

# StirFry Seminars

## DIVERSITY CONVERSATION CARDS

by Lee Mun Wah

Have you ever wanted to ask someone who was culturally or ethnically different from you a question, but were too afraid it might offend them or that you might say it the wrong way? Well, you are not alone. There are thousands of folks who feel the same way. What they all have in common is that because of their fears or lack of experience, they probably ended up not saying anything at all. It is my opinion that we've had a policy of "don't ask, don't tell" since the inception of this country and that we are all merely a product of that silencing. On top of that, we have no real model of how to begin such a courageous conversation. So, the consequence is that we have a lot of unanswered questions that most likely get filled in with all the fears and stereotypes that we've been taught.

In 2005, I created what I call the most dangerous box in the United States. We asked participants from our workshops and trainings to write down questions that they've always wanted to ask another ethnic group, but were too afraid to ask. We also asked them to write down questions that they wished another ethnic group would ask of them. We asked people of color and Euro-americans to make up questions for each other. Well, as you could imagine, we came up with hundreds of questions. From there, we chose many provocative and insightful ones to make up our most interactive product, "Diversity Conversation Cards." What came as a surprise to us was that when we first started using the cards, sometimes one question could take up to four hours, with some of the most intense and intimate conversations we had ever heard.

Some of the questions ranged from, "Do you ever wish you were a person of color? Why?" to "What do you think it would take for you to feel safe with whites?" These and hundreds of others from folks all over the country help to make this one of the most dynamic and profoundly intimate set of conversation starters on diversity issues. What question have you always wanted to ask?



### June Worldwide Celebrations

June is National GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender) Month!

Also: Father's Day (*several countries*), Dragon Boat Festival (*China*), Midsummer (*several countries*), Flag Day (*Peru*), Kamehameha Day (*Hawaii, US*), Youth Day (*South Africa*), Madaraka Day (*Kenya*), Juneteenth (*US*), Summer Solstice (*worldwide*)