

# ***VTAction***

A Program of

The Intercultural Engagement Center at Virginia Tech in partnership with Virginia Organizing

## **Communication, Culture, and Conflict**

February 2016

# FIVE MODES OF LEARNING ABOUT DIFFERENCE

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## **#1 – Introspection / Personal Reflection**

Becoming aware of your own thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and knowledge related to various people and communities. Personal introspection may involve time for reflection on your own experiences with, or having never experienced, learning about the lives of people who are \_\_\_\_\_. For some, this can include imagining what it means to care for people whose realities are somehow unique from what we consider “normal.” It may also involve recognizing what each individual sees as ethical, humane treatment of other human beings.

## **#2 – Personal Stories / Non-fiction Examples**

Becoming aware of how you are similar to and different from people who are \_\_\_\_\_ via personal interactions. Examples can include one-on-one conversations with \_\_\_\_\_ individuals, listening to speakers, and watching films that provide biographical accounts of real experiences. Encountering descriptions or portrayals of personal experiences may help you discover an emotional or mental connection with different situations or specific factors facing people who are different from yourself.

## **#3 - Research / Educational Programs**

Becoming educated on social issues, facts, statistics, laws, policies and cultures of people who are \_\_\_\_\_. This may include attending lectures, reading research about issues related to \_\_\_\_\_ communities, attending awareness building workshops and seminars, etc. Encountering new educational materials may lead to additional skills, new insights or revised cognitive frameworks for understanding race, ethnicity, class, gender, sex, gender identity/expression, age, spirituality/religion, socioeconomic class, disabilities/ability...

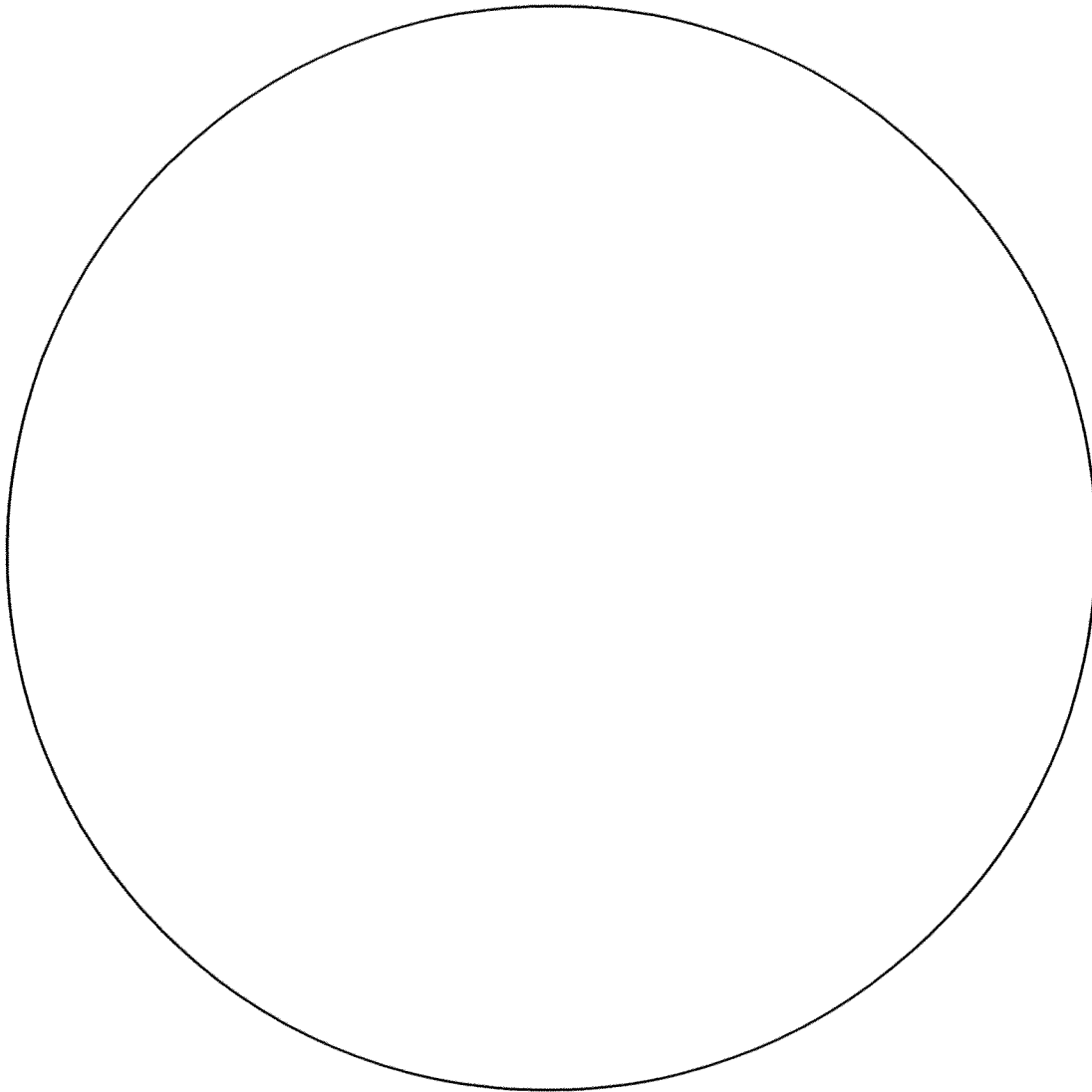
## **#4 – Dialogue / Discussion**

Developing greater understanding about your personal capacities as an ally by participating in dialogue about \_\_\_\_\_. This may include engaging facilitated discussions, one-on-one conversations or participating in other group processes. Dialogue often allows people to express thoughts and feelings, as well as questions that they have never before had an opportunity to process.

## **#5 – Action / Social Change / Activism**

Taking actions toward bringing about changes on interpersonal, group and societal levels. This may include teaching others how to recognize and resist racism, sexism, heterosexism, transphobia/cisgenderism classism, ageism, classism, ableism, religious intolerance, etc. sharing your knowledge related to institutional discrimination, working with groups and organizations to change public policy, updating and revising policies and administrative procedures, joining a support network, conducting outreach to people who are \_\_\_\_\_, etc.

- 1 – Introspection / Personal Reflection**
- 2 – Personal Stories / non-Fiction examples**
- 3 – Research / Educational Programs / Training**
- 4 – Dialogue / Discussion**
- 5 – Action / Social Change / Activism**



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## RESPECT GUIDELINES

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**R**ecognize your communication style.

**E**xpect to learn something about yourself and others.

**S**peak clearly and use personal examples when making a point.

**P**articipate honestly and openly.

**E**ngage in the process by listening as well as speaking.

**C**onfidentiality / Curiosity / Charity

**T**ake responsibility for yourself and what you say.

## **COMMUNICATION: GROUND RULES, GUIDELINES, PROTOCOLS**

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When people gather for an intentional discussion on a topic, theme, or task, facilitators of these discussions have found it helpful to establish certain acceptable attitudes and behaviors at the outset. Having group participants suggest and agree upon these attitudes and behaviors is a common practice, particularly in groups that have been assigned a task for completion.

When group members are challenged to establish their own set of communication guidelines, the facilitator needs to allow sufficient time for a variety of attitudes and behaviors to be examined and agreed upon. The facilitator also needs to be attentive to all members of the group and make certain that everyone's ideas are included in the process.

In the past 10 years, trainers and facilitators have become increasingly sensitive to the ways the issues of culture, style, communication styles, and power and authority influence dynamics of group process. Even in what can be viewed as a relatively "simple" or "benign" exercise, complex dynamics that can be attributed to these issues will manifest themselves.

One strategy that a facilitator can apply to acknowledge and address these dynamics is to present a set of communication guidelines for the groups' consideration and approval and allowing for the addition of guidelines suggested by group members. These communication guidelines serve as the basis for the first discussion question. For example, the following question can be posed: "Of these guidelines, which one is the most important to you when engaging in a discussion in this environment, or about these topics?"

Here is an example of one set of communication guidelines used by many groups in a variety of settings:

**R**ecognize your communication style.

**E**xpect to learn something about yourself and others.

**S**peak clearly and use personal examples when making a point.

**P**articipate honestly and openly.

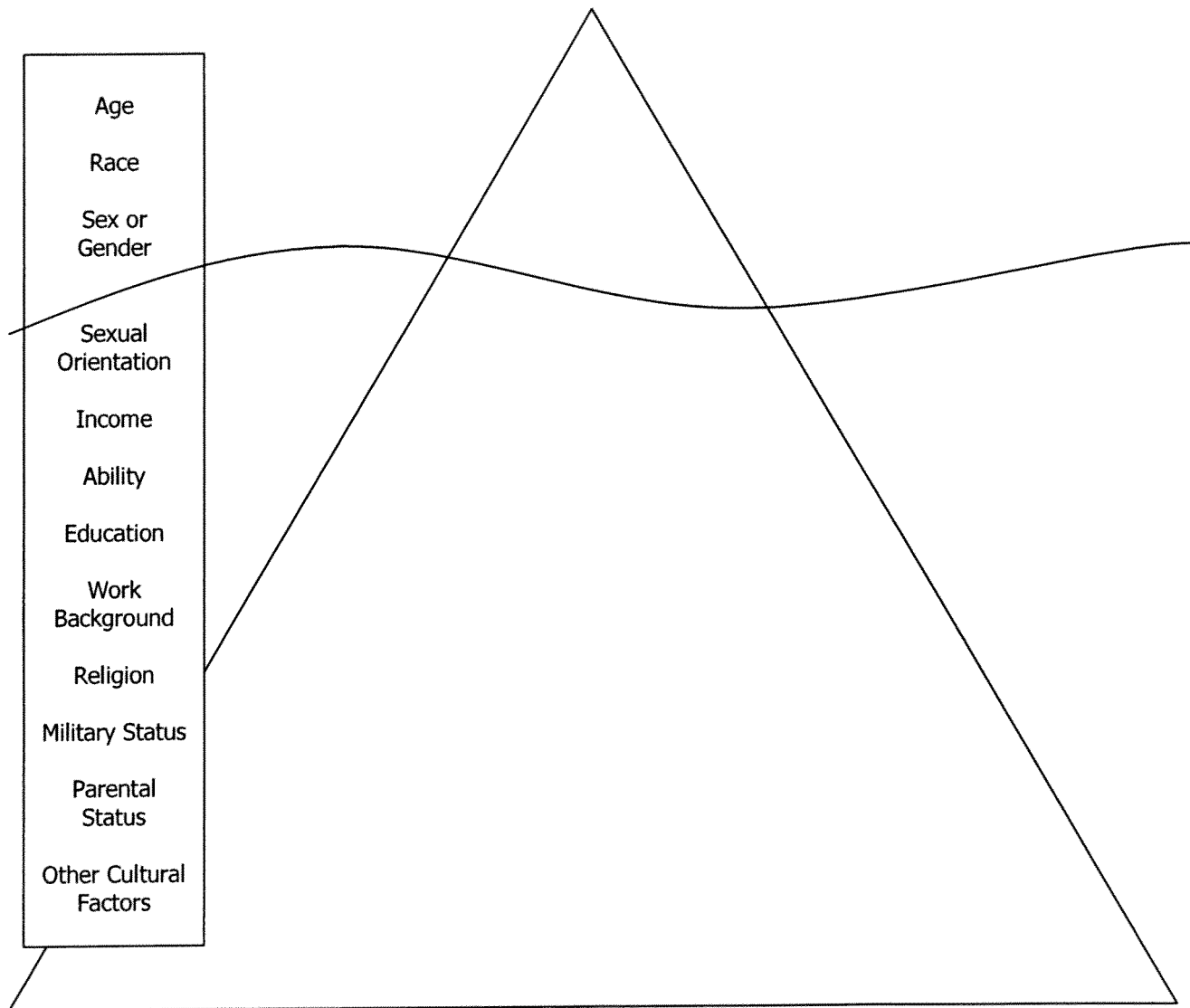
**E**ngage in the process by listening as well as speaking.

**C**onfidentiality, Curiosity & Charity

**T**ake responsibility for yourself and what you say.

## THE "ICEBERG ANALOGY" OF CULTURE

We base a great deal of our initial interactions on external cultural factors (explicit behaviors, conscious and acknowledged beliefs and values). We refer to these factors as dimensions of diversity that exist "above the water line" – things that we can see, hear, or touch. However, human interactions may be significantly impacted by internal cultural factors (implicitly learned, unconscious, difficult to change, subjective to knowledge, implicit unspoken values). We refer to these factors as dimensions of diversity that exist "below the water line" – beliefs, assumptions, values, and traditions.



# HIGH AND LOW CONTEXT CULTURES AND COMMUNICATION STYLES

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## HIGH CONTEXT COMMUNICATION (HC)

For high context communicators, most of the information is either in the background context or internalized in the communicator's experience and knowledge. Therefore, implicit messages are critical. Some aspects of HC communication include:

- The receiver must be "programmed" with ample context (this can be done through spoken word or body language), thus HC communicators feel the need to explain details such as history or seemingly peripheral details in order to situate particular ideas.
- Initially, they may have difficulty in a new setting because they must re-program themselves, and others.
- Since knowledge and communication is internalized, a HC communicator may have greater emotional investment in what they are communicating, and the effort involved in communicating. Thus, HC communicators may be negatively affected (feelings) more quickly and deeply when interrupted, dismissed or ignored when they are sharing information.

### Human Relations Effects:

HC communicators may need to speak uninterrupted to get their point across. In most organizational settings they will likely take longer to communicate and others may become impatient with them. They may also need more extensive instructions.

## LOW CONTEXT COMMUNICATION (LC)

Low context communication is often the expected and normalized pattern in most organizational settings. LC communicators tend to value explicit codes and pay less attention to implicit information embedded in messages. Some aspects of LC communication may include:

- Very little time or energy is needed for setting context.
- Initially, they can confront new situations without requiring a great amount of time and detailed information.
- They may have difficulty functioning in a high context environment because they are less aware of the impact that their style of communication has upon others.

### Human Relations Effects:

LC communicators will generally prefer getting "just the facts" with very little external context. They will probably become impatient with HC communicators who must either tell or hear a story.

## CONTEXT AND CULTURE DIFFERENCE

One of the functions of our internal context is to provide a selective screen between ourselves and the environment designating what we pay attention to and what we ignore. Because our internal contexts are different, we pay attention to or ignore different things in the same environment, thereby leading us to different interpretations. For example, three people went to see a play in which the two principal characters argued emotionally over the issues of racial discrimination. An African American may see the play as a testimony of the experiences of discrimination suffered by African Americans. A White American may see the play as a white-bashing political statement. A person who grew up with parents who argued all the time may simply shut down and leave the play without hearing its substance at all. Depending on our internal contexts, we may observe, react, and perceive very different meanings in the same situation. Edward T. Hall (1977) asserts that a major difference between cultures is the degree in which a cultural group relies on this context in communication. He labeled this continuum, from high-context culture to low-context culture.

### HIGH-CONTEXT CULTURE

In high-context cultures, people are deeply involved with each other. Information is widely shared. When people communicate, "most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message." Simple messages can have deep meaning. In high-context cultures, the communication system itself is frequently used as an art form. High-context cultures tend to be rooted in the past. Knowing the long tradition is part of the programming required in order to communicate effectively. Since tradition is valued highly, change is slow and sometimes difficult. People in authority are expected to be the keepers of tradition and are personally and truly responsible for the actions of all their subordinates. Since people have very strong bonds with each other, they also allow for considerable bending of the system to accommodate deviation from tradition while maintaining its stability.

In communication, a sender expects the receiver to know the message without it being specific. The message transmitted contains minimal explicit information. This can come in two forms. They may use a lot of non-verbal communication such as body language, or they may talk around the subject without ever getting to the point. Effective communication relies heavily on preprogrammed information (the internal context) in the receiver and in the environment. In order for effective communication to take place, time must be devoted to programming each person within the culture, or communication will not be complete. Therefore, it is very easy to make distinctions between insiders and outsiders because insiders can communicate efficiently, economically, and with much satisfaction while outsiders, without the pre-programming to understand the minimal messages, would be at a loss.

While people from high-context systems can be very creative in their own environment, they are very inefficient in dealing with anything new. Since any new situation requires them to move to the low-context side of relating in order for them to start building a common context, a high-context person will require more detailed information



and instruction, and therefore will take more time to arrive at a comfortable level of shared context in order to function with ease.

## **LOW - CONTEXT CULTURE**

Low-context cultures tend to be highly individualized. Most people relate to each other tangentially and tend not to be deeply involved with others. Since they don't share or expect to share a common context with each other, when they communicate, they put most of the message in the transmitted message in order to make up for what is missing in the context. They value highly the explicit code, usually spoken or written, as the dominant means of communication and may pay less attention to implicit information embedded in the communicator's context and in the environment.

Being people of low-context culture does not mean that they do not have a cultural context. It means that they still have a context with its selective screen, except that low-context people are less aware of their context and sometimes assume that it does not exist. As a result, they tend to look for and apply universal rules and values to everybody and do not make a great distinction between insiders and outsiders. Sometimes, what they perceive as universal values may not be universal at all and may just be part of their own internal context.

Since people do not have strong ties with each other or with organizations, based on whether things are going well or not for them, they may move in and out of organizations and relationships with ease and without guilt. Organizational coherence depends, not on individual persons in authority, since that can change rapidly, but on the system. Responsibility is diffused through the system and is difficult to pin down. People expect the system to protect its members. Low-context systems emphasize the present and future and can be changed easily and rapidly to adapt to new situations. Such a system may also be more vulnerable to manipulation.

People from low-context cultures are very creative and innovative when dealing with something new. They can confront new situations without requiring a great amount of time and detailed programming. They do not need a lot of "contexting" time. However, they may have trouble understanding and functioning in a high-context environment since they are less aware of the screen they have within themselves, let alone being aware of the highly selective screen that high-context people have.

# HIGH & LOW POWER DISTANCE

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## HIGH POWER - DISTANCE (HPD)

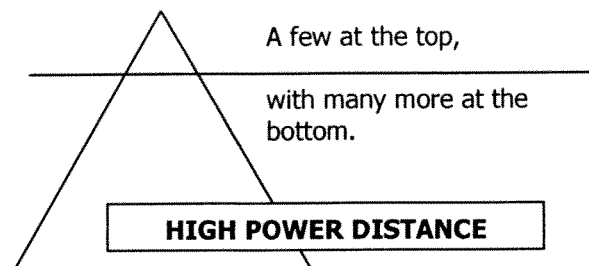
Individuals who view the world with a high power distance believe that there is inequality in the world and accept this as a fact of life. Signs of high power distance may include:

- lower trust level,
- high level of protocol,
- a desire to figure out the roles of everyone in the room before participating, and/or
- a need for more context.

Additionally, individuals who are HPD and at lower-ends of organizational hierarchies will sometimes make change when in large groupings of other lower-level HPD people.

### Human Relations Effects:

It may be more difficult to establish a safe environment for people who have high power-distance perspectives. They may be happier if they are with other people who are also HPD, rather than interspersed with people who are low power-distance, at least at first. "What's in it for me?" becomes a critical question. People who are low power-distance often think of people who are low-level HPD as "weak." People who are HPD may have little tolerance for those who feel that "we are all the same."



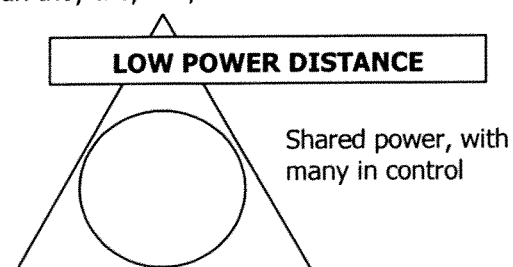
## LOW POWER - DISTANCE (LPD)

People who hold low power-distance perspectives tend to believe that power is shared by many, and that people who are HPD are either elitist (if they are at the top) or weak if they are at the bottom. LPD views may:

- downplay the importance of hierarchy,
- have a low level of protocol,
- feel that people in power should try to look less powerful than they are, and/or
- feel that people can also gain power through education.

### Human Relations Effects:

In group settings people who are LPD will speak out rather than raising hands or asking for acknowledgement or permission first, and may tend to dominate discussions. They may display strength in discussions. When discussions turn toward issues related to class, status, authority, etc. they will probably take for granted that everyone is the same and, therefore, have very little tolerance for discussions that may portray the rich, powerful or those with positions of prominence or authority as good people.



# ORAL CULTURE & PRINT CULTURE

## COMMUNICATION STYLES

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### ORAL CULTURE COMMUNICATION (OC)

Oral communication is a state in which we are highly attuned to our senses (touch, smell, sight, sound, taste, etc.) and devote a great deal of attention to sensory information. Oral communication emphasizes our connection to the environment and people who are around us.

### PRINT CULTURE COMMUNICATION (PC)

Print culture is a learned way of relating to the world that emphasizes formal, structured patterns. When steeped in print culture, we emphasize literacy and process information by analyzing and sorting sensory input into distinct categories and styles of reasoning, primarily developed through reading and writing.

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Some of the **common patterns** include:

| ORAL COMMUNICATORS:                                  | PRINT COMMUNICATORS:                            |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Relationship Oriented                                | Linear / Step-by-Step Processing                |
| Spontaneous, Flow of Conversation                    | Timed, Methodical Contributions                 |
| Repetitive, Repeat Story-Telling Maintains Knowledge | Use of Analytic/Abstract Concepts               |
| Holistic, Environmental Big-Picture                  | Determined to Appear Self-Disciplined           |
| Emotional, Expressive                                | Emphasize Delayed Gratification                 |
| Here-and-Now, Immediate Needs and Concerns           | Seeking to Strategize, Predict and Project      |
| Present-Oriented                                     | Future-Oriented                                 |
| Physical, Closeness, Bonding                         | Respectful of Boundaries, Professional Distance |

#### Oral Culture Human Relations Effects:

OC communicators may interrupt others, follow a flow of energy in conversation, and engage in spontaneous story-telling in order to relate. They may use broad details and concepts familiar to them and to a specific event in order to give a picture of what they are thinking. There may be more physical expression, including extended eye-contact and/or touch, and emotional expressions are common.

#### Print Culture Human Relations Effects:

PC communicators are likely to follow what they believe are formal patterns of communication. There is likely to be emphasis on sorting details into specific categories order to form a strategy. The ideas and concepts used to give a clear picture will likely come from authoritative sources, most likely published authors. Emotional expression is likely to be extremely limited.

## What is your usual style of communication?

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read each statement on the chart below and write your score in the box to the left of the statement. Rate each statement on a scale of 1-5, depending on how much the statement does/does not describe your behavior:

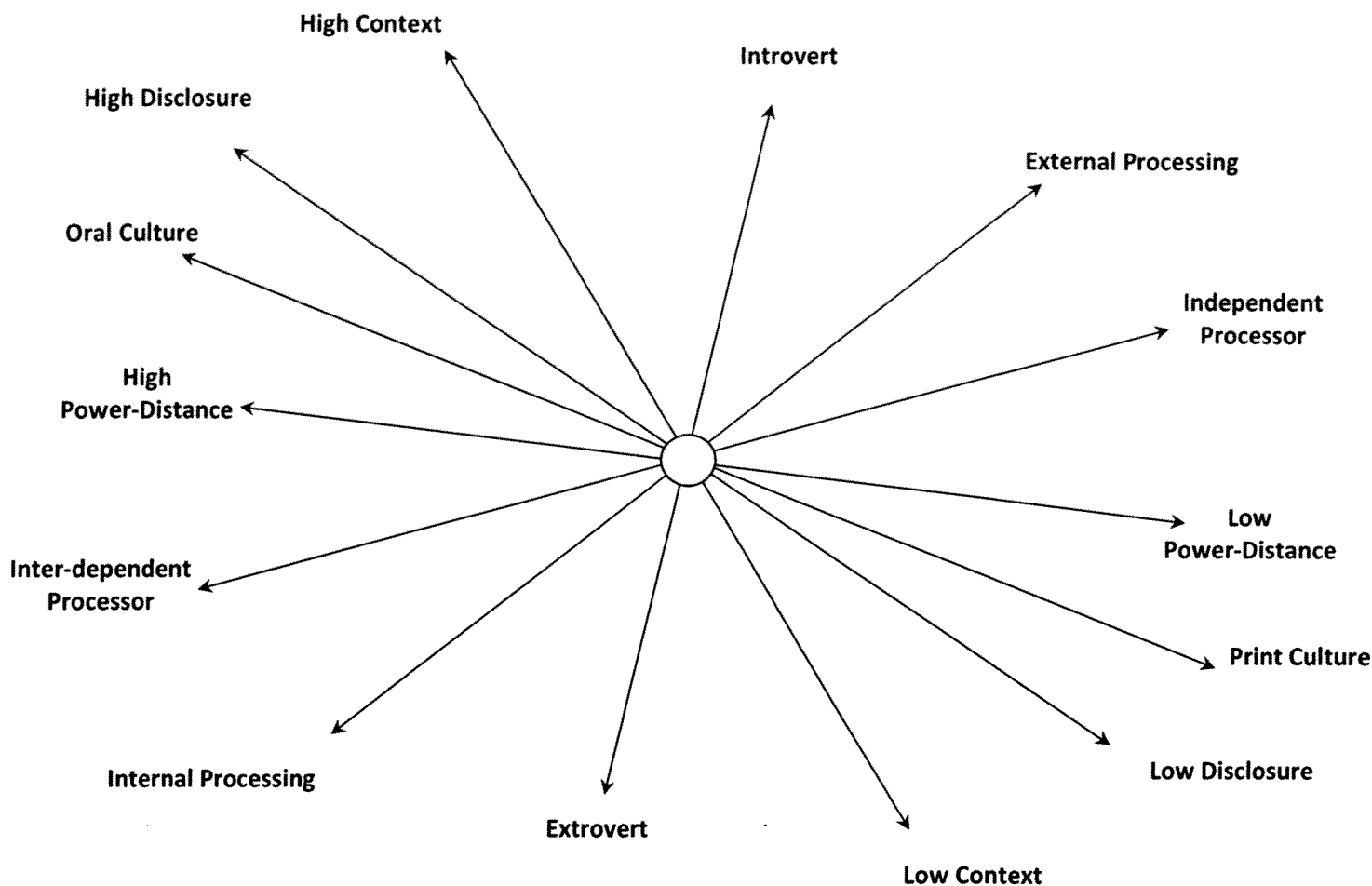
- 1 – No** - This statement does not describe me
- 2 – Mostly no** – This statement is mostly not true for me
- 3 – Sometimes** – This statement is true for me about half of the time
- 4 – Mostly yes** – This statement captures my style most of the time
- 5 – Yes** – This statement describes my style

| Column A                                                                                                                            |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| I tell everyone just about everything, that's the only way they will really know me.                                                |  |
| Relationships are more important than rules or procedures. I put people first.                                                      |  |
| I like to have multiple conversations at once.                                                                                      |  |
| Creating a welcoming environment is a priority. I set the tone by noticing people, learning their names and interests.              |  |
| I like to work in groups, socialize, and learn from each other – even though it may be noisy from conversations.                    |  |
| I learn best from telling or listening to stories.                                                                                  |  |
| In conversations I pay attention to facial expressions, body posture and tone of voice more than the content of what is being said. |  |
| When I need information for living my life, I'll ask someone who I trust, probably someone who is like me.                          |  |
| I have a schedule, but I change it according to the situation.                                                                      |  |
| I like frequent reminders.                                                                                                          |  |
| I like to touch, try and experiment when I am learning.                                                                             |  |
| Some of my communication is physical and I tend to expect physical responses from others.                                           |  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                                                                        |  |

| Column B                                                                                                                               |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Time is crucial and it is extremely important to be observant of time-constraints, deadlines, etc.                                     |  |
| I prefer rules to ambiguity.                                                                                                           |  |
| I do not interrupt.                                                                                                                    |  |
| I prefer to work alone, quietly.                                                                                                       |  |
| I approach work by breaking tasks into clear steps.                                                                                    |  |
| I only show emotions and share feelings with people who I know really well.                                                            |  |
| I believe that a plan is essential, and my goal is to stay on task.                                                                    |  |
| I like to focus on one idea at a time.                                                                                                 |  |
| When I need information for living my life, I'll research it and read the information.                                                 |  |
| In conversations I focus on the content of what is being said more than the non-verbals and the environment in which it is being said. |  |
| I just want the facts, not the story.                                                                                                  |  |
| I generally do not share personal stories.                                                                                             |  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                                                                           |  |

**RESULTS: Add the scores in each column.** If the two totals are close to the same number then you are likely draw from a balance of both oral and print communication. If you have a 20% difference between your total scores then you are likely drawing more heavily/more often on the communication style with the higher score → Column A = oral culture communication, and column B = print culture communication.

## Communication Star



Please refer to the handouts for complete descriptions of these communication elements

| Power Distance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Context                                                                                                                                                         | Social Energy                                                                                                       | Processing                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                       | Disclosure                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Oral/Print                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>High:</b> Lower trust level, high level of protocol, a desire to figure out the roles of everyone in the room before participating, inequality is a fact of life.                                                                                                | <b>High:</b> Speak indirectly, say what is polite/expected, customary, values relationships, read situations carefully, accept differences in status and power. | <b>Introvert::</b> Generally drained or exhausted by social interactions the larger the group                       | <b>Internal:</b> Processes through thinking, reflection, "internal dialogue." | <b>Independent:</b> Prefer working toward decisions one one's own. May gather details from a wide array of people, but will make decisions privately. | <b>High/Open:</b> Readily provide a great deal of personal details, open to sharing broadly on many topics, but also deeply and personally.                                                                        | <b>Oral Culture:</b> Relationship-oriented; spontaneous; story-telling; repetitive; emotional; expressive; immediate/present-oriented; physical closeness and bonding. |
| <b>Low:</b> Downplay the importance of hierarchy, have a low level of protocol, feels that people in power should try to look less powerful than they are, and/or feels that people can also gain power through education, may view High Power distance as elitist. | <b>Low:</b> speak directly, voices criticism, values time and efficiency, views conflict and direct persuasion as powerful, says what one thinks.               | <b>Extrovert:</b> Social interactions and large, energetic groups increase energy and enthusiasm for communicating. | <b>External:</b> Processes through speaking, dialogue, exchange of ideas.     | <b>Interdependent::</b> Prefer working toward decisions in tandem with others.                                                                        | <b>Low/Closed:</b> Share select information and details. May be willing to share broadly, depending on the context, but focuses on sharing relevant "surface" details unless a greater trust level is established. | <b>Print Culture:</b> Timed, methodical; use abstract concepts; emphasis on self-discipline; prefer strategy and predictions; future-oriented; maintains boundaries.   |

# CONFLICT SELF-AWARENESS WORKSHEET

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1. What are some values your family passed down to you concerning conflict?

- Do you still hold any of these values?
  
  
  
  
- Have you replaced any of these values with others you feel are more accurate/realistic?

2. What signals conflict for you?

- What does it look like?
  
  
  
  
- What does it feel like?
  
  
  
  
- What does it sound like?

# THREE PARADIGMS FOR DIVERSITY CHANGE LEADERS

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Judith D. Palmer, 1989

Multiple Paradigms lead to confusion and potential disagreements among Change Leaders."

A paradigm is a basic framework through which one views the world, giving shape and meaning to all our experiences, providing a basis for interpreting and organizing our perception.

A paradigm is more than "theory." It is a "given," so fundamental that it sometimes isn't even articulated until brought into question by someone else's new, competing paradigm. When this happens, we may feel challenged, or even take it as a personal attack; we will likely regard the other person as unreasonable, or worse. I believe this has been an unrecognized source of friction among Change Leaders (consultants, managers and affected parties) working to help organizations value diversity.

There appear to be three different paradigms operating among today's organizational Change Leaders for diversity. They are: Paradigm I (The Golden Rule), Paradigm II (Right the Wrong), Paradigm III (Value All Differences). Our own paradigm of diversity influences how we interpret facts and experiences; determines our actions; and gives us a unique definition of *diversity*. Multiple Paradigms lead to confusion and potential disagreements among Change Leaders, who think they are saying the same thing, but aren't.

## **Paradigm I – The Golden Rule**

The fundamental imagery of Paradigm I is that everyone is individual and that we are more similar than we are different. Paradigm I is the notion that "I treat everyone the same; I'm color blind, gender blind. I'm not a racist or a sexist." A paradigm I Change Leader sees him or herself as good fair person. Paradigm I people do not usually explore their underlying biases or those of other people. Paradigm I conceptualizes oppression as coming from only a few "bad" or "prejudiced" people, in isolated incidents.

Paradigm I does not see diversity issues as systemic, nor does it perceive "typical" issues or behavior among various groups. Differences among people are due to individual characteristics; and making diversity work is a matter of individual responsibility and morality.

**Meaning of Diversity.** For paradigm I, the word *diversity* means an atmosphere where everyone in the organization is appreciated regardless of their differences. Paradigm I says it is artificial to focus on the concerns of blacks, women, national or ethnic groups. Everyone is special and different. A phrase, for paradigm I *diversity* is the golden rule – "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

## **Vision & Preferred Approach to Change.**

Paradigm I Change Leaders want an organization where everyone can be an individual, with no prejudice or favoritism. The desired state is an effective organization and pleasant work environment where all can contribute and rise to their potential. Business results will improve through minimized interpersonal friction and better management; everyone will be empowered to contribute to his or her maximum.

Paradigm I interprets any disharmony among people as being individually motivated. Paradigm I people do not perceive patterns among "types" of people. The preferred method for valuing diversity involves getting everyone to treat each other with respect.

Paradigm I change leaders resist programs focused on the issues faced by specific groups. The specifically resist "awareness training," believing that this creates bad feeling and little else. They are also critical of special programs or numerical targets to increase the representation of selected groups; they see these efforts as unfair to other organization members.

Change Leaders recommend third-party consultation, team building meetings, one-one-one counseling, and sometimes individual training in assertiveness, conflict management, or problem solving. The driving motivation is "We should all just be decent to each other and treat people as individuals."

**Organized Impact.** When the prevailing view of the Change Leaders is Paradigm I, in an organization, people see each other's uniqueness-character traits, individual backgrounds, and family patterns. However, from the outside they look very much alike. The organization's members don't usually stretch their experience by learning about the deep issues of people who are quite unlike themselves. They apply the Golden Rule from their own frame of reference.

# THREE PARADIGMS FOR DIVERSITY CHANGE LEADERS

Judith D. Palmer, 1989

So in attempting to "treat everyone the same," they don't know how to put themselves in the shoes of someone very different. They don't build an environment which other kinds of people see as welcoming or nurturing. They believe that the "door is open to all who are qualified."

## **Paradigm II – Right The Wrongs**

The fundamental imagery of Paradigm II is that there are specific groups in the organization, as in the large society, who have been systematically disadvantaged. Paradigm II feels a pressing need to rectify these injustices.

The exact identification of the disadvantaged group ("Target Group") depends on the larger society the organization live in. In Germany, the target group might be the Turkish factory workers. In Japan, it could be ethnic Koreans. In San Francisco, it could be the homosexuals; in Canada, Francophones. In US organizations, two target groups are black men, and women of all races. Other target groups in the US (such as Hispanics) become focal when there are enough of them in the surrounding local culture to raise awareness and trigger action.

**Meaning of Diversity.** For Paradigm II, *diversity* means the establishment of equality and justice for specific target groups. Correcting this situation is the driving priority for Paradigm II; once this is accomplished, the same principles would be applied to other groups. A phrase for Paradigm II *diversity* is "Right the Wrong."

## **Vision & Preferred Approach to Change.**

Paradigm II Change leaders want an organization where injustice has been corrected, and where groups who were selectively and systematically disadvantaged in the past are respected and participate equitably in the rewards of the organization. Paradigm II believes business results will benefit from the fresh perspectives of the target group. Managerial and interpersonal effectiveness will also improve dramatically, as the target group's skills and sensitivities are added to the mix.

Paradigm II Change Leaders' program focus on improving how the organization recruits, retains, develops and rewards one or two target groups.

Usually the organization has in mind the "next" target group which will be focused on when the current program shows positive results. The measure of success is that the target group's members will be equitably deployed and rewarded throughout the organization, as shown by statistics on hiring, salaries, ranking, job level, turnover, and morale.

Training in Paradigm II centers on having the majority member learn how the target group feels, "walk a mile in someone else's shoes," and on having them face up to their negative prejudices. Confrontation is seen as valuable in training, to break down normal perceptual barriers so real learning or change can take place. Learning groups must contain enough target group members for dialogue to take place.

Paradigm II's concern is to keep the effort focused. While acknowledging the other groups may also experience organizational barriers, Paradigm II is clear that the target group's needs must be dealt with first. In doing this, the organization will learn important skills and principles which will enable it later to respond to the concerns of the other groups. Paradigm II Change Leaders fear that the effort will be "watered down" if too many groups' needs are addressed at the same time.

**Organizational Impact.** When Paradigm II changes are being championed, tension and conflict may develop. Strong demands may be made to management on behalf of the target group, in the belief "no one gives up power - you have to take it." Change Leaders are often thrust into an adversarial role (or at least a teaching role) with peers in their own organization who do not share Paradigm II perspectives. Frustration and impatience can run high on the part of Target group members; People are prompted to "take sides." Change Leaders sometimes experience discouragement and burnout.

Paradigm II conveys a sense of a split world, and a struggle to bridge the gap. The language which characterizes and Paradigm II outlook often conveys polarities and oppositions. Paradigm II language in the US, for instance talks of "white males" versus "blacks and women." Paradigm II seeks "we/you" types of dialogue between Change Leaders and people in the organization who appear to wield the power or control access to what's desirable in the organization.



# THREE PARADIGMS FOR DIVERSITY CHANGE LEADERS

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Judith D. Palmer, 1989

Separate formal or informal structures and programs are considered important for fostering the disadvantaged groups.

## **Paradigm III – Value The Differences**

The fundamental imagery of Paradigm III is that of an organization whose groups as well as individuals are appreciated for their differences; and where the organization has learned to work synergistically so its effectiveness is greater than the sum of all its parts.

Paradigm III Change Leaders want people to be conscious of what makes each other different. Paradigm III expects everyone to understand and appreciate the heritage and culture of many different groups, as well as being responsive to the uniqueness of each individual. This marks a clear difference from Paradigm I, which rejects "grouping" people, minimized differences, and values treating everyone the same.

**Meaning of Diversity.** In Paradigm III, *diversity* means consciously and sensitively using the talents of all the types in the organization. Paradigm III puts importance on all kinds of differences - ethnic and racial heritage, gender, problem-solving and creative approach, professional discipline, native land or language, and home organization. A phrase for Paradigm III *diversity* is "Value All Differences."

**Vision and Preferred Approach.** Paradigm III Change Leaders envision an organization where individuals reach beyond their own experiences to appreciate and work effectively with a wide range of others. Organization norms encompass many styles and approaches in the pursuit of excellence. Each contributes in his or her own unique way. The organization experiences dramatic improvements in its creativity, decision making process and results; processes and solutions are found which were not thinkable in a more homogenous organization.

Paradigm III Change Leaders believe that focusing on only a few target groups would mean having to do it all over again later with subsequent Target groups; meanwhile the organization would not be learning to value all differences. Paradigm III's approach is to become skillful at "leveraging" a wide range of significant differences.

Systemic change in Paradigm III focuses on helping managers build and energize organizations which use many kinds of people to create excellence in business results and organizational climate. The appreciation of differences is built into hiring, development and reward systems. Criteria for success include not only statistics regarding deployment of identifiable groups, but also "softer" measures such as how managers develop subordinates, and how diverse teams get better solutions through valuing their differences.

Training in a Paradigm III frame work emphasizes self-knowledge (discovering one's own prejudices and strengths) and interpersonal skills, as well as specific learning about the culture or characteristics of many different groups and "types." Confrontation and "victim/oppressor" dichotomies are down played. The lesson is that all must learn to appreciate each other's contribution to better results.

**Organizational Impact.** Paradigm III organizations do not single out Target groups for systemic change, but simultaneously and equitably work at addressing the unique needs of many different types of groups. This could mean an emphasis on a give group sometimes, but not consistently. Paradigm III language patterns convey sensitivity and appreciation for differences and avoid polarized terms such as "blacks & women" versus "white male." People are interested and enthusiastic to learn about themselves and others, and all organizational systems are geared to maximizing diversity while honoring and pursuing the fundamental needs and integrity of the organization.

Whereas Paradigms I and II have been operating for some time, and have established theory and methodology to move towards their vision, Paradigm III is relatively new; it does not yet have proven methods or even a common language to draw from. Paradigm III Chang Leaders often do not know how to communicate with each other.

## **Paradigm Clash**

Clearly, all three Paradigms want to create a high performance, smoothly running organization where members are neither penalized nor advantaged by the "type" of person they are perceived to be. Change of different Paradigms can work productively towards this

# THREE PARADIGMS FOR DIVERSITY CHANGE LEADERS

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Judith D. Palmer, 1989

goal – if they understand what's happening. If not, they can be trapped in "Paradigm Clash."

Too often, in a discussion of methods of goals, Change Leaders who think they're in alignment begin to feel a kind of craziness developing in their conversation: logic does not lead to the expected conclusion, and familiar terms suddenly don't mean the same thing when used by someone else. A predictable and very human outcome of Paradigm clash is that individuals personalize these differences. When their paradigm is challenged, annoyances and opposition begin to arise. People can easily slip into blaming or disliking the other person ("shooting the messenger"). In the clash, the agreements can become undermined by the disagreements.

**Sources of Paradigm Clash.** At the risk of oversimplifying, I see the two key issues in Paradigm Clash as: Whose Paradigm is Right? And How to Proceed?

**"Whose Paradigm is Right?"** This issue probably creates the greatest tension. Paradigm I people value their "Golden Rule" outlook, and believe they are already sensitive and unprejudiced; they are shocked and hurt when the "right the wrongs" Paradigm II people confront them on their lack of awareness. Paradigm II people are horrified by the "global" scope of Paradigm III fearing that Paradigm III with its "value all differences" orientation believe Paradigm I is dangerously ethno-centric with its "Golden Rule," and that Paradigm II is serving the needs of a few at the expense of many. Paradigm I people think they're same as Paradigm III and can't understand why Paradigm III people appear impatient with them. These are rarely articulated, but ferment under the surface.

**"How to Proceed?"** Each paradigm mandates different priorities. Paradigm I gravitates to trouble spots within teams or between individual, providing remedial or anticipatory action to smooth out friction. Paradigm II is singularly focused on the selected target group, viewing anything else as watering down the sources. Paradigm III thinks that a broad range approach is imperative right from the start.

Paradigm I prefers methods which do not dwell on "group" issues such as race, gender, or class, but

instead helps individuals work smoothly together. Paradigm II prefers methods which acknowledge and deal with the target group's issues. Paradigm III prefers methods which demonstrate in deed as well as word that "valuing diversity" covers a broad range of differences.

## **Coalition Building**

These different Paradigms, if addressed properly do not have to undermine the efforts and energy of the people committed to leading change. Even a frank discussion of assumptions, goals and expectations (paradigms) among Change Leaders can be helpful, if all viewpoints are valued and people aren't forced to subvert their views "for the good of the cause."

The discipline of negotiation, politics and community action are good sources of help in these instances. Groups with widely differing viewpoints and agendas can work together, if they carefully define the areas where they are in alignment and where their paradigms differ. It is not necessary to see the world in the same way, not to agree on everything. It is imperative, however, to define common goals and clarify the "boundaries" between what people agree on and what they don't.

The "coalition" process is, in itself, diversity in action. No one is squashed into an uneasy, over generalized statement of "what everybody wants" – the shared goals are clear, and the unilateral goals are also clear. The areas of nonagreement are also clear. The areas of nonagreement are explored to see if they're minor or serious, and decisions are made on how to handle them. A potentially richer, more creative approach is forged out of this diversity, and the group can be strengthened.

Probably the key to forming successful coalitions lies in resolving the two Paradigm Clash sources listed above. Change Leaders need to work hard at the mental discipline of not judging "who's right?" They also need to identify how to accommodate their differing priorities – what to do first, and why? What next? Maybe *sequence* is as much the key as *priority*. Finally, Change Leaders should work to understand in some detail the approaches favored by the other paradigms, in order to develop new approaches which incorporate and go beyond everything that was known before.

# THREE PARADIGMS FOR DIVERSITY CHANGE LEADERS

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Judith D. Palmer, 1989

This effort, as mentioned above, is diversity at work. We can do it, but it's hard to be participants and facilitators simultaneously. Change Leaders of different paradigms need to work with each other with great respect, patience, and an effort to understand what's behind the statement.

We're like the blind people feeling the elephant; each of us has a close-up, personal experience of a portion of the whole, and we *need* other's different views in order to create the future world we strive for.

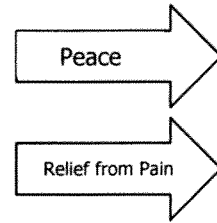
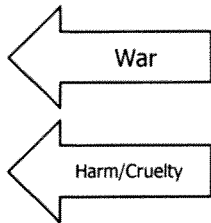
# LANGUAGE, POWER & HOSPITALITY



*New York Post*, 18 February 2009

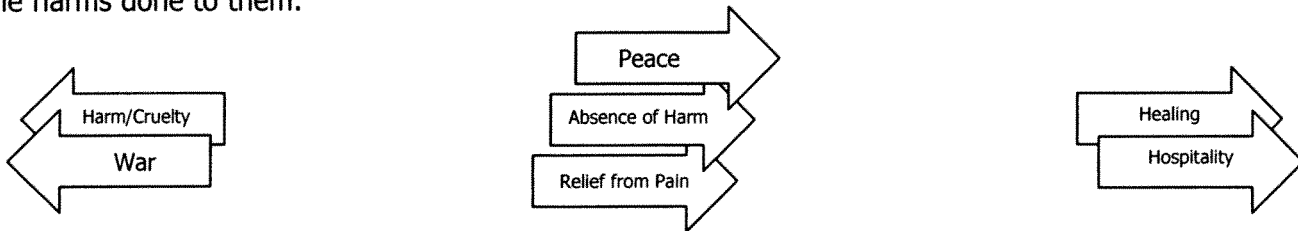
## Hospitality

Many of us have been taught that the opposite of war is peace, or that the opposite of harm is relief from pain. However, war is only the absence of peace, and relief from pain is only the absence of pain. True good cannot be only the absence of cruelty.



### Isn't there something better?

"Hospitality" is what Phillip Hallie describes as "...unsentimental efficacious love" (1982) in which we go beyond removing harm to *both* seek an end to cruel power relationships, *and* seek to **heal** people from the harms done to them.



Hospitality involves actively restoring humanity to someone, or to groups of people and, by doing so, restoring our own humanity.

Hospitality is not something that many people simply know how to act upon, for most of us it has to be learned and practiced in community with other people.

### What is Offensive Language?

- Likely provokes annoyance or irritation
- Conveys points of view and perspectives that may be in conflict with other points of view
- May be "rude," "insensitive," "ignorant"
- Does not depend upon unequal power-relationships in the real world

**Example:**

### What is Derogatory Language?

- Based on real power-relationships in which real people are segregated by arbitrary inequalities
- Maims the dignity of people/groups
- Equates certain characteristics with "bad," "negative," or "worthless"
- Is not always something about which we are aware
- Conveys whether or not someone is or is not understood as a whole person

**Example:**

## Consequences – How Derogatory Language and Power Work Together

**Forcing “normal” upon people:** Although language enables us to communicate with and understand one another, it also conveys cultural values and describes actual relationships in the world about what we think is normal, or expected of others – “norms.”

**Example:**

**Confusing “majority” beliefs as “right” beliefs:** The words we use to describe ourselves and others with regard to our characteristics (e.g., race, gender, and sexuality) reflect not only our own values but often those of a dominant ideology and popular discourse.

**Example:**

**Smothering critical thought:** Oppressive language not only expresses ideas and concepts but actually shapes or diminishes critical thought (Woods, 1997; Elshtain, 1998).

**Example:**

**Ignorance of harm:** Knowing or not knowing about language as it is used by, preferred by, or derogatory toward people from underrepresented communities has real consequences, whether or not we are aware of it.

**Example:**

**Exclusion:** Whether aware or unaware, arbitrarily biased and oppressive language communicates who does and does not belong; who we believe does and does not deserve to be valued – as if some people could ever deserve to be devalued.

**Example:**

**A Vicious Cycle:** When people are consistently taught that some people with certain characteristics are not as valuable, we inevitably create systems that omit or harm them.

**Example:**

## F AE's – Frequently Asserted Excuses

- ***It's not as if language is the same thing as hitting someone or beating people up.***  
Actually, offensive language is potentially just as harmful. Offensive language may only provoke annoyance or irritation, but derogatory language provokes real experiences of power and disempowerment.
- ***What about 'political correctness'?***  
Political correctness seems to inhibit communication. Instead of worrying about political correctness, which is a set of rules we should try to avoid breaking out of fear of penalties, we should think about how people should be treated as people, and learn the history and significance of language, and the consequences of those histories.
- ***Shouldn't I be able to say whatever I want? After all, this is a free country.***  
To an extent, yes you should be able to use your rights of free speech. However, simply because something is *legal* does not in any way mean it is necessarily *ethical*. Having a right to express certain thoughts or ideas does not mean that you have a right (nor moral grounding) to degrade another person's worth. Offensive speech may offend beliefs, but derogatory speech seeks to maim the dignity of others, to humiliate them.
- ***People are just too sensitive.***  
Whether or not other people are too sensitive, it is illogical to say that you know better than another person whether something you say or do harms them. Some people may be sensitive in order to take advantage of others. However, it is far more likely that people are sensitive to societal problems that they *actually* experience. In either case, why assume there is something wrong with being sensitive?
- ***It's exhausting to try and figure out who I am going to offend. It's just too complicated.***  
Understanding language, power and the experiences of people from different backgrounds can be extremely complicated. However, as human beings one of our most valuable abilities may be our capacities to understand complexity. Human diversity is not simple, and it probably wouldn't help any of us to try and simplify our diversity. The challenges posed by complex language can often be resolved through a willingness to adapt. We would occasionally make mistakes and take responsibility for them when necessary.
- ***Different people from the same groups use different terms, how am I supposed to keep up?***  
It may not be necessary to keep up with *every* group, but instead it may be good to learn about the power your language holds, and to think very carefully before you speak. Prepare yourself to accept responsibilities for the language you use that may be derogatory. When we challenge ourselves to be aware of inaccurate, biased and derogatory language, we are far more likely to adapt to new and challenging situations.
- ***Well, 'THEY' use that word, so I can too.***  
If you have unearned institutional power, and use language that is or once was used to degrade people from certain groups, then your use of certain terms maintains and reinforces that illegitimate institutional power and continues to maim the dignity of people from certain groups. Some groups reclaim historically derogatory terms in order to counter the power that has been invested in certain language. Learning to recognize and respect reclaimed terms means using them to the extent that you deeply understand their historical significance.
- ***I'm an equal opportunity offender. I hate everyone in the same way.***  
Even if hating everyone in the same way were morally defensible – which it isn't since this is based on rationalizing hate - people who use this line of argument are not exempt from societal power structures simply because they choose to emphasize hate for a wider array of people and groups of people.
- ***I didn't mean it 'that way.' I meant that it's just 'stupid.'***  
There are differences between what you may believe or intend to communicate, what is actually received or interpreted, and what is referenced. It is a false belief that you cannot cause harm if you don't intend to. If you use derogatory language, even if you prefer to believe it doesn't have a detrimental impact simply because you didn't intend it to, it can still be derogatory.



## Creating Hospitality in Language

### Why do anything different?

When you devalue others you necessarily harm yourself as a result of degrading someone else's humanity.

How can you be a whole person if some part of you refuses to see other people as whole?

If the ways in which we use language have power sufficient to be derogatory, then it is also possible for language to be used to ***create hospitality***.

### So, what do we do? What is a "language of hospitality"?

#### Examples:

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*"If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive."* – Audre Lorde

## How Language and Power Work Together

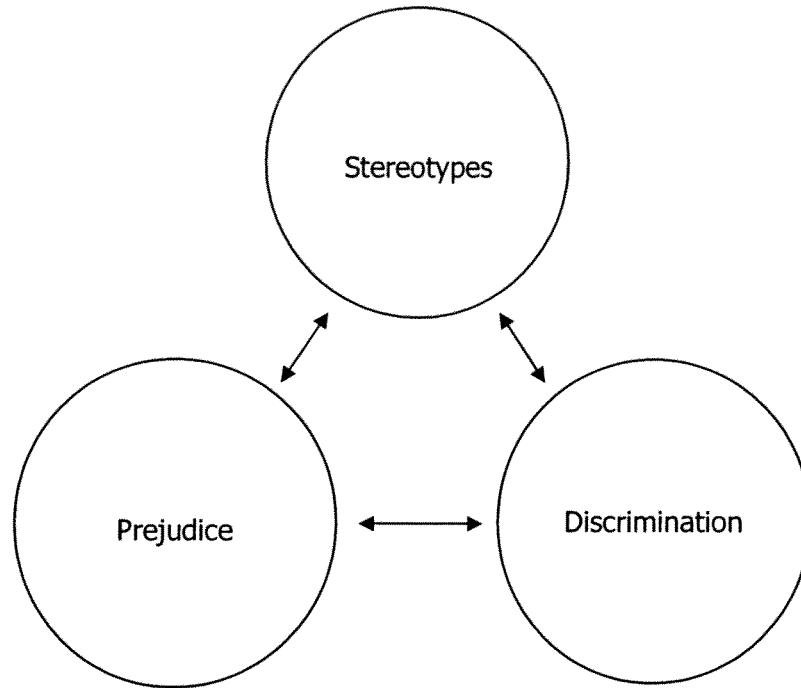


Hospitality requires understanding someone else's point of view - a moral insight (Royce, 1885). This kind of insight means that we recognize how derogatory language and actions are cruel – even if unintentional – and that they cause actual harm.

# CYCLE OF BIAS

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Stereotypes lead to prejudice, and prejudice leads to discrimination. Too often, discrimination reinforces stereotypes, and the entire cycle is repeated:



## **Stereotype (an IDEA)**

A stereotype is a generalization about a person or group of people without regard to individual differences. Even seemingly positive stereotypes that link a person or group to a positive trait can have negative consequences.

## **Prejudice (a FEELING)**

Prejudice is prejudging or making a decision about a person or group of people without sufficient knowledge. Prejudicial thinking is frequently based on stereotypes.

## **Discrimination (an ACTION)**

Discrimination is the denial of equal treatment (by individuals or institutions) in many arenas, including employment, education, housing, banking, and political rights. Discrimination is an action that can follow prejudicial thinking.

# TIPS ON CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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We use the word "culture" here to mean group customs, beliefs, social patterns, and characteristics. Nationalities and ethnicities have cultures. So do businesses, occupations, generations, genders, and groups of people who have in common some distinguishing characteristic or experience.

Cultures are not always apparent from a person's appearance. For example, you may not be able to distinguish on sight between an immigrant and a third-generation American, a city dweller and a small town dweller, or a deaf person and a hearing person.

Nationalities and ethnicities differ in ways including language, non-verbal communication, views on hierarchies (responsibilities, duties and privileges of family or group members), interpersonal relationships, time, privacy, touching, and speech patterns. Groups other than nationalities and ethnicities may also have distinctive verbal and nonverbal perceptions and expressions, and shared values, standards, beliefs, and understandings. Think, for instance, of how language and values usually differ depending on age and occupation.

The following tips are based on observations of successful cross-cultural communicators. Some of what they do is deliberate, some is instinctive. You can communicate with a person of a different culture without giving up anything or pretending to be what you are not.

## WHAT TO DO ALL OF THE TIME

**1. Remember that diversity has many levels and complexities, including cultures within cultures and overlapping cultures.** For example, a 70-year-old female small business owner from Peru is likely to have many cultural differences from a 26-year-old male fourth-generation Los Angeles government employee of Mexican descent. Yet, only age and gender differences may be apparent to the casual observer.

**2. Expect others to be thoughtful, intelligent people of goodwill, deserving of respect.** Don't be misled by cues such as accent, wordiness or quietness, posture, mannerisms, grammar, or dress. Unless you guard against it, your first reactions will be culturally biased. The more conscious you are of your own biases, the more open you can be to understanding. For instance, does a person dress

down because it is more comfortable? Or to fit in with less wealthy relatives? Or to indicate a willingness to pitch in and do some of the dirty work? Assume that there are good reasons why people do the things they do.

**3. Be willing to admit when you don't know.**

People from other nations know a lot about American mainstream culture, at least as it is portrayed through various forms of media. We know a lot about majority cultures, i.e. white, heterosexual, etc., but know far less of minority cultures.

**4. Listen actively and carefully.** Careful listening usually means your undivided attention. No dialing your cell phone, no looking around to see who else is coming. Listen for factual information as well as reactions and non-verbal communication. Stop talking the minute it looks as if the other person has something to say. If you don't, you may never hear it. This does not apply if the other culture is an assertive one.

**5. Accept responsibility for any misunderstanding that may occur, rather than expecting the other person to bridge cultural differences.** "I'm sorry that I didn't make it clear" or "When I invited you to lunch, I didn't realize that you are fasting for Ramadan."

**6. Notice and remember what people call themselves, i.e. African American or Black, Hispanic or Chicano or Latino, Iranian or Persian, Korean or Asian, etc., and use those terms.**

**7. Give non-judgmental feedback to be sure you heard what you thought you heard. Use paraphrasing or questions for clarification.**

**8. Remember that you are an insider to your culture, and an outsider to other cultures.** Be careful not to impose. Showing off your knowledge of someone else's culture (or what you believe to be their culture) might be considered intrusive or you could be working off assumptions.

## **WHAT TO DO *MUCH* OF THE TIME**

9. **Expect to enjoy meeting people with experiences different from yours.** Although getting to know other cultures is stimulating and gratifying, it can take energy. There are times when each of us seeks out familiar things and people.

10. **Be a bit on the formal side at first in language and in behavior.** After you get acquainted, you might choose to be more casual. Even then, remember to use "please," "thank you," and "excuse me." Use formal terms of address unless and until the other person indicates a preference for the informal. This is especially important with people who have a history of being denied respect. Many cultures are more mindful of titles than we are while others welcome the informality as a sign of friendliness and equality.

11. **Be careful about how literally you take things, and how your statements might be taken.** "Let's have lunch soon" or "make yourself at home" are two examples of easily misunderstood courtesy phrases. It is usually a good idea to hesitate a bit before accepting offers of refreshments, for instance. An immediate response may seem eager.

12. **Accept silence as a part of conversation.**

13. **If it appears to be appreciated, act as a cultural guide/coach.**

14. **Look for guides/coaches to other cultures, someone who can help you put things in perspective, but do not assume that people want to educate you, or are at your disposal whenever you need.**

15. **Ask questions.** Most people appreciate the interest in their cultures. Each person can speak of her/his experience, and some will speak in broader terms. Ask yourself if there is a reason to think that this person would be knowledgeable on this subject. It all comes down to respecting people as individuals and not making assumptions. Be careful about asking "why." It can have a judgmental tone to it. When you are asked questions, take care that your answers are not too short. It is smoother and gentler than a plain "yes" or "no." Most cultures are less matter-of-fact than that.

16. **To open a subject for discussion without putting the other person on the spot, think aloud about your experiences and your culture.** Thinking aloud is one way of interpreting your culture without talking down or assuming that the other person is ignorant. It also makes it safe for her/him to ask questions because you have been the first to reveal yourself.

## **WHAT SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATORS *NEVER* DO**

17. **Never make assumptions based on a person's appearance, name, or group.** Never expect people of a population group to all think alike or act alike.

18. **Never show amusement or shock at something that is strange to you.**

19. **Never imply that the established way of doing something is the only way or the best way.** There are many possible ways of accomplishing tasks, living, relating, etc.

Event Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Dept./Class/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

**DEMOGRAPHICS: OPTIONAL**

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Affiliation:** Undergraduate → First Year    Sophomore    Junior    Senior    Post-Bacc

Graduate    Faculty    Staff    Self-Identify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sex:**    Female    Male    Trans    Self-Identify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender:** Woman    Man    Trans    Self-Identify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Racial/Ethnic Background(s) with which you identify:**

Arab/Middle Eastern American    Asian/Pacific American    White/European American    South Asian/Southeast Asian

Black/African American    Chican@/Latin@/Hispanic American    Native American/Alaska Native/Pacific Islander

International: \_\_\_\_\_ Self-Identify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sexual/Affectional Orientation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Disabilities:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Veteran Status:** \_\_\_\_\_

Adapted from "Human Relations Assessment/Evaluation." Matheis, C. (2008). Corvallis, OR

**OVER →**

Event Title: \_\_\_\_\_

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**OVER →**

|                                            | Strongly Agree |   |   |   | Strongly Disagree |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------|---|---|---|-------------------|--|--|--|
| 1. The program was organized:              | 5              | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1                 |  |  |  |
| 2. The objective of the program was clear: | 5              | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1                 |  |  |  |
| 3. The presenters were effective:          | 5              | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1                 |  |  |  |
| 4. The ideas were presented well:          | 5              | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1                 |  |  |  |
| 5. The program met my expectations:        | 5              | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1                 |  |  |  |

Which aspects of the program had the most impact on you and why?

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Which aspects of the program need improvement?

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Thank you for your participation!

OVER →

|                                            | Strongly Agree |   |   |   | Strongly Disagree |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------|---|---|---|-------------------|--|--|--|
| 1. The program was organized:              | 5              | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1                 |  |  |  |
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| 5. The program met my expectations:        | 5              | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1                 |  |  |  |

Which aspects of the program had the most impact on you and why?

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Which aspects of the program need improvement?

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OVER →

Thank you for your participation!

