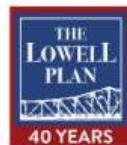




The Series on Racial Equity and Inclusion

Presented by



The Theodore
Edson Parker
Foundation

Part II: How to Cultivate an Inclusion Mindset

Featuring Guest Speaker: Kisha Dixon, The Training Associates

This seminar highlighted the following topics:

- Exploring how our circle of influence informs unconscious racial and cultural bias
- Understanding the relationship between bias and racism
- Exploring how choosing language of empathy and inclusion can change the way we see things
- Discovering simple actions to confront your own bias

Types of engagements

- Debate: where there is a winner/loser
- Discussion: where you put all points on the table and leave with an opinion
- Dialogue: where there is an opportunity to listen and share and learn from each other
 - This is what we are doing today and what we need to do to cultivate an inclusion mindset.

Activity: “Your Circle”



Write the numbers 1-10 down the side of page. Take a moment and think about the people closest to you – those you would call in a crisis and those who know you best. List them. Now look at those names and list next to them these qualities:

- Marital status
- Race (defined by color of skin)
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender identity
- Age
- Ability: physical or mental ability or disability
- Socioeconomic class (finance, status)
- Language (primary)
- Ethnicity (defined as culture or where you come from)

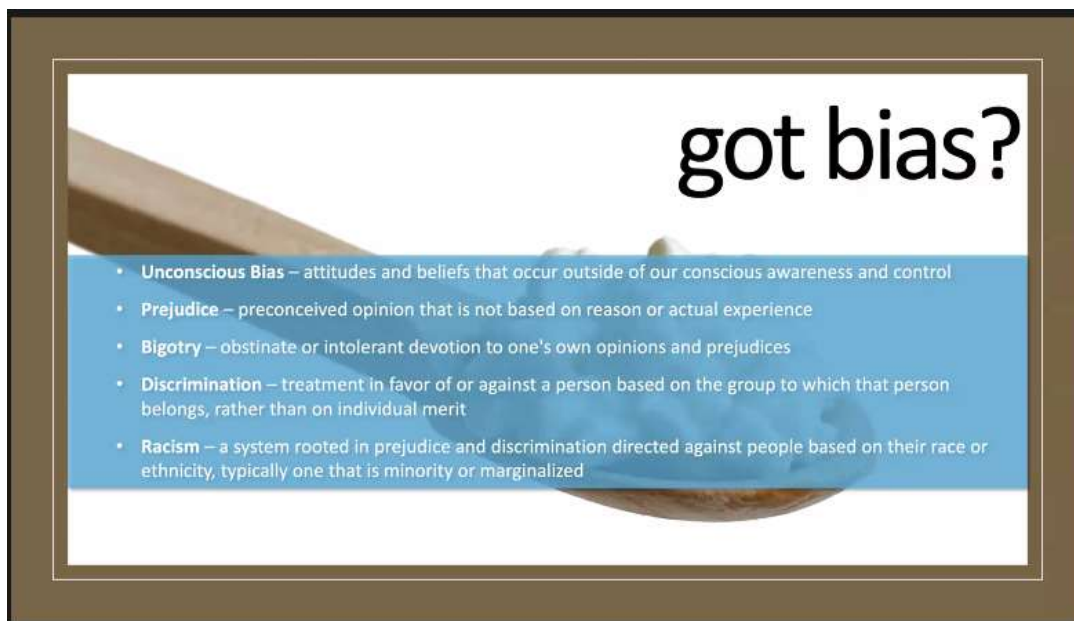
Questions

1. Where are similarities in your circle and how does that make you feel?
2. Who is not represented in your circle?
3. How do you get information about people who are not in your circle?

Discussion

- Your intimate circle is made up of the people who “get” you. This is your comfort zone. The more diversity in the circle, the broader the conversation. When everyone is similar, we can have an echo chamber. We must go beyond that circle to get different perspectives.
 - If we do not have avenues to learn about other people, it limits how we walk in the world.
 - At the same time, there is a danger of “performative allyship.” This is when individuals, organizations, or communities claim to “embrace” other cultures, but only on the surface, while sweeping under the rug the issues related to race and ethnicity. This is when we “celebrate” other cultures and ethnicities, but without real understanding of what they are going through. The opposite of this is being “authentic allies.”
- We need to pay close attention to how we learn about other cultures.
 - Good sources: nonprofit work, boards, travel, doing sports with kids, culture and arts.
 - Media: mixed. It can be divisive. You must vet your sources carefully. Social media can be positive if you control it and it is coming directly from the source, as opposed to people talking about other people.
- Segregation is real in the US. People coming from other countries are shocked by how races are treated differently (badly) in the US.
- People noticed that circles of their children are more diverse. The next generation of people in our lives helps to open and expand your circle.

BIAS



Background: Our brains are supercomputers, bombarded with 11 million bits of data in a second, but can only process about 40 at a time, and those are completely random.

(Kisha introduced the topic with a reference to her personal bias against cottage cheese... We must be careful about being gatekeepers for others against that which we may have inherent bias against simply based on our individual preferences.)

- **Unconscious bias.** Attitudes and beliefs that occur outside of our conscious awareness and control. This bias is not necessarily a true representative of who we are. It's an automatic interpretation or assignment of meaning, a quick way for the brain to tell you whether to lean in or step back. Confirmation bias solidifies what we already believe.
- **Prejudice.** Preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience. Prejudice is knowing you don't have the facts but being okay with that. We can combat prejudice with knowledge and information.
- **Bigotry.** Obstinate or intolerant devotion to one's own opinions and prejudices. Bigotry is a commitment to ignorance. "I'm not even trying to know about it." (The TV character Archie Bunker from "All in the Family" is an example)
- **Discrimination.** Treatment in favor of or against a person based on the group to which that person belongs, rather than on individual merit. Discrimination is when you are in a place of power and use your position to be a gatekeeper to other people based on bias or prejudice or bigotry. "You can't come in here. You can't have access to something."
- **Racism.** A system rooted in prejudice and discrimination directed against people based on their race or ethnicity, typically one that is a minority or marginalized. Racism develops when positions of power and privilege determine the rules that allow bigotry, discrimination, and prejudice, creating a system of oppression. And that causes damage.

RACE



In terms of genetics and biology, race is not real; however, in society, the idea is very real.

Race is a social construct developed to help those in power to retain it. During 17th-century transatlantic slave trade, race was developed to distinguish slave owners from slaves. In 1676, race was first defined legally in our country in the Virginia colonies. The House of Burgesses developed rules of colony and needed to distinguish who could own property, run for office, etc. They defined “whiteness” as those with no Negro or Native American blood (except for the descendants of John Rolfe and Pocahontas). Over time, society expanded “whiteness” to include Italians, Germans, and others.

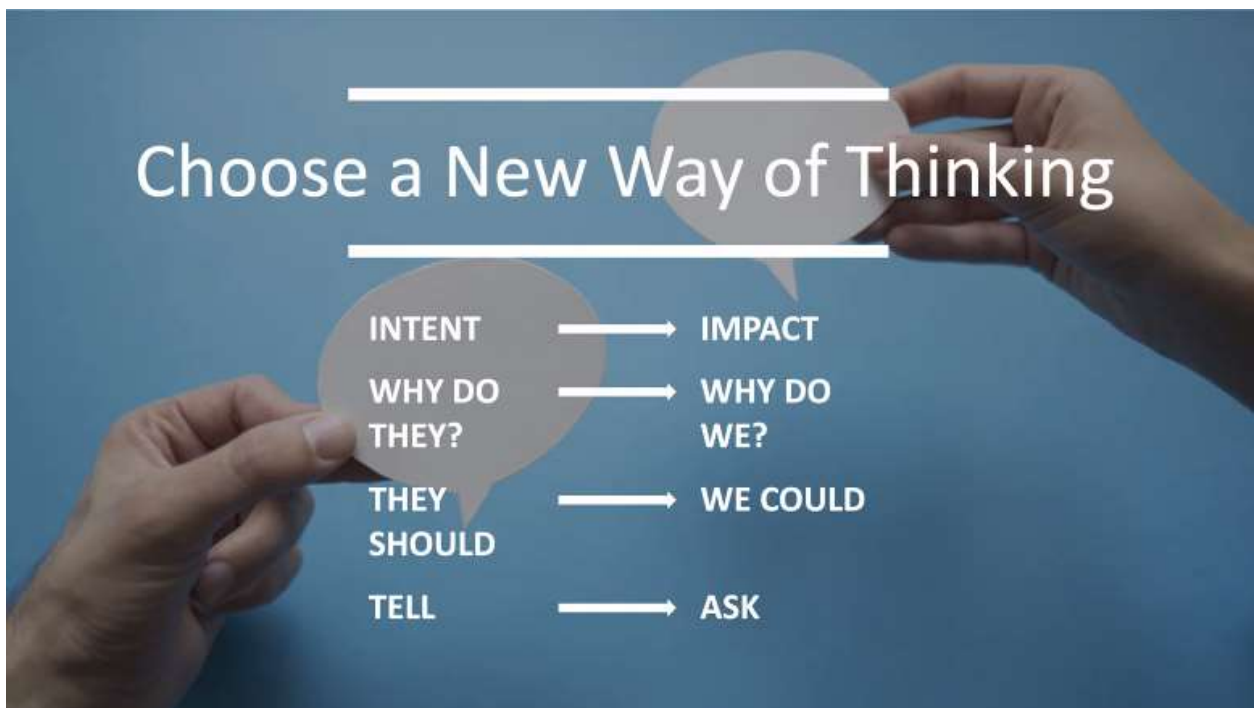
- America has promoted an ideology that whiteness has created all the bones that hold up society. We cannot change what has been done, but to move forward and change, we must acknowledge it.
- At the end of the day, it is all about money and power, not about people.

Skin Color

Skin color is the invisible twin of racism. Our skin color is determined by the amount of melanin in our eyes, skin, and hair.

- Skin is darker from areas nearer the equator because people need more protection from sun.
- What melanin does not do: affect IQ, propensity to commit a crime, athletic ability.
- It is pigment, nothing else.
- Thinking the color of skin affects the person’s abilities is like painting a car red and thinking it will drive faster.

CHOOSE A NEW WAY OF THINKING



- Intent vs impact. It is not the intent that matters; it's the impact. Saying, "Oh, I didn't mean to do that or say that" does not negate the harm; the impact is the same. (Example: I did not mean to run over your foot, but it doesn't matter when person's foot is still hurt.)
- We ask, "Why do they?" regarding why Blacks (or other ethnicities) do something. We should be changing the conversation to say, "Why do we?" and focus on how we as a community can be part of breaking down barriers and furthering the "we."
- "They should" is a reflection of "othering." It is a way of separating "us" from "them," with no sense of community or partnership. We say, "They should do something to get out of this mess," when it's a mess that we were all part of creating. We need to change our approach to "We could."
- "Tell" mode is telling people what you think and trying to get them to agree with you. "If you're smart, you'll agree with me." We need to change that to "Ask" mode, putting down our opinions and asking what the person's experience is. We miss out so much when we try to get people to agree with our way of thinking.

COMBAT RACIAL BIAS WITH EMPATHY



Racial empathy is an intentional effort to understand what another person is feeling and experiencing, resulting in greater compassion.

Sympathy vs. Empathy

There is a danger in sympathy: Tears and expressions of sympathy can turn the discussion and focus to the person who is crying/sorrowful and away from person who is afflicted. This can lead to “performative allyship.”

Empathy, on the other hand, is saying, “I’ve never walked in your shoes and never will. I cannot even imagine what you’re experiencing. But I can see how this must hurt you, even if I cannot feel or experience it myself. Please help me understand.” That opens the door for difficult conversations.

Empathy is action. It requires curiosity and a desire to learn.

- It is important that we extend grace to one another. We must welcome one another to the journey and understand that everybody has to walk their own journey. It will take some people longer than others. I can only speak to my experience and my story.
- All perspectives are valuable. All contribute to the conversation and understanding.
- It is important to stand in solidarity with others. As an example, there is anti-Asian racism related to COVID here in Lowell, where the Asian community has been subjected to racial slurs and a racially tense environment. Many in the Asian community are fearing for their safety, in addition to fearing the virus. When all those who are oppressed (Blacks and Asians and Muslims and gays, etc.) stand in solidarity with each other, it helps to bring awareness to the equity and opportunity gap for all who are discriminated against.

How to Extend Grace and Respond to Racism

- Call it out. “That is unacceptable; I don’t accept that.” Also, be aware that it is an opportunity to educate.
 - Hateful or violent reactions feed into stereotypes. Craft a response.
 - You get to choose when to engage and when to walk away.
 - When a person is in position of power, you can attempt to have a conversation. “I’m not sure what you meant by this. This is what I heard. Could you explain?” Ultimately, you must decide if you want to continue to work there.
- Be aware that you cannot change bigots. Bigotry is a commitment to ignorance.
- Seize opportunity for “authentic allyship.” Pull aside the target and tell them you stand in solidarity.
- Patience and grace are sometimes the way instead of confrontation.

Things You Can Do to Promote Inclusion

1. Continue to educate yourself. There are so many resources!
2. Seek contradictory information. Challenge what others are saying and what you are seeing.

3. Broaden your experiences (through community events, art, nonprofits, other cultures).
4. Look for and challenge assumptions. Why do I think that? Why do you think that?
5. Pay more attention to impact over intent. What you meant means less than what you did or said.
6. Listen to the experiences of others without interruption, contradiction, or comparison. We all have different lived experiences. Let someone share theirs with you.
7. Be intentional about big decisions, especially regarding people. This is how we create change, taking the time to hear and learn.

Maya Angelou quote: Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

Got Bias?

How to Cultivate an Inclusion Mindset


About TTA

TTA is the award-winning leader for Learning & Development talent and solutions. Organizations of all sizes, including Fortune 500 companies, partner with TTA to support their learning initiatives of any size or scope in all locations, virtual or in person.

Our dedicated global workforce of L&D talent has deep experience working with companies in all industries to support their unique needs from learning strategy, design and development, training delivery, and full-time placement.



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RESOURCES

Books

[*The Way to Rainy Mountain: The Legends, Mythology and History of the Kiowa Indians*](#) (N. Scott Momaday)

[*My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*](#) (Resmaa Menakem)

[*Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*](#) (Isabel Wilkerson)

[*White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*](#) (Robin DiAngelo)

[*So You Want to Talk About Race*](#) (Ijeoma Oluo)

[*The Blood of Emmett Till*](#) (Timothy B. Tyson)

[*Talking to Strangers: What We Should Know about the People We Don't Know*](#)
(Malcolm Gladwell)

Videos

[*The First Americans*](#) (video)

[*The Social Dilemma*](#) (Netflix)

[*When They See Us*](#) (Netflix)

[*13th*](#) (Netflix)

[*Brené Brown: Sympathy vs. Empathy*](#)

Emmanuel Acho: [*Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man*](#) (video series)

Podcast

[*Seeing White*](#) (podcast)

Websites

[*What did you just say? Responses to racist comments collected from the field.*](#)

[*Save the Tears: A White Woman's Guide*](#)