reporter, "…our school has been touted as a safe place, and we've been told there is no place for this, but we don't feel the administration is projecting that." Another student shared that they wanted more openness and clarity. Others also expressed concerns over an anti-Semitic incident that also had occurred. "I had no idea this kind of hateful stuff was going on here, I really didn't," a parent said. "It's taken me aback. It's also given me an opportunity to talk to my kids."

In reality, this same scenario is happening at alarming rates all around this country. We often feel that if we immediately punish the offenders, the problem will go away. While in reality, perhaps our greatest fear is that this may only be the tip of the iceberg. I remember when the shooting happened in Littleton, Colorado, so many schools across the country rushed to have more police officers and gun detectors to curb future violence. Alternatively, at a school leadership meeting I attended, an American Indian principal took a much different stance. She said, "At our school, we are looking at how the environment at our school might be like the one in Littleton, Colorado." In other words, exploring and examining our part in this tragedy is something necessary for any in-depth solution and healing.

Following suit, here are some pertinent questions I believe we should ask of ourselves when reading about the discriminatory incident noted above:

- What does 'inclusion' mean to you? Do you think the answer might be different depending on your ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, immigrant born etc.? If so, how?
- In what ways is there exclusion/racism etc. at this school? If there *is* racism, is it safe to talk about it? In what ways is it unsafe to talk about it? What would be the price if one told the truth?
- What did the students mean when they said, "...there needs to be more openness and clarity,"? If your halls could talk, what would they say? What would your teachers, staff and students say?

- What did the students mean when they said, "...we don't feel the administration is projecting that"? Is it safe to bring up discrimination? In what ways does the administration not deal with racism, etc.? Does the administration talk about honoring and celebrating diversity, but not practice it?
- What "anti-Semitic incident" occurred? How was it dealt with or not dealt with?
- Why didn't the parents/teachers know "these kinds of hateful things" were going on?
- Are the students with the Instagram account the only offenders who think this way? What if there were more?
- As parents, what would they say if their kids were the offenders or those targeted? In other words, how would parents have that discussion with their kids; are they prepared? How were parents given that talk with their own parents or teachers when they were growing up?
- What did teachers say to their students about this incident? Were they prepared?
- What kinds of actions could be taken by administrators besides suspension/expulsion?
- Are parents of color surprised at what happened at their school? Are the students of color surprised? Why or why not?
- Is it safe to bring up racism in the classroom, at faculty and parent meetings? If not, why?
- How has the impact of the Trump presidency/executive orders impacted your students and their families and has this been discussed in the classrooms, faculty/staff and parent meetings?
- Have the students, faculty, staff, administrators, parents had any prior diversity training? How often and are they effective and who is held accountable for implementation?
- How many faculty, administrators and staff of color are there at the school? Do all faculty, administrators and staff understand and feel they are adequately trained to work with and deal with issues of diversity that affect and impact teachers, staff faculty and parents who are minorities?

To truly be "inclusive", there must be a willingness to…

1. have meaningful relationships based on trust, safety and authenticity and not just diverse representation.
2. share and implement a diversity of approaches other than a Eurocentric, Christian, middle class, heterosexual, male approach and perspective.
3. have a curiosity and desire to learn from different cultures, approaches and perspectives.
4. begin where someone is, rather than where they want them to be.
5. notice the intent and impact of all their communications with each other.
6. notice and take responsibility about how they might exclude others…
   a. by the way they use certain familiar clichés.
   b. by noticing and relating only to how other people are similar to them, but not valuing, embracing or finding their differences useful or important.

c. by not noticing the subtleties of exclusion because of their privilege.

7. discuss ways each person feels excluded and/or included on the basis of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, immigrant status, religion, etc.
8. ask of oneself, “In what ways do I contribute to others feeling excluded and/or included?”
9. demonstrate curiosity when someone brings up that they are feeling excluded by asking, “What angers/hurt you about that? In what ways is that familiar to you as a _____? Am I one of those people who excludes you?”
10. share their personal reactions if someone tells them that they are racist.
11. talk about what parts of other cultures they value and which parts they don’t and why.
12. talk about what kinds of stereotypes/biases they carry and where they learned those from.
13. practice how you might respond if someone said, “I only feel safe with people who look like me.” Would you be curious, defensive, adversarial? Why or why not?
14. truly embrace and value diversity, not just tolerate it or accept it.
15. have relationships with people who are different in an authentic and honest way, making room for anger and hurt.
16. notice and talk about who is missing in the room and in their lives and families.

As Maya Angelou once wrote:

“*I may not remember what you did or said,*
but I will always remember how you made me feel.”

Mindful Techniques That Create Community

Keywords

When I am assessing what a participant is saying, I am always looking for keywords that will provide a sense of what that person needs, as well as something about who they are. These keywords are the clues to help a facilitator create an intervention that aligns with the participant's concerns. For example, if the participant says that she feels invisible, then the subtext is that she wants to feel seen. If he feels disrespected, then he wants to be respected.

It is also important to notice what is not being said. For example, if someone says that anger is no longer an issue for them because they have learned how to manage it, then the questions that might be helpful are, "What happened when you did get angry? How did it affect you? How do you compensate for it today?"

Another use of keywords is to help the facilitator establish a connection with the participant. By using his/her words, the participant feels heard and understood, thereby establishing a foundation for a trusting relationship. Too often, facilitators rush towards an intervention because of their need to "solve" a situation as quickly as possible or to stay in control.

One of the most important qualities in facilitation is the willingness to be patient – to allow the "true nature of a situation to emerge." Much like Michelangelo's sculptures, allowing the form to come forth in its own time and nature.

Underline the keyword(s) and identify what it is that each person is saying they need:

1. "I don't feel acknowledged at work. They wouldn't know what to do without me."
2. "He talks to me like I'm not there or smart enough to understand."
3. "He disrespects all the folks that aren't white. He uses a tone that just tells you he thinks you're uneducated and lazy."
4. "I'm too scared to say that I don't like being called a 'little girl.' I don't think he'd listen."
5. "All the white males who are from Eastern colleges are promoted. I've been here for over ten years and I've trained all of 'em. Yet they don't think I'm qualified enough or have anything worthwhile to say."
6. "I feel frozen when I'm in a room with all these guys."

So, you want to have a conversation on diversity….

By Lee Mun Wah

1. Lean into the discomfort, not away from it.

2. Notice if your shame or guilt are getting in the way of fully being able to listen and be curious.

3. If you take It personally, you will probably not hear as well and become defensive.

4. Listening is only half of what communication is all about. The other half is how well you respond, so that the other person feels heard, understood, believed, and that you're open to changing.

5. Just because you haven't experienced or witnessed what someone is going through, doesn't mean it isn't true. Just as a fish doesn't know it's in water.

6. Mindfully listening is also noticing what isn't being said, heard or seen.

7. If someone has to repeat themselves, it is probably because they don't feel you've heard them.

8. Saying that you're sorry or that you understand too quickly, can sometimes be interpreted as wanting a 'quick fix' or to end the conversation. The underlying questions might be: What are you sorry about? What do you think you understand? Or maybe: What aren't you sorry about? What don't you understand?

9. We do not learn from experience, but rather by our *willingness* to experience.

10. When speaking, notice the **impact** of your good intentions.

10 Ways to Begin a Diversity Conversation in the Classroom

1. Have students introduce themselves by name and ethnicity and share one thing about them- selves that isn't outwardly apparent to others.

2. Have students bring pictures of their family (including themselves) and say something about each picture. Then have the group share one thing that they remember about what they heard.

3. Request that everyone have lunch with someone who is different from themselves and who they don't know at least once a week. Then have each pair share what it was like for them and what they learned. Encourage the group to ask the pair questions.

4. Have students sit with someone new, so that different folks get to meet each other and break up old alliances.

5. Have students share in their native language how to say, "Good morning" and "Thank you". If they don't know, have them do some research or look around to find someone who might know. Have the group repeat each saying and have an oral quiz with prizes to reward those who remember.

6. Have students share three things that are special about their culture and why.

7. Have each student share about a famous writer, poet, artist, dancer, musician etc. from their culture and what this person means to them.

8. Have each student interview their parents/grandparents about what it has been like living and surviving in this culture. Ask the group to share what was similar and what was different about each story.

9. Ask the class to share the many ways ethnic groups are different and similar.

10. Ask students to share what is special about their neighborhoods.

9 Ways to Begin A Diversity Conversation with Teachers & Staff

1. Have everyone share their ethnicity, when they first discovered they were different and how it affected them then and now.

2. Have each teacher and staff member share their ethnicity and one thing that is special about their culture and why.

3. Have everyone share what their definition of diversity is, how they actualize that in their classrooms/work settings, in specific and tangible everyday practices in their relationships with the students, and how they integrate diversity into teaching practices and curriculum.

4. Have each teacher/staff share what is good and what is hard in talking about race/racism with their students and peers.

5. Have each teacher/staff share their experiences and what they notice about how racism plays itself out in their school site amongst students/staff/teachers.

6. Have each teacher/staff share how racism has affected their lives and what it has taken for them to get to this room.

7. Have each teacher/staff share how race/racism affects a student's attitude, self-esteem, behavior, and classroom performance.

8. Have each teacher/staff share what they think are effective ways to talk about racism, to deal with the issues of racism and to unlearn it. Also, have them mention what kinds of trainings they would need to sharpen their skills and knowledge.

9. Fill each classroom and hallway with quotes/pictures from all cultures and discuss what they mean with students, teachers, and staff.

Becoming Culturally Competent Is A Journey

Cultural competency in the past few years has become a constant buzzword for workplaces, schools, and social agencies. There is not an easy answer or a quick solution to how to become culturally competent, but rather it is a process, or, more exactly, a journey that takes a lot of time, curiosity and a desire to widen the scope of one's experiences. The Buddhists say that we do not learn from experience, but rather by our willingness to experience. In the Western culture, which often boasts of being multicultural, there is still so much to learn about each other and so much that is taken for granted. And so, the journey that is needed begins with first acknowledging what we don't know and being open to what it is that we need to learn.

To me, cultural competency requires many facets of understanding. For many, awareness is often just the first level of cultural competency. Becoming more aware of the social issues and contexts surrounding another's cultural history and upbringing is also needed. For example, asking, "What's good about being Latino and what's hard about being Latino?" Or, "When did you first learn you were different? How did it affect you? How does it affect you today?" Though at first these may seem like very simple questions, they are seldom asked and inherently contain many layers of emotions and experiences that can have a profound effect on one's self-esteem and perception of the world.
Here are some important ways to become more culturally competent:

a. Begin where they are, not where you want them to be.

b. Learn to correctly pronounce the name of someone from another culture. Don't abbreviate or change their names. Their names are an important link to their past and family history. Honor their names and you honor their ancestors and their heritage.

c. Learn about the important folks in someone's place of origin such as artists, musicians, dancers, philosophers, and writers, not just their foods or holidays.

d. Share your culture, so folks from other cultures don't think they are the only ones who are different. If you don't know much about your culture ask your relatives, go the library or internet and discover more about yourself and your people. Many have a culture that they've abandoned or had erased because of historical events such as racism and genocide.

e. Invite folks who do not look like your culture into your home for dinner or other occasions. In other words, widen your circle of friends. If your surroundings have few cultures represented, bring films, books, pictures, and television programs, music and artwork depicting other cultures into your home.

f. Notice and appreciate the colors, rhythms and spirituality of other cultures.

g. Let folks know that you see their color and acknowledge yours. Colorblindness is just another form of denial and marginalizing.

h. Talk about racism, sexism, and classism. Even though you may not believe it exists, that doesn't mean it doesn't happen. Be curious, empathetic and open to another reality outside of your own. Be prepared when someone brings up your ethnicity and what it means to them. Try not to take it personally if they say something negative; rather, listen and ask lots of questions. Be open to how they are feeling, even it takes the form of anger or hurt. They need to talk and trust that you will listen and be understanding.

i. When someone talks about racism or any of the other isms, believe them. Be curious, and be supportive, and not a part of the problem.

j. Avoid making fun of other cultures or telling ethnic jokes. All stereotypes, whether negative or positive, are simply generalizations and marginalizing.

k. When someone is upset, reflect back what it is they said. Use their words.

l. Notice what someone is saying and what they are not.

m. Try to understand how someone's past affects who they are and how those experiences might affect their relationship with you.

n. Stay with the process and the relationship, not just the solution.

o. Emotionally relate to how they are feeling. Nurture the relationship.

p. Be present, not too far back or too far ahead. Stay in the moment.

q. While communicating, notice the impact of your words and not just your good intentions.

r. When someone is angry, try asking, "What angered you about what happened? What hurt you about what happened? What's familiar about this? What do you need or want?" Listen without interrupting. Reflect back what you hear. Stay neutral and be empathetic.

Most folks are often afraid of discussing diversity issues for fear of saying something wrong that might hurt or offend someone. Good luck. This country has had five hundred years of a "don't ask, don't tell" policy when it comes to diversity issues. More than likely you will say something that will hurt or be painful to someone. The important thing is to take responsibility for your mistake and to be open to talking about it. Sincerity is far more forgiving when it comes out of love and caring.

Next, stay in the room. Developing a trusting and understanding relationship takes time, especially when multiple past hurts and hundreds of unfinished conversations have taken place long before your interactions. Yet, all relationships, like good gardens take a while to grow and to blossom. They can't be rushed. They grow and develop at their own time and place. There is an old Buddhist saying, "If you knew someday you were going to be very happy, would you be in such a rush?" Take your time and let go of your expectations. A good and trusting relationship with someone is something to treasure and to nurture. The time you take now to develop the friendship will be the foundation that they will rely on and remember in the years ahead when there is a misunderstanding or crisis. Enjoy the journey.

Reflection/Inquiry Practice - Staff Voices

Instruction: Write Reflections and Inquiries for each statement. Use your The Art of Mindful Inquiry cards. Vary your Inquiries. When finished, read and receive group feedback on your answers.

1. Maria says, “As a Latina, from day one I haven’t had any kind of training. I’ve been asking for something for five years. So, I’m left to do what I’m doing.”
2. Jeff says, “As African American, I’m going through problems with my supervisor. She doesn’t supervise. A lot of it’s cultural – I’m talked to; I’m subpoenaed.”
3. Mon Sia says, “As Hmong, I work at two different schools. One principal doesn’t care – she doesn’t treat me well. She says, ‘You come hourly, so you do what I want.’ She doesn’t say thank you. The other is always encouraging me. The principal treats me as an equal.”
4. Miguel says, “As Mexican American, the district knows we’re valuable, but they don’t really acknowledge us and how important we are.”
5. Mary says, “We want to be included in their agendas, not just invited, but allowed to speak about our concerns and ideas for the betterment of the school.”
6. Tina says, “As Navajo, we should have more independence in our jobs. We all have minds of our own and can be creative in our own ways. We’re always following someone else’s instructions or decisions.”

Reflection/Inquiry Practice - Student Voices

Instruction: Write Reflections and Inquiries for each statement. Use your The Art of Mindful Inquiry cards. Vary your Inquiries. When finished, read and receive group feedback on your answers.

1. Tim yells out in his mostly white class: “As an African American, why don’t we ever talk about racism here at this school? What’s the fear?”
2. Maria gets mad at the white instructor and says: “As a Latina American student, I don’t feel safe to talk about what it’s like to be a person of color here in this classroom or anywhere on this campus!”
3. Tin Fook Lee laments to his mostly white classmates that: “As a Chinese student from Hong Kong, I feel so marginalized here! Like only whites are capable of being strong leaders.”
4. Talib says: “As a Pakistani student born in Pakistan, no one says hello to us here on this campus. It’s like we’re invisible!”
5. Jerod says in class: “As a white queer student, when race comes up, it’s like queer issues take the back seat! Why is that?”
6. Michelle yells out at the white instructor, Mr. Harrison: “As a student from Palestine, I feel that you’re a racist and you don’t even know it!”

1. “What I heard you say was....”
2. “Tell me more about what you meant by...”
3. “What angered you about what happened?”
4. “What hurt you about what happened?”
5. “What’s familiar about what happened?” (How did that affect you? How does it affect you now?)
6. “What do you need/want?”

Advanced Mindful Interventions

1. He/she/they said some really *important* things just now. What is one thing you heard him/her/them say?

2. What is the *statement* behind your question?

3. How many of you think he/she/they are talking *about himself/herself/themselves*?

4. If your *tears* could talk, what would they say?

5. I can see that you have some *strong reactions* to what he/she/they said, and we'll get to those. But if you wanted to find out why he/she/they said that, what would be a good question to ask him/her/them?

6. What I heard is that you *can't understand* why he/she/they feels this way. Would you like to understand why? What would be a good question to ask her/him/them if you wanted to find out why?

7. What I heard you say was that this was *not important* to you, but it might be important to him/her/them. What would be a good question to ask him/her/them if you wanted to find out why?

8. So, what I hear is that you *don't know* how you feel about _____. If you did know how you felt, what would you say?

9. What I hear is that you don't know why _____said this. Would you like to know why? What would be a good question to ask her, him, them, if you wanted to find out why?

Advanced Mindful Interventions Alternatives

FACILITATOR: TO PERSON **CONFRONTING**

A. Did you notice (his/her/their) *reaction* to you when you were talking?

B. So, what did you *notice*?

C. Then, what would be a *question* you could ask (him, her, them) if you wanted to find out how (he, she, they) felt? Ask (her, him, them).

FACILITATOR: TO PERSON **BEING CONFRONTED**

D. What (*angered, hurt,* and was *familiar*) about (his, her, their) response to you when you first shared your story?

E. How could (his, her, their) response have been *different* so you would have felt heard, understood and believed?

Advanced Mindful Interventions Quiz

a. _____ Maxine: "The way they stared at me, as an African American woman, was... who do you think you are to question me?"

Tom: "Maxine...oh, come on.... I've been stared at, too, for being so tall. I think you need to stop being so overly sensitive."

b. _____ Terri: "I can't talk about it...." (starts crying)

c. _____ Jeremy: "I don't know how I feel about having a woman manager."

d. _____ Mark: "When they all go to lunch I'm not even invited. No one even notices I'm missing. Was it because I was Mexican? I'll never know and they won't say and I won't ask."

Scott: "Mark, I can't understand why you would think that the other white managers not inviting you to lunch had anything to do with your being Mexican. They don't invite me, either."

e. _____ Juan: "As a Mexican American, I feel my intelligence is questioned every day."

Fred: “I don’t care if you’re red, black or blue. That’s not important to me. To me, you’re just Juan.”

f. _____ Tonia: “My manager totally dismisses everything I have to say.”

Jack: “Tonia...did you ever think it had anything to do with your tone of voice?”

g. _____ I don’t know why you feel uneasy here as a black man. Mary loves it here and she’s black.

h. _____ Mary, who has a Pakistani accent, says, “For many immigrants here...being seen as uneducated and a terrorist happens all the time.”

i. _____ (Thinking to myself) I can’t remember what Tom said.

Noticing What Is Missing

Gathering more information about what happened so:

a. We can better connect by understanding not only what happened, but also what didn't happen.
b. We can better understand the impact and intent of what transpired and also how it has affected them when it happened and presently.
c. We can be supportive and nurturing by letting them know we heard them and believe them by wanting to know more.

For example: In front of 600 educators, Mon Sia, a thirty-eight-year-old Vietnamese teacher, shares her story*: I was an eight-year-old adoptee from Vietnam when I came to America. I lived with a white family in a small farming community in Idaho. Every day for eight years, these girls would spit in my hair and I would wash the spit out of my hair in the bathroom and quickly run to class. (She looks down and is close to tears)*

A. REFLECTIONS: What are some <u>reflections</u> for Mon Sia? (Remember, a reflection is like a recording, not a question. Use their words, not yours.)

1.

2.

B. NWM: What are some things that were <u>missing</u> from what Mon Sia shared? (these are simply your thoughts.)

1. She didn't share if she told her teachers about the girls spitting in her hair.

2.

3.

C. INQUIRIES: Now turn each of what was missing (NWM) into a <u>question.</u>

1. I was wondering, did you tell your teacher about the girls spitting in your hair?

2.

3.

9 NWM Inquiries Guide

1. What's missing is how they **felt** about what happened.
   *How did you **feel** when…? What came up for you when…?*

2. What's missing is **why** they thought this happened.
   ***Why** do you think …?*

3. What's missing is how it **affected** them afterwards.
   *How did it **affect** you afterwards?*

4. What's missing is if what happened was **familiar.**
   *What was **familiar** about what happened*?

5. What's missing is if there were any **witnesses.**
   *Were there any **witnesses?** If so, did they say/do anything?*

6. What's missing is if they **said or did anything** in response.
   *Did you **say or do anything** when…?*

7. What's missing is how many times has this **happened.**
   *I was wondering, how many **times** has this happened*?

8. What's missing if they **told anyone**.
   *I was wondering, did you **tell anyone**? If not, why?*

9. What's missing is what **specifically** happened.
   *What are **some of the ways**….?*

NWM Vignette #1

Halley: *As a person of color, I feel like I always have to lower my voice, otherwise I will be labelled.*

REFLECTIONS:

NOTICING WHAT IS MISSING: What were some things that were missing from what Halley shared? (these are simply your thoughts)

a.

b.

c.

d.

INQUIRIES: Now turn what was missing (from NWM) into a question.

a.

b.

c.

d.

Advanced Empathetic Responses

1. I was really touched/moved by what you shared about...

2. You've gone through so much to get to this room...

3. I'm sure there were lots of times it was hard to just get up and face another day...

4. As you were sharing, it's like it happened yesterday...

5. As hard as it is to talk about what happened, I can also see a sense of relief...

6. Given what has happened to you, I can really see why you chose to...

Advanced Empathetic Interventions Quiz

1._____ “I finally feel like I can have some closure now.”

2._____ “My sweet grandfather was hung by the Ku Klux Klan when I was five years old.”

3._____ “We were dirt poor. I had to work two jobs and also help raise my two brothers and sisters. I was the first to go to college.”

4._____ “I was so angry at the way he looked at me, as if to say, “What are you doing here? This department is for men only.”

5._____ “My mom was always there for me.”

6._____ “I think people have assumed that I was a troublemaker for speaking up all the time. I think that has a lot to do with why I’m so quiet now.”

Empathetic Responses– (For the perpetrator)

2. “I can really see how **frustrating** it is for you when...”

3. “Listening to you just now, I can really hear how h**ard/complicated** this is for you to understand.”

4. “I can really sense how **upsettin**g this is for you.”

5. “I see how **confusing** it must be to you when…”

6. “It must be **painful** to hear this about… when you have a totally different experience.”

7. “I can really see how **difficult** this is for you to hear...”

8. “It must be **embarrassing** for you to discover that those who you trusted and loved may have hidden the full truth from you.”

9. “Not **easy** to hear, is it?”

10. “Sometimes when the truth is **too hard to bear**, we need to create another truth so we can move on with our lives.”

1. “What I heard you say was....”
2. “Tell me more about what you meant by...”
3. “What angered you about what happened?”
4. “What hurt you about what happened?”
5. “What’s familiar about what happened?”
   (How did that affect you? How does it affect you now?)
6. “What do you need/want?”

Mindful Facilitation Practice

(Fact Finding Inquiries)

Instructions: What are some **connective reflections**? What are some **connective inquiries**?

1. Jeri: My grandfather went through so much racism when he was younger because he was Navajo. I think it deeply affected him and his relationship with us.

2. Mary: I wish someone had asked me how it felt to be the only Latina in a room filled with all white students. I've lost so much of my true self.

3. Joaquim: It's hard to be Guatemalan and adopted into an all-white family living in Connecticut.

4. Siddhartha: As a Muslim, everyone thinks you're a terrorist. That's why I don't have any white friends. I wish they could see the real me.

Diversity Exercises

DIFFERENCES EXERCISE

As a_____

1. When did you first notice you were different?
2. How did that affect you?
3. How does it affect you today?

WHAT DO YOU LEAVE AT THE DOOR?

As a_____

1. What parts of yourself do you leave at the door?
2. What would be the price if you told the truth?
3. What would it take for you to feel safe enough to bring your full self to this agency?

WHAT WE DO NOT SEE

As a_____

1. When people look at you, what do they see?
2. What don't they see?
3. What do you wish they'd see?
4. If people wanted to see the real you, what would it take for you to feel safe enough to show them?

"What I heard you say was...." "Tell me more about what you meant by..." "What angered you about what happened?"	"What hurt you about what happened?" "What's familiar about what happened?" (How did that affect you? How does it affect you now?) "What do you need/want?"

My Child Will Not Be Taught by a White Teacher!

Mrs. Roosevelt (an African American mother) is coming into the third-grade classroom of Mrs. White (a Euro-American teacher) because she does not want a white person to teach her daughter, Tania. Tania is arriving at this new school in the month of December, having transferred from another school.

Mrs. White has been informed by the Taiwanese Principal, Mrs. Wong, about the nature of Mrs. Roosevelt's visit to her classroom after school. Mrs. Wong appears quite nervous about the meeting. She instructs Mrs. White to simply state school and district policy about non-discrimination guidelines and practices.

As Mrs. Roosevelt appears at the door of her classroom, Mrs. White is taken aback by how tall Mrs. Roosevelt is and the seriousness on her face. Mrs. Roosevelt notices her reaction, but says nothing. Mrs. White attempts to hide her nervousness by smiling and touching Mrs. Roosevelt's necklace and commenting, "Oh, what a beautiful necklace!" Mrs. Roosevelt is shocked and pulls back and says, "Excuse me…" As they proceed to sit down, Mrs. Roosevelt appears upset and looks down at the floor shaking her head. Mrs. White asks her why she is here today and prepares to write down Mrs. Roosevelt's comments on a clipboard. Mrs. Roosevelt is surprised and says, "I thought the Principal told you why I'm here." Mrs. White says nothing. There is a long, awkward silence.

Irritated, Mrs. Roosevelt asks, "I just want to know how many teachers of color are at this school?" Mrs. White fidgets and finally says, "Well, let me see…we have a negro janitor, a little Chinese girl from Taiwan who is a teacher assistant in the bilingual department, and oh yes… Miss Santiago in the cafeteria who is Hispanic or something…"

Mrs. Roosevelt is visibly angered by her comments. She shakes her head in disbelief and asks Mrs. White once again, "Do you have *any* teachers of color?" Mrs. White nervously responds that they don't, but that the administration is an equal opportunity employer. Mrs. White says, "Of course we would hire more of those people, but they just aren't available or don't apply."

At this point, Mrs. Roosevelt blurts out, "This is why I don't want my daughter being taught by a white teacher. How could any of you, as white people, possibly understand what a black child has to go through and the issues they have to face every day?" Mrs. White is shocked and says "I am a qualified teacher for over 20 years. I have taught all the children of the rainbow. You see, I don't see color. To me, even the Hispanics and Black kids can be taught. I don't understand why having a black teacher is so important."

Mrs. Roosevelt is beside herself and starts to raise her voice. Mrs. White starts to pull back her chair and starts to walk towards the telephone, saying, "If you don't control yourself, I will have to call the hall guards or possibly the Principal." The entire situation escalates.

Group Discussion Questions

1. What does Mrs. Roosevelt want from Mrs. White?

2. What does Mrs. White want from Mrs. Roosevelt?

3. What were some of the moments of disconnection between Mrs. Roosevelt and Mrs. White?

4. What was missing in what Mrs. Roosevelt shared?

5. How could Mrs. White have responded differently so Mrs. Roosevelt would have felt seen, understood, and believed?

6. As a_____, what was good/hard about this vignette? What was familiar?