



University Equity and Inclusion

Our Beloved Community

Spring 2022 Learning Community Book Group (LCBG) Session 3

Inclusion: Going Beyond Diversity

Suggested Reading: Habits 4 (p21-26), 5 (p27-30), 10 (p49-52), 11 (p53-56), and 14 (p65-70)

Conversation Guide

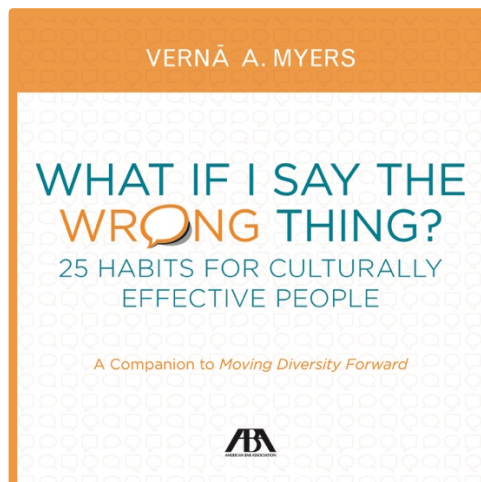


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Welcome

Welcome back to our Learning Community Book Group, a discussion group for exploring the challenges of engagement across difference and tips for positive engagement. Last week our theme focused on implicit bias. Our biases drive our day-to-day actions and reactions, but we often do not notice them and maybe do not even know—or believe—that we have them. The goal of the self-assessment you did previously and the discussion was to begin recognizing and reflecting on the role our biases can play in our interactions with others. Stress or feelings that we are not in control can cause us to demonstrate possibly deeply-held biases. The goal was to reflect on the outside factors that can lead to us demonstrating this bias, so that we can be more mindful of our reactions when those moments next arrive. In our many interactions in sharing a community, we often have the direct opportunity to either assist someone in need, or prevent them from getting what they need. Reflecting on how we think about people or who/how we may assume they are, can affect whether we help them and how.

For today our theme is Inclusion: Going Beyond Diversity. The suggested reading covered Habits 4 (Can't We All Just Get Along See The Commonalities Between People), 5 (Don't Mourn The Good Old Days Accept That Diversity Will Actually Look And Sound Different), 10 (Pay Attention To The Bathrooms Real Inclusion Is In The Details), 11 (How Are We Supposed To Tell Them Apart? Make The Effort To Really See A Person), and 14 (You Don't Sound Like A Cop Become Mutually Adaptive).

Remember, the goal of this Learning Community is not for us to become **perfect** in our interactions with others; we will all say the wrong thing again at some point. However, as we work through this book, we will come to a point where we can be more mindful of others, and able to do the work of building stronger relationships and engagements *after* we say the wrong thing.

Send participants to breakout rooms.

Breakout Room Discussion Guide for Moderators

Read aloud ground rules statement.

The below ground rules statement should be read verbatim by the moderator:

“We are here together to have respectful discussions about how to engage across difference. As we move through this book, we will engage in discussions about subjects that many of us may *think* about, but are not usually comfortable *talking* about in mixed company or any company. This is intended as a supportive space for us to engage in these discussions without fear of judgment or condemnation. The University Equity and Inclusion has provided ground rules to follow, in order for us to make this a space where we can have these discussions openly and without fear. We will refer to these ground rules at the beginning of each session.”

Repost ground rules.

Copy and paste ground rules (provided just below for convenience), additional ground rules your group generated in the welcome session, and any conflict management strategies your group may have generated in the chat.

- **Keep your camera on:** Please have your camera on for as much of the meeting as possible and be ready to engage in large and small group conversations.
- **Speak only *your* truth:** Share from your own experiences and do not speak for others.
- **Seek to understand:** Actively listen before responding.
- **Respect others’ experiences:** We may have different OR similar stories to share, and contexts to draw from. All are legitimate.
- **Disagree without discord:** Disagreement is expected. However,
 - o Approach unexpected ideas with curiosity, not argument.
 - o If you disagree, debate and challenge ideas. Do not attack the speaker.
- **Share the air:** Make room for all voices to be heard, and do not dominate the conversation.
- **Confidentiality:**
 - o Share stories and experiences, but do not identify individual people or provide details that would allow someone in your story to be identified.
 - o Do not share the experiences you hear in this space, outside this space.

Paraphrase given discussion objectives.

America has traditionally been praised as a ‘Melting Pot,’ a rich collection of people and cultures from all over the world. However, both nationally and locally, we often expect people to shed most of what makes them unique—their language, customs, or cultural identity—in order to join us, however “us” is defined. In other words, we’re not all melting together—peoples’ differences are expected to melt away.

In this session, we explore the differences between diversity as we’ve commonly understood it, and inclusion. We’ll discuss the importance of going beyond simply inviting (or allowing) people who are not like us into our spaces, to engaging with them as they are, meeting their unique needs, and learning from their rich experiences, and, as a result, becoming enriched ourselves.

As Vernā Myers says, “Diversity is being invited to the party; Inclusion is being asked to dance.”

Post discussion questions and objectives and moderate discussion.

Keep track of time and ask participants to spend about 8-12 minutes per question, unless there is time available for longer conversations. Read the questions aloud as well as posting them in the chat, and feel free to read the objectives aloud as well, so that all members understand the purpose of the discussion.

Question 1: Think of a time when someone outside your ‘in-group’* joined your neighborhood/work space/social club. How easy was it for them to participate and fit in with your group, and how did they have to change to do so? How much did your group have to change for them to fully engage and connect? Who do you think had to change the most?

Question 1 Objective: “Diversity” and “Inclusion” are often used interchangeably, with the assumption that anyone who is present is therefore included. But inattention to—or marginalizing of—difference leads to the isolation and marginalizing of people. The purpose of this discussion is to recognize the importance of being mutually adaptive: that is, being willing to make the changes in yourself/your group, that you expect others to make in order to connect with you.

Question 2: Think of a time when you forged a bond with someone who might have assumed you would share nothing in common with. What about them caused you to think that they were different* from you? How or why did your opinion change?

Question 2 Objective: We often over-estimate the importance of perceived differences, and end up pursuing bonds mostly with people who we think are ‘like us.’ The purpose of this discussion is to reflect on the bonds we have formed over shared experiences, and not imagined or skin-deep differences.

Question 3: How have your notions of “we” or “us” expanded beyond the definitions you were taught growing up? Did this expansion happen suddenly or gradually, and did you come to terms with it easily or was it a process? What changes did you or your group (family, workplace, neighborhood) have to make, in order to reflect this new notion of “we?”

Question 3 Objective: People often harken back to when ‘things were more simple,’ or when they didn’t have to deal with difference as they do now. But difference is not new, even if we acknowledge it and emphasize respect more now. The purpose of this discussion is to understand that expanding our “we” category—and looking beyond comfortable or skin-deep similarities—is an ongoing endeavor, as is our need to make changes in how we engage with one another.

* Think about the “One Up/One Down” table on Page 3 of the Book, and the ways the categories in those cells shape who you’ve thought of as your ‘in-group.’

Identify next week’s moderator.

Moderators, remember to identify a new moderator for the next session *before* returning to the main room.

Reconvene, Report Out, and End Session

Participants are recalled from their breakout room to the main group for reporting out via chat and verbally. Remind participants of date/time/theme of next session and which habits/pages are suggested reading.