Standing on Common Ground in a World of Competing Realities
Forum on Workplace Inclusion

April 10, 2018

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Facilitators

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Ms. McDonald has more than 20 years of D&I practice within multiple changing work environments that has included organizational development, strategy development and well as the management of staff and resources. As an independent leadership development consultant, she has worked in the fields of advertising and marketing, law, social justice, and higher education.

Elizabeth Williams-Riley

As President & CEO of the American Conference on Diversity, she works with companies from the public and private sectors to implement inclusive leadership, healthcare disparities, conflict management, cross-cultural communication, advocacy, and social justice initiatives. She has been featured in national publications, *Diversity Best Practices, InSight Diversity,* and *Diversity Journal*.

OUR MISSION

The American Conference on Diversity is dedicated to building inclusive and just schools, workplaces and communities through awareness, advocacy and education.

OUR FOCUS

Providing awareness and strategies to stakeholders so they can recognize, address, and challenge bias and oppression based on ability status, age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status within the workplace, in schools, and in our communities.

Overview

- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
  - Redefining Professionalism through a D&I Lens
  - Dialogue and Authenticity as tools for change and shifting understanding of the intersections of D&I and social justice
    - Open honest dialogue
    - Appropriateness – pushing the envelope
    - Expanding license to extend our boundaries

Overview

- Diversity, Equity Inclusion (cont'd)
  - From Safe Space to Brave and Courageous Places
  - Common Ground in the midst of conflicting ideals, competing realities, lived experiences
  - Reimagining D&I in the workplace and its' intersection with social justice

Objectives

- Fully engage in honest and outcome driven dialogue

- Explore our own identities, past & present

- Identify and own "the work" of dismantling injustice

Course Outline

- **Self Exploration, Cultural Share, Individual Role**
  - The Things We Carry
  - What is Common Ground?
  - The Masks We Wear
  - Assumptions of Work
- **The Experience – D&I and Social Justice**
  - Uncovering talent A new model of inclusion- Deloitte University Study
  - Competing Realities – Systems of Advantage and Disadvantage
  - Intersections of D&I and Social Justice
  - Inside/Outside of Privilege
- **Strategy/Application**
  - Personal Accountability
  - Professional
    - Institutional Change
    - Building Inclusive Organizations
  - Action Planning

Assumptions of Our Work

- Racism cuts across, and is imbedded in or layered into, all other forms of oppression. When it is addressed, society is improved for all oppressed groups.

- Too often we allow fear to paralyze action specifically focused on healing the divisions that fuel bias, and we default to implementing well-meaning but limited programs; such efforts are simply powerless in creating effective and sustained improvements.

Assumptions of Our Work

- Prejudice and bias are *learned* behaviors that can be *unlearned*.

- While it is natural for human beings to attempt to categorize one another, rigid classifications based on ability status, age, ethnicity, gender, language status, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status are neither natural nor scientific, but are social constructs.

- Miscommunication can and does occur because of cultural differences and can be rectified through *awareness*, *education*, and *exposure*.

Assumptions of Our Work

- Assumptions and stereotypes developed

  around perceived or actual social identities

  can be prevalent in institutions, communities,
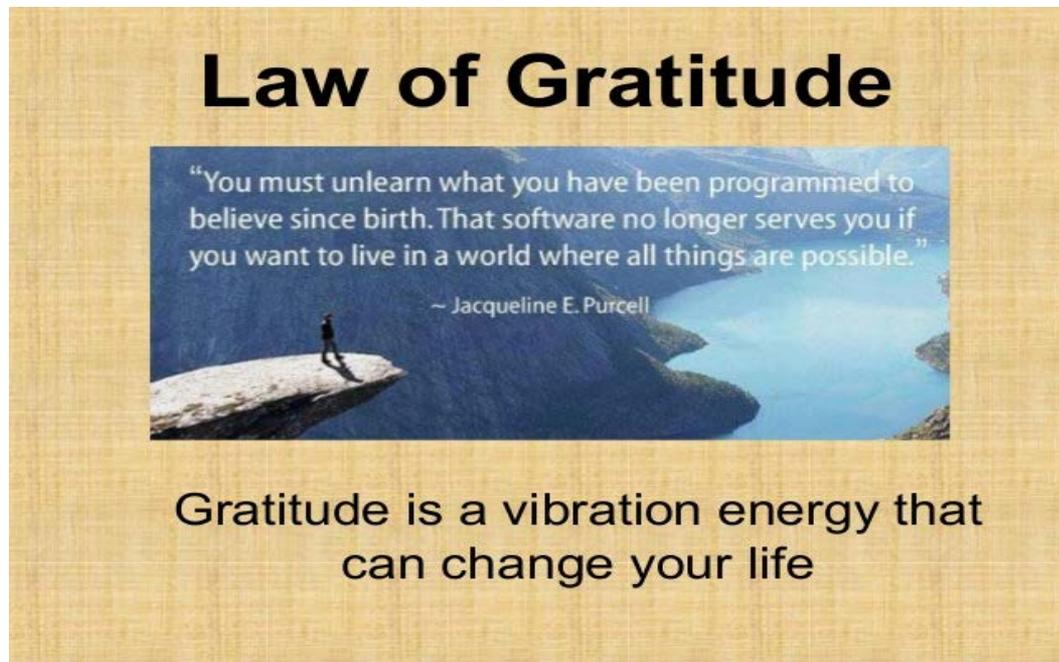
  and workplaces.

Assumptions of Our Work

- Both targeted and privileged groups participate in oppression.

  - When dealing with issues of oppression, privileged group members tend to come from an *individual* worldview and from an *intellectual* perspective.

  - When dealing with issues of oppression, target group tend to come from a *group* worldview and from an *emotional* perspective.

- Social identities impact an individual's level of empowerment and disempowerment.

Assumptions of Our Work

- The relationship between individual attitudes and systems/institutions demonstrates the roles we play in social injustice. Because we have a shared responsibility in shaping these institutions, we also have the power to change.

- Dismantling oppression requires liberation.

Law of Gratitude

"You must unlearn what you have been programmed to believe since birth. That software no longer serves you if you want to live in a world where all things are possible."

~ Jacqueline E. Purcell

Gratitude is a vibration energy that can change your life

MAPPING YOUR SOCIAL IDENTITIES

HOW DO YOUR SOCIAL IDENTITIES SHAPE YOUR LIVED EXPERIENCES IN THE WORLD?

Systems of Advantage/Disadvantage

Social Identity	Advantage (Privilege)	Disadvantage (Target)	Type of Oppression
RACE	Whites	People of Color	Racism
GENDER	Male Cisgender	Non-Male	Sexism
AGE	35 -65	Under 21 Over 65	Ageism
RELIGION	Christians	Non-Christians	Religious Oppression
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Heterosexual	Non-Heterosexual	Heterosexism
CLASS/ SOCIO-ECONOMIC	Owning, Wealthy, Rich	Working Poor, Homeless	Classism
ABILITY	Living w/o Disabilities	Living w/ Disabilities	Abelism
APPEARANCE	Barbie & Ken	All others	Lookism
NATIONALITY	Citizen	Non-Citizen	Xenophobia

WE

ALL

LOSE

Consequences of oppressive systems:

Distrust
Anger
Guilt
Lost potential
Divided communities
Insufficient resources
Mutual suspicion
Absence of cooperation
Violence within and across groups

The Masks We Wear

What Gets In the Way?

People acting to perpetuate oppression or prevent others from working to eliminate oppression

People prefer those who are perceived as similar to them

People who are perceived as different are marginalized

Failure to acknowledge differences that exist among a group with shared culture

Focus of Change Strategies

Personal

Aim to change thoughts, and feelings. Increase Awareness and openness to learning

Interpersonal

Aim to enhance skills, communication patterns; impact behavior and relationships

Institutional

Aim to break structural barriers and create policies, practices and programs that support equitable outcomes

Cultural

Aim to create environments representative of and welcoming to the org's diversity; value and utilize differences

Inclusive Workplace Characteristics

- Committed Leadership
  - Emotional intelligence and engagement

- Intentional dedicated *TIME* to address matters related to building a more inclusive workplace

- Acceptance and respect for difference
  - Willingness to engage vs. Obligation to engage

- Careful attention to the dynamics of difference
  - Acknowledgement of competing priorities
  - Work/Life Balance

- Building and application of cultural knowledge to policies and practices
  - Knowledge regarding historical implications of oppression and privilege with attention to how they influence decision making, attitudes, and behaviors

- Continuous expansion of cultural knowledge and resources
  - Investing in resources to create and sustain awareness building and educational processes for personal and professional development

- Adaptations of systems to meet the needs of diverse populations
  - Understanding Business Community vs. Business Environment

Resources

• World Health Organization, "Health Impact Assessment: The Determinants of Health (2013)."
http://www.who.int/hia/evidence/doh/en/ Accessed Feb. 10, 2013. The California Endowment, "Why Place & Race Matter: Impacting Health Through a Focus on Race and Place."

• Batts, V."Is Reconciliation Possible? Lessons From Combating 'Modern Racism,'" in Ian T. Douglas, ed., *Waging Reconciliation: God's Mission in a Time of Globalization and Crisis* (New York: Church Publishing, 2002).
www.churchpublishing.org

• St. John, M., Thomas, K., and Norona, C., "Infant Mental Health Professional Development: Together in the Struggle for Social Justice," Zero to Three, November 2012.

Websites

• www.Visions-inc.org

• www.racialequitytools.org

• http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/equity.aspx – this is the county's ESJ website. It includes links to ESJ tools, reports, resources, the IBT, ESJ work, the ESJ vision, and videos of speeches and training.

• http://grenetwork.org/wp/ – the Governing for Racial Equity (GRE) Network is a regional partnership of government jurisdictions working to achieve racial equity.

• www.cvhpi.org – information on the Place Matters initiative in the San Joaquin Valley and links to partner organizations and their work.
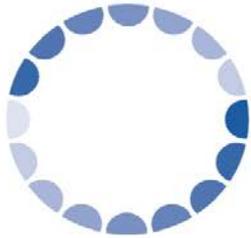
Thank You!

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