

StirFry Seminars & Consulting

May 2011

On The Road Again

I experienced the following situation at a major corporation. What stands out for me is that I had very little time to ponder beyond the moment, because everything happened so quickly. In retrospect, perhaps the best facilitation occurs when we don't get too far ahead of ourselves or the group.



When I entered the room, about thirty human resource practitioners and a few general managers were all looking at me with various stages of curiosity. Not trying to force things because of the time limitation (fifteen minutes), I introduced myself and simply asked, "Tell me what you don't know about diversity." Everyone was obviously stunned and it took them a few seconds to truly take in what I had just asked. After a few moments, a young European American woman, Melissa, shared that she didn't know about Buddhism. I asked her, "So, if you wanted to learn more about Buddhism, who would you ask in this room?" Of course, at this moment I had captured the attention of the competitively-spirited males in the room and everyone was intensely looking around for the slightest clue.

After about three minutes, no one could identify anyone else as Buddhist. Then out of the group, a Japanese man, Alan, yelled out, "They'll never get it." Everyone turned to see who had just spoken. He continued, "I bet no one in here has even noticed what I have around my wrist. I've worn it in this company for almost ten years and only one person has ever asked what it meant."

A European American man, Jim, yelled out, "Oh come on, now....what does it matter if he's Buddhist, red, white, blue, or green? To me, he's just a human being, just like the rest of us. To me, what's important has nothing to do with race or gender." Stunned, Alan looked down at the floor, shaking his head. Others in the group had the same reaction. I looked at Jim and said, "So, Jim, it sounds like you don't think it matters what race or religion he is, because to you, he's just a human being." Jim nodded, "Absolutely." "So," I replied back, "it sounds like though it may not be important to you, it might be important to Alan." In response, Alan yelled out, "Thank-you! That's exactly how I feel. Has it ever occurred to you (Jim) to ask me how I feel about my being Buddhist or how I feel about being Japanese?" I then asked Jim, "What would be a good question to ask him if you wanted to know more about him?" Jim asked, "So what does it mean for you to be Buddhist and Japanese?" "It means everything to me," said Alan, and he began a story of how his grandfather gave him his Buddhist bracelet after converting to Christianity in hopes of becoming more accepted by whites after the internment camps. With tears, Alan shared how he reclaimed his Buddhist roots and that this bracelet was worn in honor of his family and his grandfather and all that they had lost. There wasn't a dry eye in the room.

You see, a bridge had been created from a single moment of disconnection - not out of defensiveness, but through curiosity and a willingness to be open to a world outside our own. Perhaps the lesson here is that if we take the time, we, too, can find a way to walk each other home. That is my hope and my prayer each time I walk into a room.



Unlearning Heterosexism & Homophobia

Facilitated by Charles Lerner

May 21-22, 2011 • 9 am- 4 pm

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

In this workshop, individuals from all sexual and gender identities will join together in confronting issues of homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism and internalized homophobia. We will go beyond developing a basic intellectual understanding of these issues and encourage members to be curious, open, honest, humble and vulnerable in order to together find ways to really “make it better.”

Cross-Cultural Facilitation Techniques

5-day Intensive for Diversity Trainers

Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah

June 22-26, 2011

Weds-Sats: 9am-5pm

Sunday: 9am-2pm

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

In this unique training, Lee Mun Wah will guide each participant through a series of exercises and mindful techniques that will enhance their understanding of the impact of culture on relationships, conflictual cultural situations, as well as how to develop a deeper and more authentic sense of community and openness within diverse groups.

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

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



Lee Mun Wah explores issues of race on American campuses with eleven students from all over the country in his explosive new film, *If These Halls Could Talk*. To view a short preview of the film, get more information or pre-order your copy, visit, www.stirfryseminars.com/store.

Release date: November 2011

Diversity Training Materials Discounted!

In order to make our diversity training materials more affordable for our customers, we have significantly reduced the prices of many of our films.

Please visit www.stirfryseminars.com/store for more information.

Attention East Bay, California, Readers! We are looking for an ADA-accessible training space that Stirfry Seminars could utilize on an as-needed basis for our diversity trainings that have participants with special needs. If you know of a space that would be available over the weekend, let us know! We are hoping to offer an exchange—seats in our trainings for use of the space. Contact Melissa for more information (melissa@stirfryseminars.com).

A new book by Lee Mun Wah



For more information and to pre-order your copy, visit www.stirfryseminars.com/store

Release date:
Summer 2011

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

** 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