

# StirFry Seminars & Consulting

May 2017

## Lead From Where You Are

By Lee Mun Wah

Recently, I was asked to do a workshop and relate it to the theme of the conference, *Lead From Where You Are*. Now, on the surface, the theme sounds very logical and practical. But, from a diversity perspective, the title feels very “western” in nature... which to me, means to keep the focus on myself. Follow *my* lead, which is very familiar to the famous biblical quote: *Love thy neighbor, as thyself*.

A diversity perspective, however, would come from a different place: *Love thy neighbor, as they would like to be loved*. How do you find out how they want to be loved? You have to get to know them to find out. When Mahatma Gandhi was asked who he was, he responded by simply saying, “*Who I am is how I eat, how I walk, how I relate to others, how I sleep, how I cry. You see, all these and so much more, are the sum of who I am.*” So, what is the secret? Observe, observe, observe. In other words, be curious, stay open and expect the unexpected!

Early on in my career as a Special Education teacher, I remember walking into my first class and noticing how deflated my students looked, and how certain they seemed that they weren’t smart enough or expected to succeed. As I looked around the room at each of them, I smiled and told them that it wasn’t that they couldn’t learn, but as teachers, we hadn’t yet found a way to teach them. Instantly, they saw themselves differently. Because you see, it is up to both student and teacher to discover that doorway into their best way of learning.

*Begin where someone is, not where you want them to be.*

Many years ago, I was asked to come to Texas to help a mentoring program train Latinos to become managers at their banks. One hour into the training, I asked the mentors and the trainees to go into separate rooms. In the room with the mentors (all of whom were seemingly white, blue-eyed, six-foot Texans), I asked them how they perceived the program was progressing and they told me that it was going great. Then I asked each of them to share something personal that they had learned from their trainees about their families, what it has taken for them to get to this room, and their hopes and dreams for coming here to work at this bank. Amazingly, not one of the mentors could answer any of the questions about their trainees.

How did this lack of interest in their personal lives and stories impact the trainees? When I met with them, they shared how many of them felt used and duped and were about to quit the program. They talked about how they thought were hired because of the richness of their experiences and how they could best serve the communities they came from. Instead, they were told how to talk and act “white”, that nothing they brought to the table seemed of value or importance to their mentors, and that their chances of being promoted seemed very remote, considering the predominance of white male managers throughout the company.

So, perhaps, the lesson here is: *Lead From Where They Are*



# CROSS-CULTURAL FACILITATION SKILLS

## 5-Day Intensive for Diversity Trainers, Educators and Therapists

*Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah & Rainbow Markell /All Are Welcome*

**3 Sessions to choose from:** June 21-25, July 19-23, August 5-9

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

Facilitating a group with many cross-cultural perspectives and experiences requires a keen understanding and knowledge of how cultural differences can impact group dynamics, relationships and their sense of safety.

In this unique training, Lee Mun Wah and Rainbow Markell 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. Participants will explore their perception and attitudes about diversity issues through the use of films, books, vignettes and personal stories.

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### 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](http://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 a 24-hour 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](http://www.stirfryseminars.com/store).

## StirFry Calendar of Upcoming Events

<b>May 23, 2017</b> <b>Atlanta, GA</b>	Diversity Conversations in the Workplace Association for Talent Development (ATD) Conference • Open to the Public
<b>May 24, 2017</b> <b>Washington, DC</b>	Diversity Conversations in the Workplace Not Open to the Public
<b>May 31, 2017</b> <b>Fort Worth, TX</b>	The Art of Communicating with those Different From Ourselves National Conference on Race & Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE) • Open to the Public
<b>June 2, 2017</b> <b>Stamford, CT</b>	What We Do Not See Soul Work: Healing Racial Trauma- A 2-Day Conference for People of Color and White Allies • Open to the Public
<b>June 3, 2017</b> <b>New York, NY</b>	If These Halls Could Talk (Keynote) and Responding to a Discriminatory Incident (Breakout Sessions) Not Open to the Public
<b>June 6, 2017</b> <b>Lynwood, WA</b>	If These Halls Could Talk- Film Showing & Diversity Dialogue with Director, Lee Mun Wah Not Open to the Public

**For StirFry's complete Calendar of Upcoming Events, please visit [www.stirfryseminars.com/events](http://www.stirfryseminars.com/events)**

Contact Us: 510.204.8840 Trainings, Films & Diversity Products, ext. 103 • [www.stirfryseminars.com](http://www.stirfryseminars.com) • [www.diversitytrainingfilms.com](http://www.diversitytrainingfilms.com)

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