

THE GREATEST CHALLENGE FOR DIVERSITY TRAINERS: LACK OF FACILITATION SKILLS



For the past thirty-five years I have come to realize that so many Human Resource, DEI, managers, directors, and diversity trainers/presenters are not trained on how to facilitate diversity conflicts and confrontations. What they are often hired for is organizing ethnic luncheons and speakers, presenting the latest diversity models and power points, and, of course, setting up colorful displays celebrating Black History, Asian Heritage, Cinco de Mayo and other ethnic holidays.

What is lacking are realistic, substantive trainings on how to actually have authentic and intimate conversations on racism, sexism, queer issues and so many others that would allow for the anguish, feelings of being trivialized, invalidated, and attacked - to finally being heard and understood.

I think the fear of going deeper is two-fold: What and how to facilitate these intense feelings and also having to face whether or not their institution is actually *willing* to change. Sound familiar? I would like you to think about what you would do/say in this classroom situation (below) if you were the teacher or the facilitator, as well as what comes up for you:

Frank, a Black student, says in class: “How come we aren’t discussing what happened to George Floyd? I feel like I can’t think about anything else until justice is done!”

Tony, a white student yells out, “I don’t know why you said that, Frank. You people always play the ‘victim card’ when all the police are trying to do is to protect themselves and us!”

Frank looks away trying to contain his anguish.

Mr. Wright, a white teacher, tries to calm the class: “I think this is something that needs to be discussed when everyone is more calm and not so emotional. Please turn to page 32.”

Two black students, Mary and Tania, shake their heads in disgust and refuse to open their books. Janice, a white student, starts to panic when she notices Mary and Tania not opening up their books.

Now, though this is an educational scenario, it could just as well be in a corporate or social agency setting, too. Only we’d be sending Frank and Tony to HR or to their department head or manager to work it out, but definitely not deal with it in the room or meeting. The deafening silence of how to deal with these types of situations is replicated in almost every workplace and educational institution in this country. So, what can we do differently? I would like to propose another way out and in. As part of our StirFry Mindful Trainings, we would use these Advanced Mindful techniques to help Frank and Tony reconnect:

1. So, Tony, what I heard you say was that you *don’t know* why Frank said what he did because the police are here to protect themselves and us. Would you like to find out *why Frank said what he did*? What would be a good question you could ask Frank if you wanted to find out why he said what he did? (this re-directs Tony from being disconnected to re-engaging with Frank and vice versa)
2. Frank, share with Tony why you said what you did. Tell Tony what *angered* you about the way he responded to you? What hurt you about the way he responded to you? What was *familiar* about the way he responded to you? (this *empowers* Frank with the opportunity to share his *full range* of feelings without having to code switch out of the fear of being stereotyped as violent/abusive)
3. Finally Frank, tell Tony how he could have responded to you *differently* so you would have felt heard, understood and believed. (this last step allows for change and healing to take place)

You see, when we respond with curiosity, not blaming or being defensive, the possibility for empathy and understanding emerges. A white man recently said at the end of one of my workshops: *It’s all about love*. To which I replied: *Yes, but love is just the beginning. Love is enlivened and made real when it is transformed into curiosity, taking responsibility, practicing empathy, self-reflection and the willingness to change. To me, it is where the road ends, that the path begins.*

Lee Mun Wah

Upcoming Weekend StirFry Workshop

Mindful Facilitation Beginning Level Saturday and Sunday, September 17 & 18, 2022

8 am – 12 noon (PST)

Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah

\$440 for 2-day session (price includes required materials/shipping)

In one of our most popular online trainings, Lee Mun Wah will demonstrate the myriad of ways that facilitation, when practiced using Mindful Techniques, can become a useful tool in helping therapists, educators, and counselors to become more culturally competent and skilled in developing and processing individual and group issues from a diversity and therapeutic lens, using filmed vignettes, role plays, diversity films, personal stories, and interactive exercises.

Some of the Mindfulness Techniques that you will learn are:

- The Art of Intent & Impact
- Advanced Interventions for Individual/Group Interactions
- How to De-escalate Cultural Conflicts Within Seconds
- 21 Ways to Stop a Diversity Conversation
- How to Transform Anger into Compassion and Curiosity
- Ways to Diminish Fear Through Curiosity & Self-Reflection
- How to Create a Culturally Competent Community In Our Classrooms & Faculty
- Ways to Develop Empathy & Trust Using a Diversity Lens
- The Art of Noticing What Is Missing
- How to Transform A Disconnection into A Reconnection

"In 2021 I attended your weekend Advanced Mindful Facilitation course. One of my cherished takeaways is learning to work with people's identifiers. For example, shortly following the workshop I spoke with my mother, and we discussed a stressful situation that she once experienced. I asked my mom, "What was that experience like for you?" She shared a response. Then I asked, "As a Black person, I wonder what that experience was like for you?" And she shared different responses related to race. Then I followed with, "As a woman, I wonder what that experience was like for you?" I listened intently as she shared aspects of her experience as a woman. Noticing, asking, and remembering people's identifiers has been useful and transformational in my daily interactions. I find that it creates openings and permissions to talk more deeply, and it creates opportunities for healing and connection."

—Eric Amani Lackie

More Mindful Facilitation Training Opportunities

MINDFUL FACILITATION INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Saturday and Sunday, October 15 & 16, 2022

8am – 12 noon (PST)

\$440 for both days (price includes required materials/shipping)

Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah

More Info & Registration at stirfryonline.com

MINDFUL FACILITATION ADVANCED LEVEL

Saturday and Sunday, November 12 & 13, 2022

8am – 12 noon (PST)

\$440 for both days (price includes required materials/shipping)

Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah

More Info & Registration at stirfryonline.com

Full StirFry 2022 Workshop Schedule

We offer exciting options for everyone, no matter what your experience level.

Check out **StirFry Online** for workshop dates and details for all levels.

Our event schedule can be found at stirfryseminars.com/events

REGISTRATION AND full schedule of ALL StirFry Workshops
including *Tea Time with Lee Mun Wah* at stirfryonline.com

