

StirFry Seminars & Consulting

December 2017

SPEAKING THE UNSPEAKABLE

Someone once asked me, as a facilitator, when I thought a workshop began and I said, "The moment you walk in." What I meant was that from the moment the facilitator enters the room, the audience is assessing their every move and gesture. Additionally, the facilitator should also be observing the "cultural climate" of the room. For me, that begins by first noticing how *I* am feeling. You see, I think that all too often, we ignore our own initial instincts, whether those be our discomfort, our feeling ill at ease or like an outsider, etc. Often, if we are having these feelings, we are probably not alone.

I recalled entering a room at a diversity conference where I was one of the keynote speakers, and feeling very alone as I scanned the crowd of white faces. No one greeted me or smiled back when I walked through the aisles. *Does that sound familiar to any of you?* I later walked into the restroom and a flyer lying on the floor caught my eye. The flyer vigorously protested the fact that the conference planning committee and the conference program were devoid of people of color and that the workshop presenters were predominantly white. The flyer advocated for equal representation for people of color as presenters and for seats on the planning committee.

Reading this flyer confirmed my earlier feelings of isolation and invisibility, which were all too familiar to me as a Chinese-American man traversing my way through a white world. In retrospect, I think that all too often we, as minorities, blame ourselves for not being "professional" enough or appropriately "fitting in" when, deep down, we feel like outsiders and usually are. In my newest documentary film, *If These Halls Could Talk*, a white college student says that she rarely has to adapt to the culture of a classroom because most of the time her people are the majority in every facet of her life. When I heard her say this, I envied how supported and relaxed that must make her feel whenever she goes to a job interview, to the bank for a loan, is approached by a police officer, or walks into a fancy restaurant. I remember the words of James Baldwin: "*America is one tough town.*" How sad for the times he lived in and how equally true that is even today.

So, when it came time for my keynote, I held up the flyer and shared with the audience its contents and how it made me feel. I then asked that those who were responsible for its publication to please stand. Everyone in the room was shocked, especially the sponsors, at my request. Slowly, one by one, each of those who authored the flyer anxiously stood up. I asked the audience to give them a standing ovation because they were the soul and conscience of this organization. Their courage to stand and willingness to speak out would likely impact the conference's inclusiveness into the future.

Perhaps, this is how change occurs, when someone speaks the unspeakable. As Martin Luther King, Jr. once shared: *Real peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice.*

Lee Mun Wah

LET'S GET REAL:

Unlearning Racism and Internalized Racism

Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah & Rainbow Markell

February 23-25, 2018

This retreat is about confronting some of the issues that keep us all from talking to one another about race/racism. It is also about discovering new ways to begin that conversation, how to create a bridge to talk about our differences, exploring what opens us up and what closes us down, and finally, 101 ways to become culturally competent in our relationships and workplaces.

We hope that you will join us in making this not only a better world for our children, but for ourselves—not by starting tomorrow, but by beginning that conversation today.

For More Information: 510.204.8840 ext. 103 or www.stirfryseminars.com/BTC

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at StirFry Seminars!**

Diversity Documentaries Available for Online Rental!

DiversityTrainingFilms.com

Stirfry Seminars & Consulting has made its acclaimed diversity documentary films available on-demand for individuals and students via digitally-streamed video at: www.DiversityTrainingFilms.com. There, you can view Director Lee Mun Wah's latest film, *If These Halls Could Talk* as well as *The Color of Fear*, *Last Chance for Eden* and *Stolen Ground*.

Your rental fee allows you to access each film for your chosen time period. Please note StirFry Seminars' Copyright and Use Agreement prior to purchase.

If you would like to own a DVD copy of our diversity training films, you can purchase them on the StirFry Seminars & Consulting website at: www.stirfryseminars.com/store.



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Expires: December 31, 2017 *
restrictions apply

StirFry Calendar of Upcoming Events

Jan 16, 2017 Eau Claire, WI	Diversity Conversations on Campus Not Open to the Public
Jan 18, 2018 Golden Valley, MN	Cross-Cultural Facilitation Techniques for Educators, Administrators & Staff (Level Two) Not Open to the Public
Jan 27, 2018 Sacramento, CA	What Would Make the Dream Real MLK Celebration 2018- Sacramento • Open to the Public
February 2-4, 2018 San Jose, CA	Responding to a Discriminatory Incident at School Good Teaching Conference (North), California Teacher's Association (CTA) • Open to the Public
February 7-8, 2018 Baltimore, MD	Cross-Cultural Facilitation Techniques for Educators, Administrators & Staff (Levels Three and Four) Not Open to the Public

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

Contact Us: 510.204.8840 Trainings, Films & Diversity Products, ext. 103 • www.stirfryseminars.com • www.diversitytrainingfilms.com

** Held at the Quan Yin Training Center, 2311 8th Street, Berkeley, CA