

# StirFry Seminars & Consulting

APRIL 2015

## HOW TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL TOWN HALL MEETING

(Now that we've, hopefully, learned how *not* to have one!)

### Part Two

One of the most glaring mistakes that the Mayor of Ferguson made during his famous Town Hall Meeting debut was telling the audience that he and the rest of the panel would only listen and not respond. I remember a CEO of a top oil company telling me that communicating across cultures was easy – all you had to do was listen. That is one of the most popular misguided myths in diversity work: that all it takes is active listening. My sense is that this one-sided perspective allows white males and well-meaning new age groups to avoid having to deal with the deep emotions and rage that talking about diversity issues can often engender. It also silences any conflicts or anyone having to take responsibility or to have to self-reflect about any of their actions/comments. Here are some suggestions that might help:

#### Curiosity is the Gateway to Empathy

What this Buddhist saying conveys is that curiosity helps us to have more compassion once we learn more about the context of another's life and experiences. The only way that can happen is to notice two very important aspects of curiosity: learning about the person in front of us and how that enhances our learning about ourselves in the process. Being curious about another person requires asking questions and being open to hearing the answers. It also means noticing if we are trying to understand from their perspective rather than trying to make sense of their world through our own biases and cultural lens.

What can help in this process is noticing the impact of our words and actions as well as our intentions. When we enter into this relationship, is it an equal one? Do we value their perspectives in the same way as we value our own? And if we do not, then are we willing to explore why and how that might affect our level of trust and intimacy with each other?

*Some of the ways to 'open up' a conversation from the perspective of curiosity:*

- a. Tell me more about what happened....
- b. What makes it unsafe for you to tell the truth to....?
- c. What would you have liked to have said?
- d. What do you leave at the door when you come to work/school?

*Or maybe even using empathetic responses such as:*

- a. That must have been so painful to see...
- b. You were so young to have gone through all that....
- c. As you were sharing, I couldn't help but feel for you as a parent myself, how hard that must have been to see your child...
- d. How frustrating that must have felt to see that no one did anything or said anything....

Perhaps the secret to all good communication and relationships is to begin with ourselves. As I wrote many years ago...

"To become connected with each other, we need to be truly alive to what is happening around us - to notice what lies before us, within us and in the moment. The clues are all around us, in the words that are spoken and in the silences that deafen a room."

*Lee Mun Wah*

# Mastering Diversity Training & Facilitation

WORKSHOP: April 17-19, 2015

friday 2pm-9pm: saturday 8am-6pm: sunday 8am-2pm

Facilitator: Lee Mun Wah

One of our most popular workshops "Mastering Diversity Training & Facilitation" is coming up in April and we only have a few spaces left! We are really excited because this year we will be presenting quite a few new advanced exercises dealing with empathy and Mindful Facilitation Interventions. We will also be presenting our newest "Listening Exercise" which will enhance one's listening acuity from a mindful perspective. In addition, we will be providing for the first time, a set of Mindful Practice Tests to measure each trainer's proficiency in the use of culturally- appropriate interventions. **REGISTER SOON!**

Too often we are afraid to begin a conversation about race and racism because we have had a bad experience or feel that we will say something wrong or hurtful. This workshop is particularly exciting and satisfying because it allows everyone the opportunity to practice talking to someone who is different from themselves in a compassionate and honest way. Participants will learn that they are not alone in their fears and that all of us lack a "model" of how to begin this type of conversation. The most important ingredient is our sincerity and our willingness to learn and understand each other.

For More Information: 510.204.8840 ext. 103 or [www.stirfryseminars.com/btc](http://www.stirfryseminars.com/btc)

ON DEMAND DIGITAL STREAMING  
RENTALS OF STIRFRY FILMS!!

[www.diversitytrainingfilms.com](http://www.diversitytrainingfilms.com)

For the first time, StirFry is making our films available online/on demand for students & individuals via digitally streamed video. Here, you can view films such as **The Color of Fear**, **Last Chance for Eden** and **Stolen Ground** from the comfort of your own home for a small rental fee; rentals provide a link to the films online, good for 24-hours of viewing.

Please note StirFry Seminars' Copyright and Use Agreement prior to purchase. (If instead, you prefer to own a dvd copy of our diversity training films, you can purchase them on the StirFry Seminars & Consulting website at [www.stirfryseminars.com](http://www.stirfryseminars.com).) For questions, contact us at: [products@stirfryseminars.com](mailto:products@stirfryseminars.com) or call 510-204-8840 x100.



Get **20% off**,  
for a limited time, on all  
regularly-priced diversity training  
materials (including Lee Mun Wah's  
newest film **If These Halls Could Talk**)!  
Enter coupon code **NEWS20** upon online  
checkout at  
[www.stirfryseminars.com/store](http://www.stirfryseminars.com/store).  
**\* Some restrictions apply.**  
**Expires May 1, 2015**

## StirFry Calendar of Upcoming Events

April 10, 2015 Denver, CO	If These Halls Could Talk Film Showing & Diversity Dialogue with Director, Lee Mun Wah Higher Education Diversity Summit • Open to the Public
April 11, 2015 San Francisco, CA	If These Halls Could Talk Film Showing & Diversity Dialogue with Director, Lee Mun Wah Counseling Symposium • Not Open to the Public
April 15, 2015 Oakland, CA	If These Halls Could Talk Film Showing & Diversity Dialogue with Director, Lee Mun Wah Open to the Public
April 17-19, 2015 Berkeley, CA **	Mastering Diversity Training & Facilitation Open to the Public
April 27, 2015 Duluth, MN	The World is All Around Us: Creating a Culturally Responsive School Community Minnesota Association for Children's Health's (MACMH) Conference • Open to the Public

\*\* Held at the Quan Yin Training Center, 2311 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Berkeley, CA

For StirFry's complete Calendar of Upcoming Events, please visit [www.stirfryseminars.com/events](http://www.stirfryseminars.com/events)

Contact Us: 510.204.8840 Trainings, Films & Diversity Products, ext. 103 • [www.stirfryseminars.com](http://www.stirfryseminars.com) • [www.diversitytrainingfilms.com](http://www.diversitytrainingfilms.com)