

StirFry Seminars & Consulting

January 2016

MY NEW YEAR'S WISH LIST FOR WHITES IN 2016

Almost everywhere I go in this country, EuroAmericans often tell me they are perplexed about how they can be good allies to people of color. What holds them back is that they are often afraid of making a mistake or of doing further harm by, one more time, unconsciously exercising their white privilege. So, here is my wish list to all those EuroAmericans out there who are searching for some practical ways of connecting with and being good allies to people of color.

Know that:

You will make mistakes, hurt, irritate and upset people of color. I say that because as a white person, you have had over five hundred years of “don’t ask and don’t tell” regarding diversity issues in this country, so, of course, you’re going to hurt someone of color in your attempts to relate to them. That’s part of the growing process. No one is going to die if you, as a white person, make a mistake, except maybe your expectations of needing to be that perfect white person chosen to save people of color from those other unconscious, bigoted, red-necked whites. Acknowledging your whiteness is the first step in your recovery and connection with people of color.

The rite of passage is to be curious about what you’ve done or said that might be racist, to share how you feel about what you’ve learned and, then, finally, to change. So many times, what frustrates people of color is that when they share why and how they were offended to whites, what they get back is that the white person often says nothing or cries profusely and people of color end up consoling them and/or other whites come to their defense.

Racism is not just what you see, do or hear, but it’s also about what you don’t see, do or hear. I think that one of the great illusions in this country is believing that if you study the history of racism, gather data and read lots of books about racism, you will have “arrived.” Or, as one white male said to me recently, “It shouldn’t be this way.” After which, he changed the subject, despite the look of disappointment on my face.

A good example of what we don’t see and hear is illustrated by the group of armed whites who have taken over a federal reserve building in Oregon and how the FBI and local police have not confronted them. I wonder, as do many other people of color, would that have been the same response if the militants were armed Muslims, Blacks or Mexicans or American Indians?

To me, racism isn’t just what we don’t see, do, or hear, it’s also looking at why we don’t have to notice or care. What kind of privilege rewards us if we only see our similarities and not our differences, encourages us to celebrate our differences, but does not make use of any of our differences in our workplaces, schools and communities?

When we will have “arrived” is when we integrate our unique differences into our everyday business, educational and government practices in the way we hire, teach, or make policies. How do we do that? When we engage in daily intimate and authentic conversations with those who are different from ourselves, when we practice being curious about what we fear or afraid to ask or learn about. When we stand up and say something when someone is talked down to or demeaned or not promoted. When we stay in the room when we are called out for discrimination and model our response to others by being open, curious and emotionally connected. When we stay the course by staying committed to issues of diversity, not just when it is convenient or to check off a box, but as an on-going and necessary part of our learning and our growth.

In the film, *Contact*, Jodi Foster’s honesty is admonished for not understanding that the world just doesn’t work that way. Of which she replies: “Funny, I always thought the world was what we made of it.”

Lee Mun Wah

MASTERING DIVERSITY TRAINING & FACILITATION

APRIL 22-24, 2016

FRIDAY 2PM-9PM; SATURDAY 8AM-6PM; SUNDAY 8AM-2PM

FACILITATOR: LEE MUN WAH

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 • WWW.STIRFRYSEMINARS.COM/BTC

On Demand Digital Streaming Rentals of StirFry Films!!

www.diversitytrainingfilms.com

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.

HAPPY 2016 SALE

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.

*Some restrictions apply • Expires February 29, 2016

StirFry Calendar of Upcoming Events

January 19, 2016 Charlotte, NC	Responding to Racial Microaggressions and Facilitating Race Conversations in the Classroom Not Open to the Public
January 29, 2016 Carrollton, GA	A Cross Gender-Race Conversation Not Open to the Public
February 4, 2016 Albuquerque, NM	An Unfinished Conversation Some Events Open to the Public
February 10, 2016 Alameda, CA	If These Halls Could Talk: Film Showing & Diversity Dialogue Open to the Public
February 18-20, 2016 Minneapolis, MN	Cross-Cultural Facilitation Techniques for Educators, Administrators & Staff- Beginner & Intermediate Levels and Creating Community in a Diverse School Environment Not Open to the Public
February 24, 2016 New York, NY	Keynote: Walking Each Other Home: The Art of Creating Community & Connection American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) Conference • Open to the Public
February 26, 2016 Savannah, GA	Keynote: Walking Each Other Home: The Art of Creating Community & Connection Cross-Cultural Counseling & Education Conference • Open to the Public
February 29, 2016 Newport, RI	An Unfinished Conversation Some Events Open to the Public

For StirFry's complete Calendar of Upcoming Events, please visit www.stirfryseminars.com/events

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