

StirFry Seminars & Consulting

April 2009

Creating a Safe Environment

For many years now, participants have asked me how I have been able to ask such personal questions in a workshop. It's really an issue of creating a sense of safety. How I first enter a room, how I choose to begin, and how well I am able to read the culture and temperature of a room and its particular participants are all essential foundations needed to create a sense of safety to speak not only about what is being experienced, but also what is not being talked about.

You see, the workshop doesn't begin when I first start talking; it starts the moment I enter the room. I'm observing the participants and the environment: Who is in the room and who isn't? Where are the participants seated? Who are they sitting with (noticing gender and ethnic alliances)? What's on the walls and what isn't? Who looks relaxed and open? Who looks adversarial? How are folks dressed? What are their ages? At the same time, I am also noticing those who are in power – their ethnicities, gender and ages. All these factors and many others determine the culture and temperature of a room. They are signs indicating where to go and where it may not be safe – each exacting a price or a reward, approval or fear.

The next most important element is how I choose to start. Often I begin in silence for the first thirty seconds as I look around the room slowly, making eye contact with each participant or group. I share with the participants that I am silent because I am undecided about whether or not it is safe to tell the truth. I then ask the group to raise their hands if they know exactly what I am talking about. If they have raised their hands, I ask them to also stand. This single exercise creates a sense of camaraderie and honesty. From there, I ask the group to notice who is standing and who is not. I have the group raise their hands if they didn't know these people were withholding the truth when they came to work. From there, participants can hardly wait to talk. I have earned their respect because of my willingness to first be honest. Someone once said, "The truth has always been there. Saying it out loud, now that's the hard part." And that is where one must begin with each group—noticing who they are and helping them move towards who they can become.

Lee Mun Wah

Unlearning Racism

May 8-10, 2009

Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah

Friday 2 pm-9 pm, Saturday 8 am-6 pm, Sunday 8 am-2 pm

Quan Yin Training Center • 2311 8th Street, Berkeley, CA

This is one of our most popular workshops. It provides a forum for participants to discover conscious and unconscious ways in which racism has affected their lives. This workshop is experientially based and designed to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of our differences.

Through the use of films, role plays and a variety of diversity exercises, participants will learn to:

- Understand the effects of personal history, on behavior and attitude of individuals
- Listen to and explore personal experiences and perspectives from participants of diverse ethnicities
- Understand how differences in race can affect relationships, communication and behavior
- Observe facilitation of racial conflicts and misunderstandings
- Compassionately listen to, validate and acknowledge the emotional impact of racism on an individual, group and community

StirFry Calendar

April 2, 2009 Raleigh, NC	Cultural Competency for Leaders Intro Society for Intercultural Education Conference/Open to the Public
April 3, 2009 Las Vegas, NV	Cultural Competency for Educators Workshop & An Unfinished Conversation Keynote National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) Conference/Open to the Public
April 5, 2009 Phoenix, AZ	Cultural Competency for Leaders Intro American Association of Community Colleges Conference/Open to the Public
April 10-12, 2009** Berkeley, CA	Mindfully Resolving Conflicts - Beginning Open to the Public
April 18, 2009 Pasadena, CA	Cultural Competency for Educational Leaders & If These Halls Could Talk™ Intro California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Conference Open to the Public
April 20, 2009 Mountain View, CA	Film Showing & Discussion: <i>Last Chance for Eden</i> Not Open to the Public
April 30 - May 1, 2009 Manchester, NH	Cultural Competency for Leaders Workshop & Speaking Address Diversity Journey Conference/ /Open to the Public
May 5, 2009 Atlantic City, NJ	Keynote, Mindfully Resolving Conflicts for Diversity Issues & <i>Last Chance for Eden</i> Film Showing & Discussion New Jersey NASW Conference/Open to the Public
May 8-10 2009 ** Berkeley, CA	Unlearning Racism Open to the Public
May 12-13, 2009 Salen, OR	Cultural Competency for Leaders Not Open to the Public
May 28-29, 2009 San Diego, CA	A National Conversation on Race Workshop, Mindfully Resolving Conflicts for Diversity Issues & <i>Last Chance for Eden</i> Film Showing & Discussion NCORE Conference/Open to the Public

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

For more information, registration and links to conference workshops, visit <http://www.stirfryseminars.com/events>

Contact Us: 510.204.8840 Trainings, Films & Diversity Products, ext. 101 www.stirfryseminars.com