

StirFry Seminars & Consulting

February 2011

On the Road Again

By Lee Mun Wah

Recently, I have noticed how fascinated individuals/groups have become with some of my experiences mindfully facilitating conversations on diversity issues around the country. So, for this newsletter, I thought I might try something different by sharing with you an experience that happened about two months ago on the road.



Just before I was about to deliver a keynote to an audience of about 200 or so educators and auxiliary staff, the sponsors announced that they wanted the Principal at each table to introduce their colleagues to everyone attending. As each Principal introduced their staff, I noticed how softly and methodically they went about their assigned task. However, when it came to this one particular table where an African American Principal was about to introduce her staff, she yelled out, "Hello!" and everyone responded hesitantly. Then she shouted out again, "Hello!" until everyone matched her exact tone and volume. As the laughter filled the room, she then went about introducing her staff in glowing and endearing terms.

When I began my keynote, I got off the stage and walked toward this fascinating woman who had captivated the crowd and myself. I asked her what her name was and she shook her head sideways, in the way only African-Americans can, as she sang out, "Sheila...and isn't that beautiful?" "Of course," I nodded laughing as our eyes connected effortlessly. Then I asked the audience how they would describe her. Their descriptions were effusive: charismatic, incredible, dynamic, caring, compassionate, loving, a born leader, giving. As each accolade came pouring in, Sheila's eyes sparkled and she laughed adoringly to her newfound fans. Then I asked the audience what would it be like if she were a student in their class? The audience went dead quiet, until the silence seemed deafening. Everyone looked around at each other uncomfortably with many of the people of color nodding to each other. And, at that moment, Sheila broke down crying as the memories of her school days came flooding into the room. "It was so hard... no one appreciated or understood who I was. All they could see was a young, big, black girl, who, to them, was militant, violent, out of control, disruptive, and much too loud."

And thus, began a conversation...

These moments of revelation are rare, but the stories and the journeys themselves are not. They're real and they have happened—even at this very hour—in every classroom, workplace, and community in this country. The important point here is that we cannot be content to simply celebrate our differences, but we must look closely at the value we place on those differences. Then, ultimately, we can make good use of them in our relationships, with those we work next to, and the students who come into our lives with their unique gifts. That, I believe, was the hope of Martin Luther King, Jr. and his Dream for us all.

Let's Get Real: Unlearning Racism (Overnight Retreat)

Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah

March 18-20, 2011

Friday 2 pm until Sunday 2 pm

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

There is so much that is unsaid in this country about race issues. In this retreat we will explore a variety of ways to have this dialogue on race and racism that will lead to a more intimate and honest conversation and relationship with each other. 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.

Before we can truly become a multicultural nation, we must have a relationship based on respect and understanding, reflection and curiosity; where our differences and our similarities are embraced, valued and integrated into the very fabric of our workplaces, communities, schools and governmental institutions. It also means coming to an understanding that awareness and holidays are just the beginning.

Participants will learn:

- 9 Healthy Ways to Communicate
- 101 Ways to Become Culturally Competent
- 21 Statements That Stop A Diversity Conversation
- The Art of Listening & Responding Cross-Culturally

For More Information: 510.204.8840 ext. 101 or www.stirfryseminars.com

! SPECIAL PRODUCTS SALE !

25% off all regular priced diversity films/products now through March 15, 2011.

Enter Coupon Code **SALE25** upon online checkout at www.stirfryseminars.com/store.

StirFry Calendar

February 8, 2011 ** Berkeley, CA	The Art of Embracing Change Monthly Group • Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah & Naraya Stein Open to the Public
February 8, 2011 Sacramento, CA	Closing the Achievement Gap Through Cultural Competency California Foster Youth Education Summit / Open to the Public
February 10, 2011 Statesboro, GA	An Unfinished Conversation about Gender & Race (Town Hall Meeting) Open to the Public
February 11, 2011 Savannah, GA	Let's Get Real About Racism: What Whites Won't Say & People of Color Can't Ask At the Cross-Cultural Conference in Counseling & Education / Open to the Public
February 18, 2011 San Jose, CA	The Practice of Honoring Diversity Keynote & An Unfinished Conversation Not Open to the Public
February 22, 2011 St. Louis, MO	Let's Get Real About Racism Workshop Not Open to the Public
February 22, 2011 ** Berkeley, CA	The Art of Embracing Change Monthly Group • Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah & Naraya Stein Open to the Public
February 23, 2011 Oakland, CA	Oakland in a "Post-Racist" Society Not 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