

StirFry Seminars & Consulting

June 2019

WHO IS AN AMERICAN?

Many years ago, I was informed that I was to get an award by the military for my work as a diversity consultant. The award was to be presented by the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Defense. Of course, I was flattered and a bit dubious of displaying this award living in Berkeley, California! However, the week in which I was to be given the award, several incidents occurred that would impact me very deeply.

On the day of the award ceremony, I was having tea in their cafeteria preparing my speech. As I was sitting there, a young private came up to my table and shared that his superiors were concerned that my speech not have any racial 'overtones'. I was aghast- of course my work had racial overtones. I was a diversity trainer! As I took a few moments to fully absorb what was being asked of me and becoming less defensive, I realized that this young private had no idea of what he was asking of me, much less did he care. He was simply a messenger. And so, after some deep thought, I replied, "Please inform your superiors that my speech will only have racial undertones." "Yes sir," he quickly replied, "I am sure they will be pleased." "I'm sure they will be, too," I replied.

When the time came to accept the award, I walked into the room and was quickly surrounded by all these Asian folks who worked at the Pentagon. "PLEASE tell them that we're not Chinese spies. We would never do that," they said. What they were referring to was the arrest of Wen Ho Lee, a Pentagon employee, for taking home classified papers without permission. Many speculated, including the press and much of the media at the time, that he was a spying for China. As is true of most instances like these for people of color, we are often seen as a 'group', and seldom as individuals. It is rare that whites in this country are grouped as 'all whites' in this same way.

After I was handed my award, I stepped forward to the microphone and tore up my speech. Everyone was shocked, including the Deputy Secretary of Defense! "I'm tearing up my speech because something happened today that I'd like to illustrate to you and explain why. I then asked a Filipino man who was dressed in a suit and tie, to come up and stand next to me. I asked the audience to tell us how we were different and how we were the same. The answers were quite varied: We're both Asian. I was more handsome. He was older. He looked more professional, while I looked less professional since I was not wearing a suit, but rather a kimono.

After about twenty or so comments, I shared that they had all left one important observation out – we were both Americans. The audience was stunned, with many of the Asian folks nodding and crying. I then asked for those who had ever been questioned if they were American or were not seen as being American enough because they had an accent or because of the way they dressed or because of the color of their skin or their religion, to please stand up. Almost all the people of color stood. I then had each of them share their story and how this 'stereotyping and labelling' affected them being here at the Pentagon, in this community and in this country.

Luckily, it was all filmed and it became the talk of the Pentagon for months, if not years. The result for me, however, was that I was never invited back to speak again. In looking back, I have no regrets about what I did. As Angela Davis so eloquently wrote: *I no longer can accept what I cannot change. Now I know I must change what I can no longer accept.*

There is no right time for standing up and speaking out against injustice and inequality. The right time, throughout history, has always been *now*.

Lee Mun Wah



MINDFUL FACILITATION CERTIFICATE

1-Year Training Program: June 2019-June 2020

The goal of the Mindful Facilitation Certification Program is to help participants learn the how to observe the intent and impact of all our communications as a way of de-escalating conflicts, noticing when there is a disconnect and how to reconnect, how to culturally listen and respond in a way that enhances and deepens our conversations and relationships with those who are different from ourselves. Participants will also learn how these mindful techniques are applicable in educational, corporate, governmental and therapeutic and social agency settings where diversity issues are a part their mission statement, but difficult to put into actual practice.

Still accepting applicants!

Register now: www.stirfryseminars.com/certification

Questions? Schedule a time to speak with Lee Mun Wah, StirFry Seminars' Executive Director and Certificate Facilitator Today!
Contact 510-204-8840 x 103 for appointment availability.

DiversityTrainingFilms.com

Streaming rentals now available for extended rental periods:

24 hours • 72 hours • 1 week

1 month • 6 months • 1 year

StirFry Seminars & Consulting makes 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 (24 hours, 72 hours, 1 week, 1 month, 6 months, 1 year). Please note StirFry Seminars' Copyright and Use Agreement prior to purchase.

Purchase DVD copies of our diversity training films at:
www.stirfryseminars.com/store

WE'VE LOWERED OUR PRODUCT PRICES ACROSS THE BOARD!

Newly Discounted Prices!

All films \$50 (or less) and other products \$25 (or less)

www.stirfryseminars.com/store

or call us for a product catalog

510-204-8840 x 100



CROSS-CULTURAL FACILITATION SKILLS

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

Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah & Rainbow Markell /All Welcome

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 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.

Two sessions to choose from:

June 19-23 or July 17-21, 2019

Wednesday 2 pm-9 pm;

Thurs-Sat: 8 am - 5 pm; Sunday 8 am-2 pm

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

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

STIRFRY CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

May 30, 2019 Portland, OR	Culturally Responsive Techniques for Allies • National Conference on Race & Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE) Open to the Public
June 3-9, 2019 ** Berkeley, CA	Mindful Facilitation Certificate 1-Year Program Begins! (June 2019-June 2020) Register Today: www.stirfryseminars.com/certification
June 19-23, 2019 ** and July 17-21, 2019 Berkeley, CA	Cross-Cultural Facilitation Skills for Diversity Trainers, Educators & Therapists (all welcome)
Sept. 5 & 6, 2019 Bethel, AK	Mindfully Resolving Conflicts in the Classroom; Creating a Culturally Responsive School Community; Let's Get Real About Racism & Internalized Racism Lower Kuskokwim School District Conference Not Open to the Public

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

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