



# **Diversity in the Workplace**

**Federal Edition**

**M. Kay duPont, CSP, CPDT**

Foreword by Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas

# **Diversity in the Workplace: Communication Is the Key**

M. Kay duPont, CSP, CPDT

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## About the Author

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Kay has won many awards for her speaking and training, and has earned the prestigious Certified Speaking Professional designation from National Speakers Association and the Certified Professional Development Trainer designation from the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance, and Instruction.

In addition to *Diversity in the Workplace: Communication is the Key*, she has written two other successful business books – *Don't Let Your Participles Dangle in Public!* and *Business Etiquette and Professionalism*, and is a contributing author to *Chocolate For A Woman's Soul*, which hit the *USA Today* Best Seller List. Her latest book, *Loving Mr. Lincoln: The Personal Diaries of Mary Todd Lincoln*, is historical fiction at its finest.

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## Introduction

As the U.S. population has become increasingly diverse, so has the U.S. workplace. The federal government's Workforce 2000 study and the Census Bureau assure us that these population changes will continue for many years.

To succeed in our multicultural society, your organization must value the differences of our diverse population, respect the individuality of all employees and customers, and maintain a climate in which everyone is treated with dignity. To do this, you need to understand the current demographics of America and its businesses and anticipate tomorrow's population. You also need to understand how your words and actions in today's diverse workplace and marketplace affect your bottom line, and you need to maintain and exhibit a positive outlook on diversity.

Everyone in business today needs to better understand other cultures, as well as other age groups, gender groups, and lifestyle groups. We also need to be acutely aware of possible offenses against others, especially people we work with. There are many issues that can create misunderstandings, including racial, cultural, sexual, physical, mental, and verbal issues. To be totally effective and avoid unintentional offense, you need to understand the effects of perception, cultural background, discrimination, and prejudice.

*Diversity in the Workplace* will make you more aware of the ways we can offend others; help you recognize your blind spots; provide you with ways to avoid verbal, social, and written mistakes; help you learn how to talk about your differences and your similarities; and give you new ways to deal with and relate to people.

It deals with human issues and relationships—perception, stepping on toes, personal biases, confronting prejudice against you and others, and recognizing when to laugh instead of fight. (Too much sensitivity can be as bad as too much intolerance.) And, while this book is primarily about diversity in the workplace, the information applies to all areas of work and community life.

## Foreword

As I have worked in the arenas of Diversity and Managing Diversity over the past 12 years, I have concluded that these topics are complex and that most of us have considerable maturing to do in these areas. I have also noted that this maturation process is a journey that requires considerable time (multiple years) and effort from most of us. Finally, I have found that no step is more important than the first one on the journey, and that the nature of that first step varies with each of us. It is for these reasons that I am encouraged by *Diversity in the Workplace: Communication Is the Key*.

*Diversity in the Workplace* can serve as an effective introduction to workforce diversity—a good first step in the maturation process—in part, because it begins at the point where many persons seeking initial clarity about diversity are in their thinking. For those readers seeking to take the first step, the book will provide insights and, most importantly, provoke reflection.

I often nodded my head in agreement as I read *Diversity in the Workplace*; at other times, I responded, “Yes, but . . .” or “Not necessarily.” I believe that my reactions reflect the varied nature of this subject. My hope and desire is that, upon completing this book, readers will realize that their new understanding is only the tip of the iceberg—the first step in what promises to be an ongoing process of maturation in thinking and skills. Ideally, readers will be motivated to seek other works addressing diversity, and as they do, they will discover the richness and complexity of the topic. They will recognize that they indeed are on a journey, and will appreciate even more the first step offered by Kay duPont’s book.

I wish the reader much success on the maturation journey.

—Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas  
American Institute for Managing Diversity

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# Chapter *One*

## *What Diversity Really Means*

### Chapter Objectives

- ▶ Define *diversity*.
- ▶ Realize the importance of learning to accept and work with different types of people.
- ▶ Recognize the changing composition of American society.
- ▶ Deal more effectively with the changing demographics.

**Successful organizations realize that people's differences can be their strength.**

**D**iversity . . . Everyone seems to be talking about it. Businesses offer training on it, politicians support it, the media salutes it. But what exactly is diversity? Is it race? cultural background? personality type? The answer is yes—and much more. Some people let diversity get in the way of their relationships with other people. But successful organizations realize that people's differences can be their strength—if they combine their skills, experiences, and ideas while still valuing each other as individuals. As Abraham Lincoln said, “United we stand, divided we fall.”



### Take a Moment

What do you think *diversity* is? Write your own definition.

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### Diversity Means Differences

Differences are what diversity is all about. Although many organizations are now offering diversity training for their employees, diversity is not really a skill or something for which you can be trained. *Diversity* simply means “differences,” and in this book it means “differences in people.” Whether diversity becomes an asset or a liability to you and your organization depends on how you use it.

Diversity can give us a distinct advantage in the workplace—and in the world. Minorities or “the oppressed” aren’t the only ones who gain from a diverse environment. Each of us benefits from the depth and vitality that diversity offers. There is very little wisdom in putting together a group of people who all have the same looks, feelings, and thought processes. If we did that, at least *half* of us would be useless.

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**In this book,  
*diversity* means  
“differences in  
people.”**

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### A Story of Diversity

Once upon a time, there lived twin princes. Although they were twins, one prince was fair and one was dark. And their personalities were as diverse as their coloring. One prince thought more, one prince felt more. One related to the world through his logic, one through his intuition. One liked to make decisions, one liked to leave things open. One was introverted, one was extroverted. The twins weren’t bothered by these differences; each drew comfort from knowing that what each was not, the other was.

As the princes grew, their subjects worried about having two heirs to one seat of power, so they tried to determine which boy was stronger and wiser so he could inherit the throne. What foolishness, the princes thought. We are neither strong nor weak, wise nor stupid. We are only *different*. We were made to rule together.

When the king died, the people of the kingdom wondered who should rule. For neither prince had turned out to be better than the other—just different. Finally, the princes decided to divide the kingdom. One chose to take the majority of the land. He said his riches lay in the wealth of the earth. The other chose to inherit the majority of the citizens. His riches, he said, lay in the hearts of his people.

## ● What Diversity Really Means

After the kingdoms were divided, the people who lived in each one suffered. One kingdom had great resources but not enough workers to harvest them. The other kingdom had many hands to do the harvesting but not enough resources.

Eventually, news of the kingdoms reached an old wizard who lived far away. Saddened, but not surprised, the wizard carved two magic mirrors. When she was finished, she stood before one of the mirrors and cast a spell, saying, "The more you are like others, the more they will like you." Then she stood before the other mirror and cast a second spell, saying, "The more you give others what they need, the more they will give you what you need." She sent one mirror to each king. At first, the kings were delighted with the beautiful mirrors. But they became angry when they discovered that whenever one of them looked in his mirror, he saw his brother instead of himself. Gradually, they overcame their anger and began to watch the mirrors—and each other—more often. One brother saw his twin care for his kingdom by caring for his people. The other brother saw his twin care for his people by caring for his land. Finally, they remembered again that one of them wasn't stronger, or better, or wiser—just different.

One day, the inevitable happened—the kings stood before their mirrors at the same time. They were so surprised to look into each other's eyes that, for a moment, each froze. Then one king whispered, "The more you are like others, the more they will like you." The other replied, "The more you give others what they need, the more they will give you what you need." Then one king smiled, and one king laughed. They held out their arms and stepped into the mirrors. In the middle of a road, in the middle of the two kingdoms, one king emerged from the mirrors. The two kingdoms became one again as well, and the people were healed. And far away, an old wizard smiled.

(Story adapted from *The Two Kings*, © Diane Cory)

Diversity is challenging, yes, but it's also richer, livelier, more fun, and ultimately more profitable. If the members of your organization don't recognize that diversity is an issue that affects your ability to operate, your organization can only suffer. As new technologies make distance meaningless, our diversity complements our role in the new international order. If your organization doesn't accept and embrace diversity and teach employees how to thrive in a diverse culture, how will it maintain relevance?

### Take a Moment

Every organization reflects diversity in a variety of ways. What are some of the differences you notice in the people you work with? Does your organization do anything to help people accept and adapt to each other's differences?

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### The End of the Melting Pot

Americans have traditionally thought of their society as a “melting pot” in which everyone embraced the same culture and values. That model may have worked well for previous generations, when people spent their whole lives in one place or migrated in groups, because most of the people living and working in particular areas were indeed alike. But our world is far more mobile. Developments like jet aircraft, satellite TV, and the Internet are bringing diverse groups of people closer than we'd ever dreamed possible.

Today, American society is more like my mother's vegetable soup than a melting pot. Her soup has an overall flavor and “feeling,” but I can still easily see and taste the potatoes, the carrots, the meat, the beans, and all the other vegetables. Although they exist happily together in the pot and contribute

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**Today,  
American  
society is more  
like vegetable  
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melting pot.**

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## ● What Diversity Really Means

**Members of numerous ethnic and cultural groups don't want to become part of a melted whole; they want their tastes, looks, and textures to remain unique.**

to the success of the soup, they are still very different. I don't have any trouble telling the potatoes from the tomatoes.

As of July 2004, the U.S. has 265 million individual "ingredients" in its soup, each demanding his or her own rights. Members of numerous ethnic and cultural groups don't want to become part of a melted whole; they want their tastes, looks, and textures to remain unique. Perhaps for the first time in history, people are openly expressing their identities and rejoicing in their cultures without fear of being judged.

Unfortunately, these changes can also cause problems in our relationships. You may suddenly find yourself living and working alongside people who hold attitudes and values different from yours. You may even discover that you have biases or prejudices you never knew existed. Being around people who look, believe, or act differently from you may make you feel uncomfortable. You might even be self-conscious when people from other cultures don't act as you would—or as you think they should.

Since the predominant culture usually thinks of itself as "right," it's hard for some Americans to recognize their prejudices against others. If you are a member of a minority culture or new to the U.S., you may become angry or frustrated with that attitude. Or you may feel that nobody listens to you or that you're not being taken seriously.

Dominant cultures, however, can lose their dominant status. This is happening today to the white, male-oriented culture of the U.S. workforce. Most U.S. trade, industry, business, and government organizations have been dominated by white males, both in numbers and values, since the “colonies” were formed. But, in 2004, white non-Hispanic males made up only 37% of the civilian labor force over the age of 16.

Part of the reason for this decline is that, during the last decade, the Asian, African American, American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic populations have been increasing in the U.S., while the Caucasian population has been declining. Nearly one out of every four Americans in the 1990 Census claimed African, Asian, Hispanic, or American Indian/Alaska Native ancestry, compared to only one in five in the 1980 Census. By 2050, “average” U.S. residents will trace their descent to Africa, Asia, the Hispanic areas, the Pacific Islands, Arabia, the Americas—almost anywhere but white Europe.

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**During the last decade, the Asian, African American, and Hispanic populations have been increasing in the U.S., while the Caucasian population has been declining.**

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## **Self-Check: The Changing Face of America**

Take the following quiz to see how much you really know about the changing face of America. Answers are found on pages 21 and 22.

1. Approximately what percentage of the U.S. population is listed in the 2000 Census as one-race black/African American?  
a) 12%                      b) 25%                      c) 38%                      d) 42%
2. Since Census 2000, the Hispanic population has increased by what percent?  
a) 20%                      b) 38%                      c) 40%                      d) 53%
3. By the year 2110, what percent of newcomers into the job market will be non-Hispanic white males?  
a) 10.0%                      b) 25.1%                      c) 32.6%                      d) 46.9%
4. What percent of people in the U.S. was born between 1955 and 1965?  
a) 10%                      b) 15%                      c) 20%                      d) 25%
5. Approximately what percentage of women between the ages of 20 and 34 are in the workforce as of 2004?  
a) 32%                      b) 58%                      c) 63%                      d) 75%
6. Approximately what percentage of all women over 16 are now in the workforce?  
a) 30%                      b) 52%                      c) 63%                      d) 75%
7. What are the average earnings of a year-round full-time worker in America?  
a) \$30,000    b) \$38,000    c) \$43,000    d) \$47,000
8. As of 1997, how many minority-owned businesses were in the U.S.?  
a) 1 million                      b) 2 million                      c) 3 million                      d) 4 million

## What Diversity Really Means ●



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9. As of July 2004, what percent of the U.S. population is American Indian/Alaska Native?  
a) 10%      b) 12%      c) 14%      d) 20%
10. What percent of U.S. households listed themselves in the 2000 Census as gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender?  
a) 10%      b) 13%      c) 25%      d) 75%
11. To be protected under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, you must be at least:  
a) 40 years old      b) 50 years old  
c) 60 years old      d) 70 years old
12. As of 2002, the median age for first marriages is:  
a) 17      b) 21      c) 25      d) 26
13. How many interracial married couples (including all races) does the 2000 Census report?  
a) 2 million      b) 1 million      c) 1.2 million      d) 3.3 million
14. Approximately how many people listed "Other" as their racial category in the 2000 Census?  
a) 2 million      b) 7 million      c) 6.8 million      d) 9.8 million
15. The largest number of immigrants to the U.S. comes from what country?  
a) Mexico      b) Vietnam      c) India      d) Philippines
16. Of the 73% of Americans who indicated a single ancestry on the 2000 Census, which country boasts the largest heritage?  
a) France      b) Sudan      c) Denmark      d) Germany
17. What percentage of the U.S. population aged five and older speaks a language other than English at home?  
a) 5%      b) 12%      c) 18%      d) 25%

### Accepting These Changes Is Critical

These statistics show that the potential for cross-cultural miscommunication is great. They also reflect the change that diversity is bringing to our culture, and the challenges that change poses for each of us.

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**Change can be hard to accept, but it's always been a part of life.**

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Change can be hard to accept, but it's always been a part of life in this country. In 1829, Martin Van Buren, then the governor of New York, wrote to President Andrew Jackson: "The canal system of this country is being threatened by the spread of a new form of transportation known as railroads. As you may well know, railroad carriages are pulled by engines at the enormous speed of 15 miles per hour. In addition to endangering life and limb of passengers, they roar and snort their way through the countryside. The Almighty certainly never intended that people should travel at such breakneck speed."

In today's mobile world, Van Buren's concerns sound quaint, but many people are expressing the same type of fear about diversity. Some people go through life totally oblivious to the differences in people and are unwilling to change when they do notice. Why? Because it's easier to fade into the woodwork, run with the pack, keep birds of a feather together, and never have to deal with our differences. That attitude can kill a business or a career very quickly.

Many years after Martin Van Buren wrote his letter, President John F. Kennedy said, "Change is the law of life. Those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future." Industry leaders have always known that adjustment to change is essential for businesses to survive and grow. The same is true of governments, countries, and individuals like you and me. Each of us has to develop our ability to deal with the changes diversity brings and the way they affect our lives. We have to resist the normal human tendency to want things to stay the same. We can't fight change or diversity, and we shouldn't fear it or feel negative about it. Change is growth, and diversity is positive. We'd be out of a job without them!



### Take a Moment

Think of a time when you had to deal with change in your life. How did you handle it? Did you find the change stressful or exciting? What did you do to cope? Could any of the same strategies help you deal effectively with the changes diversity can bring to your workplace?

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### Four Steps to Dealing with Diversity

As the world grows smaller, functioning in a diverse work environment will be as much a part of our jobs as filing or computing. The key to dealing successfully with diversity is open, honest communication. In a diverse workplace, we should all feel free to be ourselves—while treating others with respect. We should be able to tell each other when something bothers us—without overreacting. Relationships, especially in business, grow stronger with discussion and compromise. We can all work together more effectively by following these four easy steps:

- ◆ **Understand and respect individual differences.**  
Keep an open mind toward others who are different from you. Remember that not everyone sees things the same way you do.
- ◆ **Be assertive.**  
Let other people know how you want to be treated, and don't be afraid to speak up if another's actions make you uncomfortable. How will people know that you find a particular expression or behavior offensive unless you tell them? And, if someone has the courage and sensitivity to tell

**The key to dealing successfully with diversity is open, honest communication.**

## ● What Diversity Really Means

you how you've offended them, don't get defensive—be thankful. The only way you can correct the situation is through honest communication. Don't say, "That's not what I meant! What's the matter with you?" Say, "I'm sorry you heard it that way. That's really not what I meant. Can I clarify and tell you what I did mean?"

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**Everyone is responsible for workplace behavior.**

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- ◆ **Learn how others want you to treat them.**  
Use the New Golden Rule (sometimes called the Platinum Rule): Treat others the way they would like to be treated. If you're confused about how to pronounce an unfamiliar name, or whether a person would rather be called black or African American, ASK. Your question will not only help you learn how to avoid misunderstandings and conflict but also will communicate a respect that will strengthen your relationships.
- ◆ **Act as a force for change.**  
Everyone is responsible for workplace behavior. If you encounter an example of discrimination or prejudice report the behavior to your supervisor, other official, or civil rights office. Attitudes may not change overnight, but you can change behavior, and that's the first step.

We will explore these steps further throughout the rest of this book. In the next chapter, we will discuss some of the factors that make up our individual differences. In Chapter 3, we will consider the attitudes and behaviors that keep us from being able to accept and respect those differences. Chapter 4 offers strategies for communicating effectively with people from a variety of cultures and backgrounds, and Chapter 5 presents ways you can make your own communication needs and preferences known. We will conclude with suggestions for ways you can continue to act as a force for change in developing and maintaining a diverse workplace.

## What Diversity Really Means ●

As Ralph Waldo Emerson observed, fear springs from ignorance. Understanding more about how people are similar and different will help us overcome our fear of diversity and learn to see our differences as strengths instead of weaknesses.

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We have an American problem. It can only be solved by all Americans working together . . . . I want you to find strength in your diversity. Let the fact that you are black or yellow or white be a source of pride and inspiration to you. Draw strength from it. Let it be someone else's problem, but never yours. Never hide behind it or use it as an excuse for not doing your best. We all have to live here together . . . . Divided, fighting among ourselves, walking our separate lines of diversity, we are as weak as newborn babies.

*Gen. Colin Powell  
Former Chair, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff  
U.S. Secretary of State, 2000-*

## ● What Diversity Really Means



### Self-Check: Chapter 1 Review

Answers appear on page 103.

1. We can define *diversity* as:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What are four steps to help us handle diversity and work together more effectively?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Successful organizations realize that people's differences can be their \_\_\_\_\_

4. Today, the U.S. is much more like \_\_\_\_\_ than a melting pot.

5. Ralph Waldo Emerson said that fear springs from \_\_\_\_\_.

What we need in the United States is not division. What we need in the United States is not hatred. What we need in the United States is not violence or lawlessness, but love and wisdom and compassion toward one another. And a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or they be black. Let us dedicate ourselves to what the Greeks wrote so many years ago: To tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world, let us dedicate ourselves to that and say a prayer for our country and our people.

*Robert F. Kennedy*  
*Former U.S. Attorney General and U.S. Senator*

## The Changing Face of America Quiz Answers

1

1. *Approximately what percentage of the U.S. population is listed in the 2000 Census as one-race black or African American?*  
Answer: a) 12%, almost 13% if you include those who listed themselves as dual race. People of color (Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander) comprise 24% of today's Americans.
2. *Since Census 2000, the Hispanic population has increased by what percent?*  
Answer: c) 40%, about 16 million people. In fact, the population of Hispanics (who may be of any race) reached almost 40 million in July 2003 and is expected to increase another 18% by 2010. The number of people who reported being Asian grew 12.5%, to 13.5 million. Following Asians were Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders (up 5.8%), Blacks/African Americans (up 4.4%), American Indians/Alaska Natives (up 3.3%), and Whites (up 2.8%).
3. *By the year 2110, what percent of newcomers into the job market will be non-Hispanic white males?*  
Answer: a) 10%.
4. *What percent of people in the U.S. was born between 1955 and 1965?*  
Answer: d) 25%. There are 45 million of these 40- to 50-year-olds (baby boomers) in the U.S., and they are still changing the economic and social structure of America.
5. *Approximately what percentage of women between the ages of 20 and 34 are in the workforce as of 2004?*  
Answer: a) 32%. Because these are women's childbearing years, this increase is affecting the way companies treat child care and maternity/paternity leave.

## ● What Diversity Really Means

6. *Approximately what percentage of all women over 16 are now in the workforce?*  
Answer: c) 63%. John Naisbitt, author of *Megatrends*, believes the changing role of women in our society is the most significant change in this century. Sixty-nine percent of all working-age men (over 16) are in the workforce.
7. *What are the average earnings of a year-round full-time worker in America?*  
Answer: c) \$43,000
8. *As of 1997, how many minority-owned businesses were in the U.S.?*  
Answer: c) In 1997, there were 3 million minority-owned businesses in the U.S., employing 4.5 million people and generating \$591 billion in revenues. These firms made up 15% of the nation's 21 million nonfarm businesses, employed 4% of its workers, and generated 3% of its receipts. The percentage of ownership of these businesses is: Hispanics/Latinos, 40%; Asian/Pacific Islanders, 30%; African Americans/Blacks, 27%, American Indians/Alaska Natives, 7%.
9. *As of July 2004, what percent of the U.S. population is American Indian/Alaska Native?*  
Answer: c) 14%, including those also listed as multi-race.
10. *What percent of U.S. households listed themselves in the 2000 Census as gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender?*  
Answer: c) 13%. Over 600,000 couples identified themselves as members of same-sex couples in the 2000 Census, and almost 13% of the households listed themselves as gay or lesbian.
11. *To be protected under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, you must be at least:*  
Answer: a) 40 years old.
12. *As of 2002, the median age for the first marriages is:*  
Answer: d) 26.
13. *How many interracial married couples (including all races) does the 2000 Census report?*  
Answer: d) 3.3 million, 6% (up from 2.9% in 1990).

14. *Approximately how many people listed "Other" as their racial category in the 2000 Census?*

Answer: a) 2 million, 6.6% of the population.

15. *The largest number of immigrants to the U.S. comes from what country?*

Answer: a) Mexico. In 2000, over 16 million foreign-born people in America were from Latin America, representing 52% of the total foreign-born population. Of those, 11.2 million were from Central America (including Mexico with 9.2 million immigrants), 3 million were from the Caribbean, and 1.9 million were from South America. The foreign-born from Asia and Europe accounted for 26% of the immigration and 16% of the total foreign-born population. As a percentage of the population, immigrants now account for more than 1 in 10 residents, the highest percentage in 70 years, according to a 2000 report from the Center for Immigration Studies.

16. *Of the 73% of Americans who indicated a single ancestry on the 2000 Census, which country boasts the largest heritage?*

Answer: d) Germany (15%), followed by Ireland (11%), England (9%), Italy (6%), Poland (3%), and France (3%). Nearly 11% of those participating in 2000 Census claimed an ancestry other than Anglo-Saxon Europe and, as of 2002, the estimated foreign-born population included 32.5 million people (more than 11% of the people now living in the U.S.).

17. *What percentage of the U.S. population aged five and older speaks a language other than English at home?*

Answer: c) 18%, with the most-spoken being Spanish (10.7% of the population speaks Spanish at home).

# Chapter *Two*

## *Factors That Create Diversity*

### Chapter Objectives

- ▶ Identify the factors of diversity.
- ▶ Recognize different personality styles and adjust to them.
- ▶ Adjust your assertiveness level to match someone else's.
- ▶ Deal more effectively with the opposite gender.

**Diversity is much more than skin color, gender, or background.**

**D**iversity is much more than skin color, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or background. It's internal and external. Skin color is the result of the level of pigment in our skin; it's a biological event. It doesn't determine how we think, feel, or believe. Gender is random gene selection; we had no choice. It doesn't decide our goals, ambitions, or careers. As children, we learn about morals, values, and religious beliefs. But these may be relearned, changed, and adjusted over the course of our lives. Each of us is diverse in many ways—chosen and random—and each of us brings many qualities to the workforce and the world in general.

My father is a Catholic from the North, and my mother is a Baptist from the South. I am Jewish. My grandparents were French, English, Irish, and American Indian. I am American by birth and Southern by choice, but I've traveled extensively and worked in many other countries. And now, my doctor says I am "chronologically gifted" and "poundage enhanced"! Am I different from you in a lot of ways? What other factors could I have listed?



### **Take a Moment**

List as many factors as you can that go into diversity—all the things that make us different as human beings:

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What types of diversity are present in you? in someone you work closely with?

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### **What Makes Us Diverse?**

When we put all people of one color, gender, or ethnic group into one category, we disregard the many other ways in which people are diverse. Many of the factors that create diversity may not be immediately visible: personality style, thinking style, processing style, assertiveness level, religion, values, energy level, habits, likes and dislikes, education and knowledge, goals and ambitions, political views, lifestyle, sexual orientation, social status, job titles, disability, geographic location, income, work experience/work style, skills language, age, communication style, and many more. We can find diversity even in a group of 25-year-old, native-born, white males of the same religion, size, and coloring. *Diversity* simply means “differences,” and no two people are identical.

**Many of the factors that create diversity may not be immediately visible.**

## ● Factors That Create Diversity

Some of the ways people are diverse include:

- ◆ Processing Style
- ◆ Assertiveness Level
- ◆ Age
- ◆ Gender
- ◆ Race/Ethnicity
- ◆ Disability
- ◆ Sexual Orientation

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***Processing style is the way people listen, receive, think about, and accept information.***

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### **Processing Style as a Factor in Diversity**

*Processing style* is the way people listen, receive, think about, and accept information. It is subconscious and automatic, although it might change because of age or disability. We can identify three major categories of processing styles:

- ◆ Seers (visual)
- ◆ Hearers (auditory)
- ◆ Feelers (kinesthetic)

“Seers” prefer to receive information visually. They like to read, and they want information given to them in written form. If you call a highly visual person on the phone and say, “Here is what I need you to do,” he or she might say, “Would you send me a fax on that?” No matter how many times you *tell* them, they need to see it.

“Hearers” will ask for information in an auditory form, usually the phone. If you send them a note, they will say, “Yes, I saw it, but I didn’t have time to work on it. Can we talk about it now?” No matter how many e-mails you send them, they’ll still want to *hear* it.

“Feelers” want to meet about the matter. They like to see your face, be able to *feel* your presence. If you write or call, they’ll still want to get together.

How do you figure out which style you're dealing with? All you have to do is watch and listen—most people broadcast their styles (particularly when they are *against* an idea). Seers use visual words. “I can't *visualize* how that would work.” “I need the *big picture* here.” They can be listening to a radio and say, “Did you see what he said?” They may also be reading or writing when you see them. They have notes in their pockets and purses. They enjoy reading, watching TV, and playing intellectual games.

Hearers use auditory words: “I like the way that *sounds*.” “Are we *in tune* on this issue?” If they're not listening to music or tapes, they may be whistling or humming. Sometimes they might not even realize they are doing it. They enjoy word games, conversation, and movies.

Feelers use feeling words: “This is a *touchy* issue.” “This doesn't *feel* right.” They also like the sensory perception of touching things and people. They like to hold items while they talk. And, if they compliment your clothing, they may reach out and touch it at the same time. They will also wear soft, sometimes fuzzy, materials. They enjoy sports, concerts, plays, and dancing.

If you need additional proof of a coworker's processing style, ask a leading question: “How does this idea *look* to you?” If the person is a seer, he or she will say “Fine” or “It looks great.” If your coworker answers in a mode you didn't use (“*Sounds* good to me”), try a question in that mode: “I'm glad you like it. I have another angle I'd like you to *listen to*. How does this *sound*?” If you get another response in the same mode, you've probably found that person's favorite style. Try communicating with that person in that style as much as possible.

Of course, people cross over from one style to another, but researchers say that we stay in our own comfort style 70% of the time. So identifying and adapting to someone's primary style can be an effective way of communicating with them. Remember: The more you are like others, the more they will like you.

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**Seers use visual words, hearers use auditory words, and feelers use feeling words.**

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**We stay in our own comfort style 70% of the time.**

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## ● Factors That Create Diversity



### Take a Moment

Ask a friend or coworker to describe something—a vacation, a picture, a person. Listen to the type of language they use. Do you hear visual words, auditory words, or feeling words?

***Assertiveness* can be defined as the power we use to make our needs, wants, and desires known to others.**

### Assertiveness Level as a Factor in Diversity

Assertiveness is another factor that can influence diversity. *Assertiveness* can be defined as the power we use to make our needs, wants, and desires known to others. (*Assertiveness* should not be confused with *aggressiveness*, which involves trying to dominate other people.)

People express assertiveness in many different ways: through tone and volume of voice, gestures, physical size and posture, and by what they say. As you might guess, different people express different levels of assertiveness. A person who speaks in a high, soft voice while looking at the ground would be perceived as less assertive than a person who stands straight, looks a person in the eye, and speaks loudly.

We can represent these differences in assertiveness on a scale. Those who express less power vocally and physically would be on the lower end of the scale. People on the high end of the scale seem to have more power—conveying their needs, wants, and desires more effectively and getting more results.

#### Assertiveness Scale

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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As with other types of diversity, these variations in assertiveness can cause problems if we aren't aware of them. The farther apart two people are on the assertiveness scale, the more potential there is for misunderstanding and conflict. A person who rates a 10 on the scale may have very little respect for a person who rates a 2, and vice versa. (Many cultures have a lower assertiveness level than others. Some may see brashness as a sign of disrespect and egotistical behavior, while others may see a lack of assertion as passivity or weakness.)

You can't change another person's level of assertiveness, but you can deal effectively with people of different assertiveness levels by adjusting your level to meet theirs. Try to determine how assertive the other person is and adjust your behavior accordingly. When speaking with people on the lower end of the scale, try lowering the volume of your voice and pausing occasionally to give them a chance to talk. When speaking with highly assertive people, increase the volume of your voice, and don't be afraid to express your opinion. Just remember, you can't change *them*; you have to change *yourself*.

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### Take a Moment

Where do you think you rank on the assertiveness scale in your normal dealings at work? Where does the coworker with whom you work most closely rank? Where does your manager rank? How can you adjust your assertiveness level to match theirs?



## Personality Type as a Factor in Diversity





Some people love to work in teams; some are loners. Some people want facts and figures before they make a decision; some go with a gut feeling. Some people are cheerful all the time; others seem to have the weight of the world on their shoulders. Throughout history, people have tried to explain differences in personality. Astrology was one early attempt that identified 12 different personality types, or signs; there have been many others.

In 1923, Dr. Carl Jung created a model based on four categories of personality types: Intuitor, Thinker, Feeler, and Sensor. Since then, many researchers have expanded on Jung's model. Today, dozens of models of personality types exist, all based on grouping behavior into four categories. Though the names used to describe the different personality types differ in each model, the personality types themselves remain the same.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If you are interested in more information on personality types, see the American Media Incorporated video *Relationship Strategies* with Dr. Tony Alessandra.

## ● Factors That Create Diversity

Read through the following descriptions, and see if you can identify yourself and your coworkers:

<p><b>Type A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong, solid, unbendable</li> <li>• Task-oriented</li> <li>• Motivated by achievement</li> <li>• Fears being taken advantage of</li> <li>• Favorite words: <i>time, more, money, deal, power</i></li> <li>• Annoyed by people who waste time</li> <li>• Takes risks, accepts challenges</li> <li>• Focuses on the bottom line</li> <li>• Speaks first, thinks later</li> <li>• Gets the job done—quickly</li> <li>• Sees the big picture easily</li> <li>• Expresses opinions freely</li> <li>• Appears rushed, insensitive</li> <li>• Not concerned with details</li> <li>• Challenges others frequently</li> <li>• Doesn't listen completely or with empathy</li> <li>• Impatient, confronting, controlling</li> <li>• Sometimes perceived as rude, overbearing</li> <li>• Extrovert</li> <li>• Aggressive</li> </ul> 	<p><b>Type B</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stolid, Impassive</li> <li>• Task-oriented</li> <li>• Highly analytical</li> <li>• Motivated by order</li> <li>• Fears losing control of own situation</li> <li>• Favorite words: <i>logic, sense, proof</i></li> <li>• Annoyed by emotion, rambling</li> <li>• Believes his/her way is only way</li> <li>• Controlled, critical, cautious</li> <li>• Concentrates on details</li> <li>• Works best under known conditions</li> <li>• Focuses on one thing at a time</li> <li>• Checks for accuracy</li> <li>• Thinks logically</li> <li>• Talks very little</li> <li>• Critiques performance (own and others')</li> <li>• Makes slow but excellent decisions</li> <li>• Sometimes perceived as unemotional</li> <li>• Introvert</li> <li>• Passive until challenged</li> </ul> 
<p><b>Type C</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light, airy, flexible</li> <li>• People-oriented</li> <li>• Motivated by recognition</li> <li>• Fears not being liked</li> <li>• Favorite words: <i>I, me</i></li> <li>• Annoyed by people who interrupt and those who don't recognize his/her talents</li> <li>• Makes decisions emotionally</li> <li>• Likes to be in contact with people</li> <li>• Makes favorable impression</li> <li>• Verbalizes, articulates well</li> <li>• Talks a lot</li> <li>• Influencing, interacting, interesting, entertaining</li> <li>• Generates enthusiasm</li> <li>• Likes to be fashionable</li> <li>• Wants to help</li> <li>• Participates in groups</li> <li>• Sometimes perceived as flighty</li> <li>• Extrovert</li> <li>• Assertive</li> </ul> 	<p><b>Type D</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steady, patient</li> <li>• Devoted to friends and family</li> <li>• People-oriented</li> <li>• Fears change</li> <li>• Favorite words: <i>we, us, others, team</i></li> <li>• Annoyed by people who disturb his/her belongings and those who don't keep their promises</li> <li>• Motivated by stability and teamwork</li> <li>• Makes decisions slowly</li> <li>• Performs accepted work pattern</li> <li>• Can remain in one place for long periods</li> <li>• Loyal and supportive</li> <li>• Specializes in one or two areas</li> <li>• Team builder</li> <li>• Concentrates on one thing at a time</li> <li>• Shows loyalty and support</li> <li>• Listens well</li> <li>• Calms excited people</li> <li>• Sometimes perceived as stubborn and slow</li> <li>• Introvert</li> <li>• Passive</li> </ul>  <p style="text-align: right;">© M. Kay duPont</p>

We all have parts of each personality type, of course, but tend to stay in one or two styles most of the time. The ideal team would consist of equal numbers of each personality: Type As to generate ideas and insist on results, Type Cs to go out and promote those ideas, Type Ds to make sure the ideas are carried out and bring stability to the group, and Type Bs to make certain that key details are covered and the project is done well.

Unfortunately, instead of capitalizing on our differences to work more effectively, we let them come between us. Can you see the potential for conflict in the following interaction between Type A Sally and Type D Jeff?

**Sally:**

You're spending too much time talking to customers. You're supposed to be stocking shelves, not visiting.

**Jeff:**

I'm just trying to keep the customers happy. Some of them have questions or just want to talk.

**Sally:**

You're not being paid to talk. Stop being so nice and get to work.

Sally doesn't realize it, but her task-oriented Type A approach has alienated people-oriented Jeff. In fact, Sally may have destroyed their relationship. As a Type A, Sally has no idea what she's done. And, because Type Ds dislike conflict, Jeff probably won't tell her.

As this example illustrates, most people don't carry a crystal ball in their pocket. The key to dealing with the different personality types is to develop all four sides of our own personalities so we can adjust ourselves to the people we meet. If Sally developed the Type D side of her personality, she'd deal more sensitively with Jeff. If Jeff developed the Type A side of his personality, he'd be more comfortable explaining himself to Sally when a communication problem arose.

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**The ideal team would consist of equal numbers of each personality.**

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**Unfortunately, instead of capitalizing on our differences to work more effectively, we let them come between us.**

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## ● Factors That Create Diversity

Here are some specific guidelines for getting along with the four personality types:

<p><b>Type A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get to the point and stick to the facts.</li><li>• Compliment their ideas and goals, not them personally.</li><li>• Motivate them with clear objectives; they won't listen to vague directions.</li><li>• Give them several options, and let them choose.</li><li>• Assure them that their time will not be wasted.</li><li>• Don't expect recognition; they don't have enough time to give praise.</li><li>• Respect their authority.</li><li>• Never be late.</li><li>• Give them more than they expected (110%), and make sure they know you did so.</li></ul> 	<p><b>Type B:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be organized and armed with facts and statistics.</li><li>• Compliment their efficiency.</li><li>• Communicate systematically.</li><li>• Motivate logically.</li><li>• Don't rush their decision-making process.</li><li>• Avoid emotion.</li><li>• Check your timing—they can only do one thing at a time.</li><li>• Don't take their attitude personally.</li><li>• Avoid small talk and personal questions.</li><li>• Don't expect compliments or gifts.</li><li>• Remind them of events and things to be done outside their field of concentration.</li><li>• Let them think the plan was their idea.</li></ul> 
<p><b>Type C:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be entertaining.</li><li>• Pay them direct compliments.</li><li>• Allow them plenty of time to state their case.</li><li>• Support their dreams and opinions.</li><li>• Summarize in writing what you both agreed to; they get so caught up being the center of attention that they sometimes forget.</li><li>• Offer incentives and testimonials as motivation.</li><li>• Listen for facts and feelings.</li><li>• Probe them with direct questions.</li><li>• Establish checkpoints or follow-up procedures.</li><li>• Let them be the center of attention.</li></ul> 	<p><b>Type D:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Show them personal interest before getting to the subject.</li><li>• Discuss their feelings along with the facts.</li><li>• Compliment their efforts, credibility, and loyalty.</li><li>• Motivate them by helping them strengthen their relationships.</li><li>• Give them a mentor.</li><li>• Actively listen and discuss alternatives slowly. (They are not dense, but it takes them time to think things through.)</li><li>• Offer personal assurances that you will stand by their decisions.</li><li>• Don't push them or make them feel like they are getting the third degree.</li></ul> 



### Take a Moment

Can you identify your dominant and secondary personality styles? How would developing the other styles in your personality help you in your work?



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### Age as a Factor in Diversity

America is getting older. A Census Bureau study predicts that the 65-and-older population will grow from 12% in 2004 to 21% by 2010. At that time, America's elderly population will total almost 87 million.

The median age of workers will rise from 35 in 2004 to 41 in 2005. Workers over the age of 45 are expected to total close to 58 million by 2005, and because of improved health, many of these workers will be over today's "retirement" age.

### Gender as a Factor in Diversity

In today's work world, men and women work side by side in careers of all kinds. For the most part, there are no more "female" jobs or "male" roles in the workplace. Consequently, men and women are asked every day to relate to each other in new (and equal) ways, and that makes some people uncomfortable. Most of us began our journey to adulthood in same-sex groups: the girls sat on one side of the room, the boys sat on the other.

Years ago, females in our society were traditionally taught to be nonaggressive, noncompetitive, submissive, and dependent; they learned to put relationships ahead of winning. Males, on the other hand, learned how to compete early in life; they were expected to be aggressive, dominant, independent, and competitive. A recent Harvard study shows that American mothers are generally more verbal with daughters than with sons, teaching their girls how to nurture and build relationships.

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**When men succeed, they are likely to praise their own abilities; women credit their success to luck, extra effort, or the contributions of others.**

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## ● Factors That Create Diversity

Other studies show that parents handle male infants more roughly than female infants and speak to them in louder voices, teaching their boys how to be tough. Parents may instill differences in many other subtle ways, but the result is the same: starkly different communication and working styles.

Given these differences in upbringing, it's surprising that men and women can communicate with each other at all. Because we tend to expect others to respond as we do and often consider differences to be "wrong," communication between the sexes holds many opportunities for wrong assumptions, frustration, and hurt feelings. But to interact effectively in our diverse workplace, we need to accept each individual as a person, not a *male* or *female*.

### Self-Check: Gender Differences

Take the following quiz to see how much you really know about how the genders communicate. Answers are found on page 44.

Indicate **True** or **False** for each statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Women talk more than men.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Women interrupt men more frequently than men interrupt women.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Men look at women more often when conversing with them than women look at men.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Women talk about a wider range of subjects than men.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. In conversation, a woman generally nods to show that she agrees with the speaker.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Women speak more politely than men.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Men and women use the same set of words.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Men are harder on themselves and blame themselves more.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Women ask more questions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Women are more intuitive than men.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. At business meetings, people are more likely to listen to men than women.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Men and women laugh at the same things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Women touch others more often.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Women confront problems more directly and are likely to bring up a problem first.



## ● Factors That Create Diversity

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**To communicate better and coexist more easily, men and women need to acknowledge their differences and appreciate where each excels.**

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So, career equality notwithstanding, men and women are different. We listen differently, talk differently, and build relationships differently. According to couples' therapist John Gray, in *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*, men and women also "think, feel, perceive, react, respond, love, need, and appreciate each other differently."

To communicate better and coexist more easily, men and women need to acknowledge their differences and appreciate where each excels. They should also consider adopting some of the communication techniques of the opposite gender. Suzette Elgin says in *The Last Word on the Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense* that in every conversation, you must make adjustments based on the listener's reaction to what you've said. There are few communication strategies that will fail more quickly than being determined to talk in a particular way—your way—no matter what else happens.

Men will never be like women, and women will never be like men. We have different ways of communicating, listening, moving, thinking, and even sleeping.

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**Both sexes need to cultivate strong, useful communication styles and rid themselves of communication habits that are not serving them well.**

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Just remember that habits can be broken. Just because Mama or Daddy communicated in a particular fashion doesn't mean you have to. Both sexes need to cultivate strong, useful communication styles and rid themselves of communication habits that are not serving them well. By learning to recognize, appreciate, and adjust for our differences—and our similarities—men and women in all types of personal and work relationships can avoid the problems that result from miscommunication.

### **Race/Ethnicity as a Factor in Diversity**

As of 2000, Blacks/African Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders and other people of color (not including Hispanics, who can be made of any race) make up 24.9% of the U.S. population. Due to higher immigration and birth rates, these minority groups are growing at a faster rate than the U.S. Caucasian population. By the year 2030, the Census Bureau estimates that people of color will make up approximately 43% of the nation's population and will claim 50% by the middle of the next century.

Even with this large increase in additional cultures to the U.S., many Americans are still reluctant to teach their children about race/ethnic diversity. When asked to describe their earliest racial/ethnic memories, both white children and children of color often report feelings of confusion, anxiety, and fear. Consider, for example, the small white child in the mall with his mother who asks, “Why is that kid black?” The embarrassed mother replies, “Shhh. Don’t say that.” The child was only attempting to make sense of a new observation, yet the mother’s attempt to silence him sends a message that it is not okay to talk about this observation (and possibly even skin color). In this example, the Caucasian child quickly became aware that questions about race or ethnicity raise adult anxiety, and as a result, may learn not to ask about, or even want to learn about or become familiar with, people who are different from him.

People of color often have early memories of name-calling or other negative interactions with other children, and sometimes with adults. They also report having had questions that went both unasked and unanswered. In a 1995 write-in survey by *USA Today*, 45% of U.S. students in grades 6 through 12 said they had experienced prejudice from their peers in the past year, with Asians reporting the highest percentage. In addition, many adults have had uncomfortable interchanges around race/ethnicity topics.

We must learn to treat people equally and objectively. We must recognize people’s differences but not allow ourselves—or others—to condemn, belittle, or discriminate because of them. The sooner we can learn to live together, the better our work and social relationships will be.

None of us should be criticized, ostracized, or demoralized for history. In order to work together, we must concentrate on our strengths and respect each other as individuals and as members of unique and different cultures. We do not have to be clones to be equals.

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**Due to higher immigration and birth rates, minority groups are growing at a faster rate than the U.S. Caucasian population.**

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**We must learn to treat people equally and objectively.**

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## ● Factors That Create Diversity

Race is an arbitrary and meaningless concept. Races among humans don't exist. If there ever was any such thing as race, there has been so much constant crisscrossing of genes for the last 500,000 years that it would have lost all meaning anyway. There are no real divisions between us, only a continuum of variations that constantly change, as we come together and separate according to the movement of human populations.

*Amoja Three Rivers  
Cultural Etiquette: A Guide for the Well-Intentioned*

### **Sexual Orientation as a Factor in Diversity**

Diversity is respecting and valuing individuals, and includes respecting an individual's sexual orientation. Once it was common practice to refuse to hire suspected homosexuals. Employees and applicants were physically threatened, verbally abused, and subjected to hostile working conditions. Today, while the practice is no longer common or legal, discrimination persists.

Sexual orientation is a workplace issue for a number of reasons, including:

- For the federal government, it's a legal mandate. The 1978 Civil Service Reform Act and Presidential Executive Order 13087 clearly establish that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the federal workplace will not be tolerated.
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals are a part of the federal workforce. Heterosexual (straight), gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender employees can be found throughout *all* workforces.
- Preventing discrimination is everyone's job. All employees need to be aware of their responsibility to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and ensure that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals are valued as part of our diverse workforce.

- Discrimination hurts productivity.
  - Fear of negative job consequences can affect gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender employees' work performances.
  - Not being treated with dignity and respect is demoralizing.
  - Time spent by managers, supervisors, and others dealing with discrimination is time not spent on productive work.

### **What if my religion says that homosexuality is morally wrong?**

The federal workforce includes a diversity of religious views, and discrimination on the basis of religion is prohibited in the federal workplace. This means that no one can, or should, ask an employee to change his or her religious beliefs on homosexuality. Conversely, this also means that religious objections to homosexuality cannot be imposed on other coworkers or be used to obstruct nondiscrimination laws, policies, and diversity activities.

### **Interacting with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender employees.**

- Refrain from gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender jokes and negative comments.
- Consider educating yourself and others about the lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people.
- Listen to what the person's life is like, and what kind of experiences he or she has had.
- Take responsibility for your own reactions—positive *and* negative.
- Try to develop trust and openness by accepting others' lifestyles.
- Defend the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender person against discrimination.

### Disability as a Factor in Diversity

According to the Census Bureau, there are almost 50 million (civilian noninstitutionalized) people over five years of age in the U.S. with disabilities, and they're not hiding anymore. As individuals with disabilities are more and more a part of society, they can still be perceived as "handicapped" or "unable"—not because of their differences but because of others' attitudes. Although individuals with disabilities have as many valid ideas and leadership abilities as the nondisabled, some nondisabled people are unable to look beyond the disability. To change existing attitudes toward those with disabilities, we need to improve communication between all involved.

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**As individuals with disabilities are more and more a part of society, they can still be perceived as "handicapped" or "unable"—not because of their differences but because of others' attitudes.**

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Disabilities are often physical and visible, but there are many hidden disabilities, like arthritis, hearing or visual impairment, cancer, or loss of a breast or some other unseen body part. There are also some personal characteristics such as height, weight, and speech pattern that are not disabilities, but can be handicapping conditions due to the way some people react to or misperceive these personal identifiers.

Organizations are sometimes afraid to hire individuals with disabilities, often because they fear that it would be too hard to let that person go if he or she didn't work out. This concern can be overcome simply by realizing that individuals with disabilities are as capable as everyone else. When someone doesn't work out, the best policy is to be up front and honest and explain why. Treating individuals who have disabilities as you treat individuals without disabilities is the goal of these civil rights laws. These laws allow people with disabilities equal opportunity to succeed and to fail the same as everyone else. People who are blind can function just as aptly and have computer skills the same as sighted persons. A person who uses a wheelchair can drive a hand-controlled car as skillfully as an able-bodied person can drive a car, and certainly being in a chair does not necessarily affect a person's computer or office skills.

If you work with someone who has a disability, learn to talk about it. You don't have to avoid the subject; a person in a wheelchair *knows* that he or she is in the chair! But do be aware and sensitive. I called for a volunteer to come onstage recently, and a woman jumped to her feet. Her seeing-eye dog jumped to



his feet at the same time, and they came bounding up the stage steps. When we were finished with the exercise, I told her I would send her a copy of one of my books as a reward for coming onstage.

As I thought about this later, I *realized* she was blind. I knew she was blind when she volunteered, but she was so lively and eager and full of fun that the realization didn't sink in until later. I could have sent the book, but because I try to be aware and sensitive, I called her and asked whether she would like a book or an audiotape. She was thrilled that I noticed our differences and wanted to send the right gift for her. If you work with someone who is visually impaired, ask them if they would like help. If you work with someone who stutters, ask them if they would like you to help with a difficult word now and then. (Most stutterers become annoyed with people who continually finish sentences for them.)

If someone has no visible problem, but has a certain habit, be sensitive enough to ask for a deeper explanation. A person who asks you to repeat your statements may be hearing impaired; a person who becomes short-winded may have heart problems; a person who is overweight may have a thyroid deficiency. Making fun of someone because they can't keep up with you in every way is a form of bigotry.

If you're the person with the disability, understand that most people will be curious in the beginning—acknowledge that rather than being defensive. In the Tennessee Williams play, *The Glass Menagerie*, the young Laura let her entire life be ruined because she had to wear a leg brace in school. She believed that no one would like her because of it. Many years later, she learned that no one could hear her brace hitting the stairs and that the boy she cared about in high school thought she was beautiful. Each of us has a disability of some sort—no one is perfect! Letting our hidden or visible differences make our life miserable, or blaming our differences for our misfortunes, is not a good idea. Learn to be outgoing, honest, and friendly. Accepting our differences makes us unique from one another and interesting to one another.

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**If you work with someone who has a disability, learn to talk about it.**

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**2**

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**If you're the person with the disability, understand that most people will be curious in the beginning—acknowledge that rather than being defensive.**

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## ● Factors That Create Diversity

### Putting the Factors Together

There is more to diversity than meets the eye. People are made up of personality style, processing style, assertiveness level, religion, values, energy level, habits, likes and dislikes, education and knowledge, goals and ambitions, political views, lifestyle, sexual orientation, social status, job titles, and many other things. No two people are identical, and even if one of us is right, the other does not have to be wrong. We must learn to accept people for who they are, not who we want them to be.

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home. So close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual persons; the neighborhood they live in; the school or college they attend; the factory, farm, or office where they work. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere.

*Eleanor Roosevelt  
Former First Lady and  
U.S. Delegate to the United Nations*

## Self-Check: Chapter 2 Review



Answers appear on page 103.

1. True or False?  
Diversity is mostly an issue of skin color and gender.
2. The three major categories of processing styles are:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. True or False?  
To work most effectively with other people, you should identify their assertiveness level and adjust your own to match.
4. Match the following personality types with their characteristics:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Type A  
\_\_\_\_\_ Type B  
\_\_\_\_\_ Type C  
\_\_\_\_\_ Type D
  - a. Task-oriented, motivated by order, concentrates on details
  - b. People-oriented, motivated by stability and teamwork, loyal and supportive
  - c. People-oriented, motivated by recognition, generates enthusiasm
  - d. Task-oriented, motivated by achievement, focused on the bottom line
5. True or False?  
People of color make up more than one fourth of the U.S. population.

### Gender Quiz Answers

1. *Women talk more than men.*  
**False:** Contrary to popular stereotypes, men actually talk more. They also talk for longer periods of time and more often than women in a mixed group. Studies like one done by linguist Ned Hershman show that men give answers that are lengthier and more involved than the questions asked. One study found that women spoke an average of three minutes when asked to describe a painting, and men averaged 13 minutes. Because of this, women often withdraw from conversations and speak less than men in mixed conversations.
2. *Women interrupt men more frequently than men interrupt women.*  
**False:** University of California researchers Donald Zimmerman and Candice West found that 75–98% of all interruptions are made by men. They also found that, after being interrupted by men, women become increasingly quiet, pausing more than normal after speaking. Men are also more likely to answer questions that are not even posed to them. And they are more likely to openly challenge and dispute what someone else says. In single-sex groups, though, men and women interrupt each other equally.
3. *Men look at women more often when conversing with them than women look at men.*  
**False:** Numerous studies show that women make better eye contact and focus on a speaker, male or female, more steadily than men. For that reason, women appear to be more attentive when listening. A study by Dr. Albert Mehrabian, reported in his book *Silent Messages*, shows that in positive interactions, women increase their eye contact. Men tend to be uncomfortable in their interactions and decrease their eye contact (except in conflict). Women also appear friendlier than men when meeting and greeting people. Women smile 93% of the time, men only 57% of the time.
4. *Women talk about a wider range of subjects than men.*  
**True:** A study by Pam Fischman of Queens College in New York verified that over 60% of the topics introduced into conversations are introduced by women. Women generally

want to talk problems out, and they use conversation to gain a sympathetic ear or understanding. Men use conversation for defining problems and finding solutions. Even though men don't bring up as many topics of conversation as women, they interrupt more, which actually gives them control of the topics.

5. *In conversation, a woman generally nods to show that she agrees with the speaker.*

**False:** Studies consistently show that women show approval by smiling. They nod to acknowledge the speaker and indicate that they are listening. Men nod when they *agree* with the speaker. As a result, men often presume that women are agreeing when they aren't, and women see men as uninterested or not listening. Sally McDonald Ginnett's research at Cornell University found that women are also more inclined to say "uh-huh" to encourage the speaker when listening. When men make listening responses, it's usually because they *disagree* with what the person is saying. As a result, men perceive women as uncritical listeners or even as flirting; women see men as arrogant.

6. *Women speak more politely than men.*

**True:** Women use more filler words, as well as "women only" constructions ("It's really just so wonderful to see how nice everyone looks; I hope you wouldn't really mind if . . ."). As a result, men don't get the true message, or they don't take women seriously. According to Mary Richie Key, an expert on women's speech, women tend to be more tentative when they speak because they generally communicate from a weaker position. In her book, *Language in a Woman's Place*, Robin Laycoff says women's use of "tag endings," such as asking a question after making a statement ("It's a lovely party, isn't it?"), adds to the image of being unsure of themselves. Women are also less likely to use command terms. They will say, "Would you mind getting me a cup of coffee?" instead of a man's more direct, "Get me a cup of coffee."

## ● Factors That Create Diversity

7. *Men and women use the same set of words.*  
**False:** Women talk about feelings, relationships, people, children, and self-improvement. Men talk about news, sports, money, business, and physical tasks. Men also tend to bring up fewer personal topics than women.
8. *Men are harder on themselves and blame themselves more.*  
**False:** Women tend to be more self-critical. They may personalize a problem, take responsibility for it, or blame themselves when they may have had no part in it at all.
9. *Women ask more questions.*  
**True:** Just as women bring up more topics in conversation, they also ask more questions. It's their way of starting or maintaining a conversation. Men generally use questions simply to get information.
10. *Women are more intuitive than men.*  
**False:** There is no truth to the myth that women have a sixth sense. They are simply better "people readers." Studies have shown that baby girls are more aware of people's faces and expressions than baby boys. This carries over into adulthood and probably explains why women can often perceive a person's emotional state better than men. Have you ever heard a woman say, "I know there's something wrong; I can see it in your face"? That's good listening and reading of nonverbal signals, not "women's intuition."
11. *At business meetings, people are more likely to listen to men than women.*  
**True:** In my experience as a professional speaker and trainer for over 25 years, I've noticed many times that male and female audiences of all sizes tend to listen more attentively to male speakers. The audiences also tend to remember more information from presentations by male speakers, even when the presentations are identical to females'. Another study showed that there is usually less noise in the room when men speak.

12. *Men and women laugh at the same things.*

**False:** Women tell jokes less frequently, and do so more often when they are in a small, female group. Men are more likely to tell jokes in a larger, mixed-sex group, and tend to joke around with one another as a bonding technique. Male humor also tends to be more hostile, abrasive, and sarcastic than female humor.

13. *Women touch others more often.*

**False:** Men are more likely to touch women when they guide them through doors, assist them with coats, and help them into cars. Linguist Nancy Henley's research shows that, in a variety of outdoor settings, men touched women four times as much as women touched men. Men also touch each other—backslapping and handshakes, for instance—more than women. Remember, too, that touching often has to do with power. A person with power touches more often than a person without.

14. *Women confront problems more directly and are more likely to bring up a problem first.*

**True:** Even though men make more direct statements, a recent survey indicated that women tend to confront and bring up problems quicker and more often. Even so, women tend to be more indirect and polite, which may minimize the problem.

# Chapter *Three*

## *Barriers to Diversity*

### Chapter Objectives

- ▶ Define *prejudice* and understand where it comes from.
- ▶ Define *stereotyping* and *discrimination*.
- ▶ Understand how prejudices affect our work and life.
- ▶ Define and understand *friendly fire*.
- ▶ Understand how nonverbal behavior can hurt relationships.

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**Diversity itself isn't a problem. The problems lie in our attitudes toward diversity.**

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**A**s we've seen, people are diverse in many ways. When we accept our differences and learn to work with them, we enrich our lives and improve the creativity and productivity of our organizations. But too often, we work against our differences and allow them to hinder instead of help us.

### **What are the Barriers?**

Why do we have so many problems dealing with diversity? Diversity itself isn't a problem—our differences have always been there; they're what make us unique. The problems lie in our attitudes toward diversity. People who have negative attitudes toward other people's differences often engage in negative behaviors, including:

- ◆ Prejudice
- ◆ Stereotyping
- ◆ Discrimination



To keep these negative behaviors from becoming barriers to organizational diversity, we must learn to recognize and avoid them—in our working relationships, our treatment of employees, our hiring and firing practices, and our marketing. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination hurt people—and hurt a business' bottom line.

**Prejudice**

*Prejudice* is a preconceived feeling or bias—Voltaire called it an opinion without judgment—and it's a normal human reaction. Each of us has biases of one kind or another. Some people absolutely hate cats even though they've never owned one; some people own dozens. Some people hate spinach because their parents forced them to eat it; some people think spinach makes them smarter or stronger. Some people wouldn't be caught dead driving a certain make of car or wearing certain brands of clothes; other people swear by them. We all have different likes and dislikes, and that's okay.

***Prejudice is a preconceived feeling or bias.***

**3**

**Take a Moment**

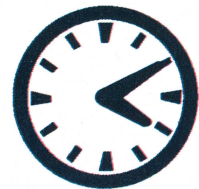
What are some of your likes and dislikes? How do you think you developed these biases?

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Our prejudices come from our family, our friends, our environment, the media, and other external influences—wherever we first learn our beliefs. As long as our biases are about unimportant things, like our brand of toothpaste, they're relatively harmless. But when we hold prejudices against other people, we create all kinds of problems.

## ● Barriers to Diversity

Prejudice against people comes from a belief in the superiority of one's own race/ethnicity, culture, class, or other group. It comes from believing that our own group is best or "right" and that others are not just different, but "wrong." These prejudices often lead people to create stereotypes.

### Stereotyping

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***Stereotyping* occurs when we apply our biases to all members of a group.**

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*Stereotyping* occurs when we apply our biases to all members of a group. If you were raised to think that all members of a particular ethnic group are lazy, you may still hold this stereotype, no matter what your day-to-day experience tells you. If you believe strongly in this stereotype, you may also spread it to others.

We also stereotype when we apply our experiences with one member of a group to the entire group. If you met one member of a particular culture who treated you rudely, it might be hard for you to recognize that not all members of that culture are rude. But just because one member of a race, gender, age group, or culture acts a certain way doesn't mean every other person of that group will act the same way. Your perceptions could be based on a lack of knowledge because you haven't taken the time to understand the other person or culture.

Stereotypes often lead to assumptions that are insupportable and offensive. They cloud the fact that *all* attributes may be found in *all* groups and individuals. Stereotypes show up in phrases like, "What else would you expect from an intellectual?" or "Men won't ask for directions," or "All blondes are dumb."

## Take a Moment

Fill in the blanks below with stereotypes you've heard:

- A real man/woman is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Americans are too \_\_\_\_\_.
- All foreigners are \_\_\_\_\_.
- Blacks/whites are too \_\_\_\_\_.
- Jews are particularly \_\_\_\_\_.
- Asians are \_\_\_\_\_.
- Gays and lesbians are \_\_\_\_\_.



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The stereotypes we attach to people hurt us as much as they hurt everybody else, because we can't get to know the other people for who they really are. Worse still, stereotypes lead to discrimination.

## Discrimination

Discrimination does not mean failing to hire enough women, minorities, or individuals with disabilities; it doesn't even mean refusing to associate with people from other cultures.

*Discrimination* is treating people differently, unequally, and usually negatively because they are members of a particular group. We develop prejudices, turn them into stereotypes, and allow them to grow into discrimination. Prejudice can take many forms: ethnic, cultural, sexual, physical, mental, verbal. And so can discrimination: racism, sexism, heightism, weightism, ageism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, religious bigotry—the list goes on and on.

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***Discrimination*** is treating people differently, unequally, and usually negatively because they are members of a particular group.

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### **Take a Moment**

Have you ever been discriminated against? Have you ever witnessed an incident of discrimination against another person? How did you handle it?

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**You have a responsibility to speak out against intolerance. If you don't, the consequences for you and your organization could be staggering.**

### **Consequences for Your Organization**

Unfortunately, prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination are still facts of life in our society and our workplaces. We see these barriers to diversity every day in the form of racist or sexist jokes, rude remarks, or the refusal to hire or promote. If you encountered a person being discriminated against today, how would you handle it? Keep in mind that doing nothing is also taking a position. If you have friends or coworkers who act in a discriminatory manner and you accept that part of them without protest, you are actually aiding discrimination. You have a responsibility to speak out against intolerance. If you don't, the consequences for you and your organization could be staggering. Consider the following statistics:

In 2003, American workers filed 98,371 job bias claims with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, and disability.

Bias Suit Filings	1995	2000	2003
Race	29,986	28,945	28,526
Sex	26,181	25,194	24,362
Age	14,416	16,008	19,124
Disability	19,798	15,864	15,377
National Origin	7,035	7,792	8,450
Religion	1,581	1,929	2,532
<b>Totals</b>	<b>101,997</b>	<b>95,742</b>	<b>98,371</b>

(Figures courtesy of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.)

American society pays a price for its inability to deal successfully with diversity:

- ◆ Racial bias claims alone cost the American economy billions of dollars each year. In 1991, economist Andrew Brimmer, PhD, former member of the Federal Reserve Board, estimated that racial bias deprived the American economy of about \$215 billion, roughly 3.8% of the gross domestic product. In FY 2003, \$87.2 million was awarded in private sector cases that were investigated by the EEOC alleging discrimination on the basis of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, and gender.
- ◆ More than one third of the Fortune 500 companies have been sued for sexual harassment, many of them more than once. Although the following statistics are dated, and unfortunately have not been updated, they are quite illustrative of the impact that sexual harassment has on our economy. A *Working Woman* magazine survey of Fortune 500 businesses in 1988 determined that the annual costs of sexual harassment averaged \$6.7 million in lost productivity, absenteeism, and turnover per company. One expert estimated that when overall gender bias is figured in, companies lose over \$15 million per year.

## ● Barriers to Diversity

- ◆ Litigation alleging age discrimination was declining, but in FY 2003, according to the EEOC's website, a stunning \$57.8 million was awarded in lawsuits alleging age discrimination.
- ◆ Disability claims decreased in FY 2002, but are on the rise again. In FY 2003, \$2.6 million was awarded in successful lawsuits.

Besides the expense of a settlement, a discrimination claim can cost your organization a tremendous amount of money in court costs and attorney fees. If a discrimination case goes to court, it can take more than three years to be heard, which adds to the expense.

Significantly, about half of all discrimination lawsuits don't make it to court. Some are settled out of court but can still be expensive for an organization. Others are dismissed because they resulted from misunderstandings, miscommunication, or oversensitivity rather than malicious intent. Even lawsuits that are dismissed, however, can cost your organization—in money, time, energy, and reputation—simply because of something somebody said or did unintentionally. This type of lawsuit is perhaps the most wasteful, because so many unintentional offenses can be easily prevented.

### Friendly Fire

The military uses the phrase “friendly fire” to describe situations in which troops inadvertently come under fire from their comrades. I think it's an excellent way to describe those situations in which we say or do something without thinking and end up hurting someone else in an attempt to be our own friendly selves.

*Friendly fire* is unintentional discrimination that occurs because of habit, unconscious behavior, or just plain insensitivity. We can avoid friendly fire if we take the time to think about how our words and behavior might affect others, and if we communicate with sensitivity. Friendly fire can occur:

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**What you say  
is not always  
what they  
hear, and  
what you  
mean is  
not always  
what they  
understand.**

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- ◆ Verbally, through biased language
- ◆ Nonverbally, through inappropriate gestures, movements, and other signals

## Biased Language

Though we may not intend it, we sometimes say things that can be interpreted as racist, sexist, or offensive in some way. Some of this biased language includes:

- ◆ Using names and descriptions to group people for no reason
- ◆ Referring to different groups of people in an unequal manner
- ◆ Using the wrong name to refer to a culture or group
- ◆ Misusing the name of someone from a different culture
- ◆ Using inappropriate labels or terms

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## Grouping

We sometimes use names and descriptions to group people without a purpose for doing so. You might look at me and say, “She’s cute for a short person,” but you would never say of someone, “She’s cute for an average-height person.” You’ve probably heard people use expressions like “handsome Jewish man,” “tall black woman,” “great blind pianist,” or “professional male secretary.” These same people would never say “handsome Baptist man,” “great sighted pianist,” “tall white woman,” or “professional female secretary.” To use the designation to refer to one group reflects bias if you wouldn’t apply the same designation to other groups.

You should be especially careful to avoid the use of gender-specific terms to distinguish men from women. Feminine terms such as *authoress*, *poetess*, *waitress*, *stewardess*, *lady lawyer*, and *lady doctor* are considered offensive by many people. So are masculine terms like male secretary and male nurse. Also be careful with the suffix *-man*. In American English, many gender-specific words have been replaced with neutral ones.

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**You should be especially careful to avoid the use of gender-specific terms to distinguish men from women.**

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## ● Barriers to Diversity

*Firemen* have become *firefighters*; *repairmen* are *repairers*; and *policemen* are *police officers*. Though grammar traditionalists may object, most people now use “they” for nonspecific references instead of the generic “he” or the cumbersome “he or she.” “If you want to invite someone, add *their* name to the list.”

### Unequal References

If we are referring to several different groups of people, we need to use language that treats each group equally. When we list ethnic backgrounds on an application, for instance, they should match in format. Can you find what’s wrong with this list?

- White
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Mexican
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian/Pacific Islander

One problem with this list is the division of “Hispanic” and “Mexican”—Mexicans *are* Hispanic.

A not-so-obvious problem is the term “white.” All the other words are ethnic terms; white is a color. The ethnic terms for white are Anglo-Saxon, Caucasian, Anglo-American, or European American. It’s true that most people use the term *white* loosely, but we should at least be consistent in our use of color terms versus ethnic terms in the same document. If we use *white*, we should also use *black*. And remember, the white or Caucasian category doesn’t always have to be listed first.



### Take a Moment

Can you find any examples of unequal references in your workplace? How would you change them to make them equal?

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## Mislabeled Groups or Cultures

We risk alienating members of other cultures or groups when we refer to them by a name they would prefer not be used. Some common examples of this are *Indian* instead of *American Indian* and *Oriental* instead of *Asian*. Unfortunately, even people in the same culture or group sometimes disagree on what they would like to be called. When you're in doubt, the one sure way to learn what people prefer is to ask.

Many other types of expressions can reflect a negative attitude toward other cultures. Expressions like “culturally deprived” and “culturally disadvantaged” imply superiority of one culture over another. “Non-white” implies that white is the standard by which all others are judged—similar phrases, such as non-black or non-yellow, do not exist. “Minority” ignores the fact that people of color make up the majority of the world's population (and may make up the majority of your immediate locale).

## Individual Names

Few things are more frustrating than hearing your name mispronounced, no matter how well-intentioned the speaker. As our workplace becomes more culturally diverse, native English speakers must learn how to deal with names from a variety of cultures. Some of these names may be difficult to spell or say. To avoid offense, always ask whether you are pronouncing and spelling the name correctly. The order of names can also be confusing. Some cultures place the surname last, some place it first, and some use no surname at all.

Consider this story about a businesswoman who was meeting with prospects from Singapore. When she met them, she greeted the top man, Chong Ho Win, as Mr. Win. She addressed the second man, Tsao Hoa Chee, as Mr. Chee. In her attempts to be polite, she had missed one vital piece of cross-cultural etiquette: In Singapore (as well as Vietnam, Mien, Hmong, Cambodia, and China), family names are positioned first. She was actually calling her prospects Mr. Tom and Mr. Charlie! She should have called them Mr. Chong and Mr. Tsao. Her “friendly fire” cost her a job.

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**As our workplace becomes more culturally diverse, native English speakers must learn how to deal with names from a variety of cultures.**

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## ● Barriers to Diversity

**In Latin America, most people's surnames are a combination of the father's and mother's, with only the father's name used in conversation.**

In Latin America, most people's surnames are a combination of the father's and mother's, with only the father's name used in conversation. In most Spanish-speaking countries (including Mexico), the father's name comes first. So Victor (given name) Mendoza (father's name) Costa (mother's maiden name) is called Mr. Mendoza. But in Portuguese-speaking Brazil, it's the other way around, with the mother's name positioned first.

In Thailand, Indonesia, and Korea, names run backward by our standards—Chinese style—so that the family name comes first, given name last, and “Mr.” is put with the first name. And to a Thai, it's just as important to be called by the given name as it is for a Japanese person to be addressed by the surname.

Unfortunately, the Chinese order of names does not apply in all of Asia. The Taiwanese, many of whom were educated in American schools, often position their given name first. Hyun Suk Kim should be called Mr. Suk, or Hyun by his friends. In Korea, whether a man's first or last name takes “Mr.” is usually determined by whether he is his father's first or second son.

**In Korea, China, Cambodia, Hmong, Mien, and Vietnam, a woman keeps her maiden name even though she precedes it with “Mrs.”**

In Korea, China, Cambodia, Hmong, Mien, and Vietnam, a woman keeps her maiden name even though she precedes it with “Mrs.” So the wife of Kim Young Sam, former president of Korea, is known as Mrs. Sohn Myong Suk. In America, of course, when a woman keeps her maiden name, it is usually preceded by “Ms.”

People from Chile add the courtesy title to their *middle* name. People from Russia, Brazil, and South America add the courtesy title to their last names. In addition, most Americans call each other by first names, even though this is *not* acceptable to many older people. This may be hard for other cultures in our workplace to accept. In the Mexican culture, for instance, first names are *seldom* acceptable because names and titles are a source of pride, tradition, and continuity. In the Japanese culture, first names are never acceptable because only family and close friends are allowed this privilege. In some Chinese cultures, even family members must call each other by relationship terms like “Sister” and “Cousin” instead of first names.

Age also plays a part in what to call people, even in America. Many of the “older” generation still prefer the terms “Mr.” and “Mrs.” In some other cultures, younger people must show

respect by using the terms “Aunt” and “Uncle” for older people, even if the “younger” person is 90! This tradition has been practiced in Africa for many generations, and many African Americans continue it in their homes.

In business, Asian and Middle Eastern employees may be more comfortable using a courtesy title with their manager’s first name (Mrs. Kay, Mr. Jeff) than using just the first name. So it may be hard for members of some cultures to jump right in to the first-name-at-work routine.

### **Inappropriate Titles and Terms**

**3**

Many seemingly innocent terms can be considered discriminatory. Terms like *working man*, *mankind*, and *man on the street* imply that men are the standard by which all humans are measured, while terms like *gal* and *Girl Friday* portray women as childlike and immature. Some people find slang terms like *y’all*, *you guys*, *you’uns*, *you people*, *ma’am*, and *folks* belittling and, in some cases, racist. The term *handicapped* is offensive to many people who have disabilities, and calling someone “Honey” or “Sweetheart” can get you labeled as sexist.

#### **Take a Moment**

Listen to the titles and terms you, your coworkers, and your supervisor use when referring to one another. Do any need to be updated?



### **Nonverbal Communication**

Our nonverbal communication, or body language, can also be a source of friendly fire. It’s true that our actions often speak louder than our words. Our unspoken messages are usually understood by our peers but may easily be misinterpreted by people from other races, genders, cultures, age groups, sexual orientation, or economic backgrounds. Although our world is becoming smaller, we will never all share the same language, culture, or mannerisms. No gestures are universal. Worse yet, sometimes our tongues say one thing, our gestures say another

## ● Barriers to Diversity

**Our unspoken messages are usually understood by our peers but may easily be misinterpreted by people from other races, genders, cultures, age groups, or economic backgrounds.**

thing, and our symbols (clothing, jewelry, hairstyles, facial hair, body markings) say yet another thing. Mixed signals can be very misleading to other people, especially people who come from an area where the words, gestures, or symbols mean something entirely different.

### **Gestures**

You and I use inappropriate gestures without ever thinking about how they might affect people. We fold our arms, stand in a certain position, move our body in a way that might be considered provocative or rude, or make eye contact when we shouldn't. It's so easy to offend people without really knowing it.

The gesture that means "okay" to people born or raised in the U.S. has various meanings in other countries. To your coworker from Japan, for example, it means "money." To your business associates who grew up in France, Belgium, and Tunisia, it signals "worthless," or "zero." To those from Turkey, Greece, and Malta, it refers to homosexuality. To people who grew up in the rest of Europe and Mexico, this gesture represents an obscene or lewd comment. The crooked finger that native-born Americans use to say "Come here" is also considered obscene in many cultures. It's often the way people call prostitutes, animals, or "inferior" people! So you might offend a coworker from another culture without ever knowing why!

**The gesture that means "okay" to people born or raised in the U.S. has various meanings in other countries.**

### **Personal Space**

We also differ in our "comfort zones"—and getting close to someone can become friendly fire. Have you ever walked up to someone and had him back away from you? Perhaps members of his culture don't enjoy having people that close to them, while you were raised to get up close and personal. (Americans have a comfort zone of 8 inches to 3 feet, Mexican Americans will accept closeness up to 18 inches, Japanese Americans want a distance of 3 to 6 feet.) The person you stood close to may not even be consciously aware that conversational distance or personal space was an issue—he simply knows that he feels uncomfortable.

As always, the answer to personal space decisions should be based on the other person. If you see an associate wince when you move toward her, back up. If she looks confused or worried when you stand too far away, move in. Or, if someone else's behavior makes you uncomfortable, be honest. Tell her how you feel: "I know I've never told you this, but when you get so close to me, I feel uncomfortable. It's just the way I was raised. You don't mind if I take a step backward, do you?"

### Eye Contact

Eye contact follows the same principle as personal space. Typically, Americans are taught that the more eye contact they give, the more power they are perceived to have. In many cultures, however (especially Asian, Mexican, Latin American, American Indian, and Caribbean), less eye contact is more respectful. Many African Americans were also raised this way. Americans are sometimes confused by this when their employees, coworkers, or customers don't give them the eye contact they expect. They begin to think that something is wrong or that the other person is doing something they're ashamed of. Jumping to these conclusions can harm your relationships.

Make sure that you understand other people's culture and background before becoming suspicious of them; it can save you embarrassment and help you avoid conflict. Try to make appropriate and equal eye contact when talking to others. If you perceive that their eye contact is low and fleeting, don't stare. If you perceive that they have a strong personality and enjoy watching your face as you talk, try not to be sensitive or avert your gaze too often or too quickly.

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**Americans have a comfort zone of 8 inches to 3 feet, Mexican Americans will accept closeness up to 18 inches, Japanese Americans want a distance of 3 to 6 feet.**

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**Typically, Americans are taught that the more eye contact they give, the more power they are perceived to have. In many cultures, however, less eye contact is more respectful.**

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### Opening Doors

Today's guideline for opening doors is not based on gender, age, or hierarchy. The rule is that whoever is in the lead opens the door and holds it for the other.

### Touching

Touch is another area that causes friendly fire. People in positions of authority sometimes think they can touch employees without causing offense, yet they get upset if someone from their support team reaches out to touch them. The rule of equality says that we should not use a behavior without being willing to receive it as well. Still, any touch other than a handshake is not wise behavior in a work setting; it is too easy to misunderstand.

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**The rule of equality says that we should not use a behavior without being willing to receive it as well.**

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Shaking hands is a polite way to greet people throughout much of the world, and an occasional pat on the back is acceptable. Anything else in the workplace is risky. (Do remember, however, that people who were raised with other cultural values may not even want to shake hands as quickly or as often. In many Asian countries, for example, body contact is considered disrespectful, so the accepted greeting is a nod or a bow and a verbal exchange.)

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**Shaking hands is a polite way to greet people throughout much of the world.**

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All of these precautions may seem a little overwhelming at first, but don't panic. Avoiding friendly fire doesn't mean that you have to walk on eggs, be careful of every word you say, and never look at anybody. And it doesn't mean political correctness. (In fact, even saying "politically correct" is politically incorrect now!) Adjusting your verbal and nonverbal behavior to avoid unintentionally offending someone is simply a way to keep customers and friends, avoid lawsuits, and not hurt people.

## Accepting Our Differences

We need to recognize and accept that people are different and have different areas of sensitivity. I may be terribly hurt by a word or action that you think is foolish. But see it from my point of view. If you make a joke at *my* expense, you're just being friendly. If I make a joke at *your* expense, it will burn like fire.

But if it *is* just a joke and no harm was intended, forgive and forget. Going to court or losing a job or a friend over a misunderstanding is not a good use of your rights.

**3**

Let us vow to attack intolerance and discrimination wherever they occur. Unfortunately, there are still too many places in the world where intolerance based on race, color, and creed exists. It may only be passive discrimination that isolates groups or individuals who are different, but discrimination invariably degenerates into gross violations of human rights, even crimes against humanity. Ultimately, discrimination poses a threat to international peace and security. It must be understood that intolerance is unacceptable.

*Amara Essy  
Former President of the  
General Assembly of the United Nations*

It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope. And, crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

*Robert F. Kennedy*



## **Self-Check: Chapter 3 Review**

Answers appear on pages 103 and 104.

1. Match the following terms with their definitions:

\_\_\_\_\_ Prejudice  
\_\_\_\_\_ Stereotyping  
\_\_\_\_\_ Discrimination

- a. Treating people differently because they are members of a particular group  
b. A preconceived feeling or bias  
c. Applying our biases to all members of a group

2. What is meant by “friendly fire” in this book?

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3. True or False?

Racial bias costs the U.S. economy about 4% of the gross domestic product each year.

4. True or False?

A discrimination suit won't cost your organization time or money unless it goes to court.





# Chapter *Four*

## *Our Changing Etiquette*

### Chapter Objectives

- ▶ Appreciate the beliefs, values, and standards of behavior of other cultures.
- ▶ Use proper etiquette and protocol when relating to members of these cultures.
- ▶ Work more effectively with the three cultures most prevalent in the U.S. workforce.

To work effectively with people from other cultures or upbringings, you need to understand them and where their ideas of right and wrong come from. That's what *culture* is: the way we were raised and the values, beliefs, and standards for behavior we internalized. These factors profoundly affect our relationships, the way we do business, and our reactions to events, circumstances, and other people.



### Take a Moment

List some values that you were taught as a child:

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Have you ever met people who had different values? If so, what was your opinion of them and/or their values?

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## Adapting to Cultural Differences

Because cultures are so diverse, values, beliefs, and standards for behavior are not universal. What is right for *you* may not be right for *me*, and what is important to a member of one culture may not be important to a member of another culture.

Independence, for example, is emphasized in American culture, so people who were raised in the U.S. are ready to leave home at an early age and may continue to move throughout their lives. Because American society is so mobile, Americans tend to jump into jobs and friendships quickly. They *need* to make friends quickly because they may not be in the same city a year from now.

More traditional cultures emphasize family and long-term relationships. People who grew up in “older” cultures (European, Asian, and others) or who were raised within those older value systems don’t move around as quickly or easily. They often are born and die in the same place and take time to get to know people before accepting them as friends.

You can see how these two different approaches toward friendship could cause confusion in the workplace. A typical American might appear pushy and overly familiar to someone from a more traditional culture, while the more traditional approach to friendship might seem formal and standoffish to a typical American. Americans also tend to have different sets of friends—work friends, social friends, and neighborhood friends. Members of other cultures more often include friends in all aspects of their lives. So if you are friendly at work, they may not understand why you don’t invite them to socialize. These differences could lead to misunderstandings and friendly fire, creating an unpleasant working relationship.

We all need to realize that the way we do something may not be the way someone else would do it—or want it done. Remember the New Golden Rule: “Do unto others as *they* would have you do unto *them*.” If you’re totally uncertain about what to do or how to behave with coworkers from other cultures, wait and see what they do, then follow suit. If you observe in a way that doesn’t make the other person self-conscious, your observations

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**Because cultures are so diverse, values, beliefs, and standards for behavior are not universal.**

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**We all need to realize that the way we do something may not be the way someone else would do it—or want it done.**

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## ● Our Changing Etiquette

can provide you with useful information about differences in etiquette and notions of proper behavior.

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**As you interact with people from other cultures, try to identify and respect their culture's values and standards for behavior.**

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### **Manager/Employee Relations**

As you interact with people from other cultures, try to identify and respect their culture's values and standards for behavior. If you violate the formality that many cultures prefer, the person may be temporarily offended. But if you genuinely appreciate the other person's perspective and make your error out of ignorance or forgetfulness, that person will probably sense the innocence of the error and react accordingly.

Beliefs, values, and behaviors aren't the only cultural differences that can create misunderstanding in the workplace. Language differences can also create a variety of communication problems.

### **Communicating with Non-Native English Speakers**

Almost 11% of all U.S. citizens were not born in the U.S., so many workers speak English as a second or third language, and 28% speak no (or very poor) English. This language gap can contribute to a variety of misunderstandings. While learning English, a difficult language to master, demonstrates intelligence and ability, idioms can still be confusing.

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**Imagine that English is a new language for you. What would you picture if someone told you, "After you get the hang of it, it will be a piece of cake"?**

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Imagine that English is a new language for you. You understand most American words and their literal meanings, but you learned from textbooks, not from real life. What would you picture if someone told you, "After you get the hang of it, it will be a piece of cake"? or "Let's put on our thinking caps and keep our noses to the grindstone so we can whip the competition"?

In America, idioms are as common as apple pie. In fact, we often forget that idioms are meaningless phrases instead of a new wave in communication. Unfortunately, when people don't speak fluent English (and sometimes even when they do), they may have a hard time understanding idioms. Even "first thing in the morning" means different things to different people, doesn't it? And what about that old favorite, "in just a minute"? How long is a minute? It depends on whose minute it is!

If you are a native speaker of English, don't assume that someone understands you just because they speak to you in English or nod in agreement. Members of many cultures will not question you about unfamiliar words or expressions, because they believe that to do so is disrespectful, suggesting you didn't make yourself clear. They may also be afraid of appearing as though they have trouble understanding instructions. To communicate effectively with non-native English speakers, try the following techniques:

- ◆ Avoid jargon, slang, and idioms.
- ◆ Slow down your speech (but don't talk louder—hearing is not the problem).
- ◆ Use simple words.
- ◆ Pronounce and enunciate clearly.
- ◆ Repeat your ideas in different words.
- ◆ Check for understanding.

If you are a non-native English speaker, don't be afraid to ask coworkers to slow down or repeat themselves—your request will not be considered rude. If someone uses an expression that you don't understand, ask about it—your coworker will probably enjoy explaining it to you.

### **Using Accepted Protocol**

Because members of different cultures often have very different standards for behavior, they may want to use the accepted forms of etiquette and protocol of the society in which they live and work—at least until they have discussed their cultural differences and agreed to accept them.



## **Self-Check: American Protocol**

Let's take a quiz to make sure that you're aware of some of today's typical American protocol. Answers are found on page 75. Remember, however, that it's the spirit of etiquette that matters, not the letter.

**Indicate True or False for each statement.**

### **Socializing**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The highest-ranking person is always mentioned first in an introduction.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. When introducing someone, you should say that person's name before their title or relationship to you.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. A handshake is always an acceptable greeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Politics is a good topic for small talk.

### **Meetings**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. When you enter someone's office for a meeting, you should always choose the chair closest to the door.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. It doesn't matter who leaves the meeting first when it is over.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. It's all right to just "stop by" to see business associates.

### **Names**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. People without an MD or a PhD are never addressed as "Doctor."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Out of courtesy, people who have an earned or designated title (President, Senator, General) should be referred to by that title even after they retire.

## **Examples of Etiquette Differences**

The chart on page 72 is a guide to three cultures you may be working with in America. (Of course, the chart will be especially helpful if you are traveling to Mexico or Japan.) Please remember that it is only a **guide**. Every individual in every family in every city in every country is an individual. Remember, too, that our individual differences, such as age, style, gender, and so on, come into play in addition to our cultural and ethnic backgrounds; an older female in the U.S., Mexico, Asia, or any other area may act very differently from a younger male in the same area. Review the following chart and compare how these three cultures affect and influence workplace etiquette.

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**Our individual differences, such as age, style, gender, and so on, come into play in addition to our cultural and ethnic backgrounds.**

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## ● Our Changing Etiquette

	U.S. Workplace Culture	Mexican Workplace Culture	Japanese Workplace Culture
<b>Greeting</b>	Usually outgoing, shake hands firmly. Socially, men may hug or kiss cheeks with women, and women may do the same with men.	Medium formality. Always shake hands (moderate grip) or give a slight bow (especially with women) in business. Tend to hold handshakes for a while and repeat frequently. Socially, friends may hug; women may kiss cheeks.	Comfortable shaking hands but will do so gently. The native way is a long, low bow instead.
<b>Business Cards</b>	Not automatically exchanged on meeting but always handed out if there is some reason to get in touch later. No one will refuse your card, but don't be offended if you don't get one in return.	Prefer to give cards at start of business meeting, after introductions. No particular protocol.	Prefer to exchange cards before shaking hands (or bowing). To present your card in Japanese style, use both hands, with type facing the recipient, right side up. Examine theirs, turn it over, admire it; never fold it or write on it. It is considered impolite to receive a card and not give one back.
<b>Eye Contact</b>	Moderate to strong.	Strong, but usually drop eyes as sign of respect.	The more respected a person, the less direct eye contact is used.
<b>Decision-Making Style</b>	Quickly, usually independently.	Those in authority are not expected to solicit input from colleagues, so decisions may take longer than many people are comfortable with.	By consensus, and sometimes a very time-consuming process. High-level people are seldom seen making decisions. When negotiating, will want you to come down from initial offering. Don't like to say no, but that doesn't mean yes.
<b>Negotiating Style</b>	Most don't worry about building relationships. Ready to get down to business, so there's little time spent on small talk before business. One-on-one, usually between high-level individuals. Informal. Ask for more than they expect. Timing is important.	Slow, indirect. Will appeal to personal relationship. Love to bargain and play with offers.	Slow, formal. Building a personal relationship comes before building a professional relationship. Usually done in a collective group. High-level people seldom speak. Will be well-informed about topic.
<b>Problem-Solving Style</b>	Systematically and through trial and error.	By taking the leader's vision. Careful consideration of everything. Use intuition.	With group input. Thorough.



## **Cooperation in the Diverse Workplace**

No matter what your level of intelligence, talent, or business acumen, your success in the workplace depends to a large extent on your ability to work with other people. And now those people are multifaceted, multiracial, and multicultural.

When you adapt your behaviors to the cultural practices of others, you're more likely to earn cooperation and support, get commitments, gain friends and clients, and keep peace. The people you depend on to keep your organization running—customers and coworkers—will usually come through for you.

As John Naisbitt observes in *Megatrends*, “Whenever new technology is introduced into society, there must be a counterbalancing human response.” As our society becomes increasingly high-tech as well as multicultural, the need for a nonoffensive, sensitive, and personal touch in our interactions increases.

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**When you adapt your behaviors to the cultural practices of others, you're more likely to earn cooperation and support.**

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## **Self-Check: Chapter 4 Review**

Answers appear on page 104.

1. What is the New Golden Rule?

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2. How long should you be expected to wait for a business meeting?

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## American Protocol Quiz Answers

### Socializing

1. *The highest-ranking person is always mentioned first in an introduction.*  
**True.**
2. *When introducing someone, you should say that person's name before his or her title or relationship to you.*  
**True:** Most people want an identity first and a title second.
3. *Shaking hands is a polite way to greet people throughout much of the world.*  
**True:** Just remember that neither a bone-crushing handshake nor a “weak fish” handshake is impressive.
4. *Politics is a good topic for small talk.*  
**False:** Not unless you know they agree with you. Also avoid religion. Safe topics include sports, weather, locale, food, arts, and travel.

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### Meetings

1. *When you enter someone's office for a meeting, you should always choose the chair closest to the door.*  
**False:** The person who inhabits the office will most likely show you where to sit. You can ask to move, but they will direct you to where they want you to be.
2. *It doesn't matter who leaves the meeting first when it is over.*  
**False:** The person who called the meeting decides when it's over. This may be hard for some people to accept because in many cultures, rank and age always determine who rises, sits, and leaves first.
3. *It's all right to just “stop by” to see business associates.*  
**False:** Protocol mandates that we phone first.

## ● Our Changing Etiquette

### Names

1. *People without an MD or a PhD are never addressed as "Doctor."*

**False:** In America, dentists and veterinarians are also addressed as "Doctor." But the term is not used as a sign of respect as it is in many other countries.

2. *Out of courtesy, people who have an earned or designated title (President, Senator, General) should be referred to by that title even after they retire.*

**True.**



# Chapter *Five*

## *Confronting Prejudice and Discrimination*

### **Chapter Objectives**

- ▶ Communicate more effectively.
- ▶ Give feedback more clearly.
- ▶ Confront prejudice and discrimination.

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**We may have an easier time responding to prejudice and discrimination if we think of ourselves as giving feedback rather than starting a confrontation.**

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**F**ew people enjoy confrontation. In fact, many of us will go out of our way to avoid it! For this reason, we may be tempted to overlook instances of prejudice and discrimination in the workplace. But when it comes to these behaviors, turning our backs can only make an unfortunate situation worse. Prejudice and discrimination create a hostile work environment that robs all employees of the energy they need to be productive. Eliminating these negative behaviors can release that energy and produce positive, constructive results.

We may have an easier time responding to prejudice and discrimination if we think of ourselves as giving feedback rather than starting a confrontation. *Feedback* is a form of communication that helps other people see their behavior as *we* see it. Feedback should not be used to criticize a *person*, only to describe what the person is *doing* and your reaction to it. If your reaction is positive, feedback can reinforce the behavior. If your reaction is negative, feedback conveys the message “I like you, but I don’t like what you’ve done.”

### Is It Really Prejudice?

Before you provide feedback on behavior that you perceive to be prejudice or discrimination, analyze the situation carefully to be sure it isn't just a simple misunderstanding or friendly fire. By reviewing the situation before you speak, you have a better chance of finding the truth and not making the situation worse. Remember that people often respond differently to situations because they don't have the same:

- ◆ Information (knowledge each person has)
- ◆ Goals (what each wants to accomplish)
- ◆ Values (what is important to each)
- ◆ Methods (how something is done)
- ◆ Perceptions (how each sees the situation)
- ◆ Cultural background (maybe it's not offensive behavior where the other person comes from)

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To further diagnose the situation, ask yourself these important questions:

- ◆ How important is this issue? Am I overreacting? Why am I really bringing it up?
- ◆ What will I gain/lose by bringing it up? What will I gain/lose by not bringing it up?
- ◆ Is it really prejudice or just friendly fire?
- ◆ How frequently do these types of situations occur with this person? Can I overlook a one-time mistake? Are others having the same problems?
- ◆ Am I bringing any biases or misinformation to the situation? Am I being objective?
- ◆ How does this person view me? Would they consider me insensitive or biased?
- ◆ What actions can I take to help change the situation?
- ◆ Am I ready and willing to make the effort to resolve it?
- ◆ What changes am I actually looking for?

## ● Confronting Prejudice and Discrimination



### Take a Moment

Recall a situation in which someone's words or actions made you uncomfortable. How would you deal with the same situation today?

### Guidelines for Feedback

If you still feel that you have encountered prejudice or discrimination after considering these questions, approach the other person with your feedback. Use the following guidelines to increase the likelihood that your feedback is well-received and that the intent of the feedback—change in the other person's behavior—is realized:

**Feedback is most helpful when given soon after the behavior occurs. Present your feedback in a private place, away from other people, and be sure emotions have cooled.**

- ◆ **Check your timing.** Feedback is most helpful when given soon after the behavior occurs; however, it should always be appropriately timed. Present your feedback in a private place, away from other people, and be sure emotions have cooled. Check the other person's readiness by asking, "I have an issue to discuss with you. It should take about 20 minutes. Is now a good time?" or "I'd like to discuss what happened this morning. Is now a good time?" If the other person says yes, present your feedback. If the person says no, ask, "When is a good time?"

If the other person would rather discuss the issue at another time, make an appointment and arrive for it promptly. When you arrive, ask again, "Is it convenient to talk now?" If it still isn't convenient for the other person, ask again, "When will be a good time?" Stay calm and avoid any hint of exasperation or sarcasm. If you remain polite and persistent, you will eventually get your chance to speak.

- ◆ **State the problem as *your* problem or as a common problem.** An effective way of dealing with a negative behavior is to describe the situation from your perspective: "I'm having a problem with the joke you told this afternoon." This gives the other person an opportunity to respond without being put on the defensive.



You can also state the problem as a common problem: “Kay, there seems to be a problem with your perception of Nancy’s work habits.” This technique is known as *triangulation*. Often, when two people have a conflict, the situation turns into me against you. If, instead of working against each other, those involved can work against the problem, they can solve it. So instead of confronting the other person with “You have a bad attitude” or “You bigot!” try “Kay, we seem to have a problem getting along, and I’d like to talk about it. Is now a good time?”

- ◆ **Be empathetic.** Put yourself in the other person’s shoes; acknowledge that person’s needs and point of view. The major barrier to communication is our natural tendency to judge, evaluate, and approve or disapprove of others. Suppose the person next to you at lunch today says, “I really like what Kay has to say in her book,” what would you say? Your reply would probably be either, “I do too!” or “I think it’s terrible.” In other words, your first reaction would be to evaluate your friend’s statement from your point of view, and approve or disapprove of what your friend said. Although the tendency to make evaluations is common in almost all conversation, it is heightened in situations where feelings and emotions are involved. Empathy can help us listen, be more sensitive, and not judge so quickly. A sincere attempt to understand someone else’s view usually makes that person more receptive to our ideas.

Empathetic statements reflect the person’s feelings, not just their words. In a heated situation, you might say, “I can see that you’re angry about this” or “I can hear that you feel like you’re being discriminated against” or “I can tell that my statement bothered you. Will you tell me why?”

- ◆ **Acknowledge the other person as a unique individual.** Feedback should address what a person did, not who that person is. You’re not evaluating the person, you’re addressing behavior or performance. When the person expresses feelings—positive or negative—in reaction to your comments, respond with statements that indicate you understand their feelings: “I understand that you’re angry about this; I might be too. But it has to be resolved.”

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**The major barrier to communication is our natural tendency to judge, evaluate, and approve or disapprove of others.**

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**Feedback should address what a person did, not who that person is.**

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## ● Confronting Prejudice and Discrimination

- ◆ **Paraphrase, clarify, and ask thoughtful questions.** When you don't really understand, or if you just want to make sure you understand clearly, the best thing to do is paraphrase or clarify: "You smiled when they made that crack about Jews, but I thought I sensed anger too. Did it bother you?" or "So because you're Catholic, you feel that you shouldn't be required to work on Sundays, is that correct?"
- ◆ **Mirror and align with the other person.** Remember, the more you are like them, the more they will like you. You certainly don't need to try to turn into the other person, but for that particular moment, try to mirror that person's body language and align with their processing style (seeing, hearing, touching) so you are on the same wavelength.
- ◆ **Bring in a third party if necessary.** If you reach a point where nothing is being solved, you may want to ask an outsider for their opinion. Make sure that this other person is not biased for or against either party or the situation.
- ◆ **Thank the other person for their cooperation and willingness to consider changes in behavior.** Say, "I appreciate your efforts to address this issue. It's been bothering me, and now I feel like we have a handle on it. I appreciate your willingness to talk about this. We still don't agree, but I'm glad we were able to discuss it."

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Following specific steps when you give feedback can help you stay on track and avoid becoming unnecessarily emotional.

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### Follow a Feedback Formula

Following specific steps when you give feedback can help you stay on track and avoid becoming unnecessarily emotional. The following formula incorporates the guidelines discussed above. The first letters of each step spell out D.E.A.R.—Describe, Express, Ask, and Review. This formula works best if it's used in exactly this order. Remember that the timing of feedback can also be critical, so choose an appropriate, private time and place.

### The D.E.A.R. Formula

**D**escribe the other person's behavior objectively and give specific examples (not assumptions or hearsay). Telling someone, "Your comments were inappropriate" does not explain what was unacceptable to you. What were the comments? What about them was inappropriate? Why?

## Confronting Prejudice and Discrimination ●

Here are some clear descriptions of behavior that could be used to begin a feedback session:

1. “When you ignore my comments in the staff meetings or interrupt me . . .”
2. “When people touch my hair, as you did this morning . . .”
3. “When racist humor is perpetuated, like the joke you used in this week’s column . . .”
4. “Your use of the word (derogatory term) . . .”

(We’ll complete these sentences in our next set of examples.)

**E**xpress how you feel and explain the effect the behavior or situation had on you, the rest of the group, or another person. Explain more if you wish, then pause so the other person has a chance to respond. Remember that the feedback you’re providing is a description of your perception and is not absolute, even if it is important. Use “I” language (I think, I feel, I get) to describe your feelings—statements that begin with “you” tend to imply absolutes and may seem judgmental. Instead of saying, “You insensitive, sexist idiot!” try “When I see lewd pictures in your office, I feel ashamed and embarrassed.”

Here are some expressions of feelings that could be used to complete the examples given above:

1. “. . . I get really frustrated. It makes me feel like you just don’t care about me as a person or treat me as an equal.”
2. “. . . I really dislike it. It takes hours to get it done like this, and it’s very personal space.”
3. “. . . it embarrasses everyone in the group.”
4. “. . . is offensive and embarrassing to me and the entire department.”

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**Remember that the feedback you’re providing is a description of your perception and is not absolute, even if it is important.**

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## ● Confronting Prejudice and Discrimination

### **Negotiate and compromise if possible.**

**A**sk for the other person's help and talk about the situation. Negotiate and compromise if possible. If the other person does not want to change, ask for what you want, and be sure to describe the benefit to them.

These sentences correspond to our previous examples:

1. "I'd really like to prevent this from happening again. What will it take?" (Negotiate, compromise.) "I'll tell you what. If you'll agree not to interrupt or ignore me in our meetings, I'll try not to become so defensive when you forget. That should make both of our lives easier. OK?"
2. "I'll answer any questions you have about the process. Just please promise not to do it again."
3. "If you try to be a little more sensitive to everyone's feelings, I think we can work together much better."
4. "If you'll agree not to let this happen again, I'll withdraw the complaint I made to management so your name will be cleared."

**R**eview the new agreement, then stop, as in these conclusions to our previous examples.

1. "So we've agreed that . . ."
2. "Now that you know how I feel about people touching my hair, I'm sure it won't happen again."
3. "If you find that you can't avoid using racial qualifiers in your article, you'll let me know ahead of time. Is that agreeable?"
4. "You've promised not to use terms like that at work (or around me)."

## **Take a Moment**

Think of a situation that you need to address with someone and fill in the formula below:

**Describe:** "When (this behavior) happens . . ."

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"Like (when/what) . . ."

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**Express Effect:** "I feel . . ." or "It causes . . ."

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**Ask:** "How can we change this situation?" or  
"What can I/we do to keep this from happening  
again?"

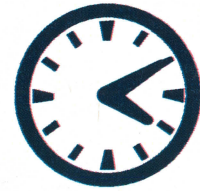
**Listen, discuss, compromise:** Don't forget to be clear  
about what outcome you want.

**Review:** "So we've agreed that . . ."

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### What If That Doesn't Work?

What if someone makes a promise to change a behavior and doesn't? Here's another formula you can use to point out a discrepancy between somebody's words and deeds—to remind them that they agreed to act differently toward you or another person. As with the previous formula, you can use this to help keep your emotions in check and objectively describe what the other person said they would do, what they actually did, and what you want or how you feel. The steps are similar to those in the D.E.A.R. formula:

1. Agreement—Describe what they said they would do:
  - “Last week, you agreed to stop interrupting me and discrediting my input at company meetings.”
2. How broken—Describe what they really did:
  - “Then today you made fun of my ideas about the new project. I'll admit that you didn't interrupt, but when you roll your eyes as though nothing I say is valuable, it has the same effect.”
3. Advice—Determine what you can do about the situation. (Optional)
  - “What else can I do to get your respect?” *Talk, negotiate, compromise.*
4. Desire or incentive—State what you want or what you'll offer:
  - “How about this? If you'll just hold your tongue and not make faces while I'm speaking, I'll ask your opinion in the group when I'm finished, and you can say out loud whatever it is you're thinking. I can handle the spoken criticism, just not the nonverbal antics in the middle of my thoughts. Is that a deal?”
5. New agreement—Restate the desired outcome:
  - “So we've agreed that you'll listen calmly to my ideas until I've finished. Is that correct?”

## Take a Moment

Think of a situation in which someone has not lived up to promises made to you, and fill in the formula below:

1. Agreement:

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2. How broken:

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3. Advice: **Talk, negotiate, compromise.** Don't forget to be clear about what outcome you want.

4. Desire or incentive:

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5. New agreement:

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## ● Confronting Prejudice and Discrimination

Americans do not care as much about differences in culture or even in color (despite much rancid history under that heading) as they care about character as it is expressed in behavior. The American challenge now is not to pay homage to every cultural variation and appease every ethnic sensitivity, but rather to encourage universally accepted ideals of behavior: self-discipline, compassion, responsibility, friendship, work, courage, perseverance, honesty, loyalty, and faith.

*William J. Bennett  
Former Director of the  
Federal Office of Drug Control Policy*

### Handling Touchy Situations

I did a “relationships analysis” for a large company last year. One of the questions was, “Describe your manager.” A participant responded, “He is very hard to describe. Let’s just say that there are more than 200 million people in the world, and he gets along with three of them.” Isn’t that a perfect definition of a “difficult” person?

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**Providing feedback about prejudice or discrimination to a difficult or sensitive person can be a special challenge.**

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Providing feedback about prejudice or discrimination to a difficult or sensitive person can be a special challenge. Here are some approaches for handling those touchy situations. I call this first set of phrases “escape routes.” They are a way for either side to get out of the conversation and still save face. They include phrases such as:

- ◆ “I’m sure you’re not aware of this, Gary, but . . .”
- ◆ “I know you don’t mean to be offensive, but . . .”
- ◆ “Adam, we seem to have a problem . . .”
- ◆ “Betty, I have a problem, and I need your help.”
- ◆ “Is now a good time for us to talk?”
- ◆ “I hope you don’t mind my asking . . .”
- ◆ “I feel uncomfortable bringing this up, but . . .”



You might say, “I’m sure you’re not aware of this, Gary, but when you say my clothing is unprofessional, it makes me angry. My clothing is part of my culture, and I’m proud of it.” The escape route gives Gary a chance to say, “You’re right. I wasn’t aware of that.” Gary can then apologize or ask questions. Most people will take the escape route if you offer it to them rather than fight in public.

As your interaction progresses, you can paraphrase and clarify the other person’s intent and meaning with “power phrases” such as:

- ◆ “It appears that you feel . . .”
- ◆ “So from your point of view . . .”
- ◆ “So it seems to you . . .”
- ◆ “So from where you stand . . .”
- ◆ “It looks like you see it as . . .”
- ◆ “So you think . . .”
- ◆ “What I hear you saying is . . .”
- ◆ “It sounds like you’re (angry/sad/overjoyed).”

Here are two more techniques that will help you in touchy situations:

- ◆ **Repetition:** If a person refuses to acknowledge your point of view, calmly repeat what you want or believe until you receive a response. One caution—don’t let this type of situation become a yes/no, yes/no battle.

**Supervisor:** I really don’t think you can do this assignment.

**Employee:** I know you don’t, but I do think I can, and I’d like a chance to try.

**Supervisor:** Well, you’ll never be able to pull it off.

**Employee:** I understand your opinion, but I think I can, and I’d like a chance to try.

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**If a person refuses to acknowledge your point of view, calmly repeat what you want or believe until you receive a response.**

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## ● Confronting Prejudice and Discrimination

**Acknowledge criticism or offensive remarks without admitting or denying them, and without becoming defensive.**

- ◆ **Acknowledgment:** Acknowledge criticism or offensive remarks without admitting or denying them, and without becoming defensive. A simple “thank you” usually works to destroy this kind of interaction too.

**Employee 1:** That’s the ugliest “costume” I’ve ever seen.

**Employee 2:** (Don’t take offense to or correct the sarcastic use of “costume,” just acknowledge the remark.) I can see why you wouldn’t wear it.

**Employee 1:** Darn right, nobody in their right mind would wear it.

**Employee 2:** That may be true, but I’m not just anybody.

### Some Additional Guidelines

**The more you give people what they need, the more they will give you what you need.**

1. Check your timing before asking to talk.
2. Listen, listen, listen.
3. Listen for the unspoken too.
4. Never assume anything.
5. Remember that the more you give people what they need, the more they will give you what you need.
6. Never expect the same reaction to a statement or situation that you would have.
7. Don’t be surprised at anything that comes up.
8. Don’t look for praise for yourself or others.
9. Don’t shame or blame anyone.
10. Allow plenty of time for the conversation.
11. Be assertive but not aggressive.

12. Remember that others may take more time to adjust than you expect.
13. Make appropriate eye contact.
14. Don't belittle or put down people's ideas or comments.
15. Never interrupt or "yes, but" people.
16. Don't tell others how they feel or what they think (now or in the future).
17. Don't compare people to other people, even yourself.
18. Be empathetic and positive.
19. Discuss points from logic, not from emotion.
20. Don't make promises you can't keep.

### Stand Up for Your Rights

The thought of confronting instances of prejudice and discrimination can be intimidating. But if you think before you speak and follow a formula for providing feedback, you can improve your chances of being effective.

Everyone has a responsibility to combat prejudice and discrimination in the workplace and the community. The following communication reminders can help motivate you to work to eliminate these negative behaviors.

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**Everyone has a responsibility to combat prejudice and discrimination in the workplace and the community.**

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### Communication Reminders

1. Everyone has a natural right to courtesy and respect.
2. By standing up for our rights, we show that we respect ourselves, and we earn respect from other people.
3. Sacrificing our rights usually results in allowing other people to mistreat us.
4. By trying to avoid conflict, we can hurt ourselves and others.
5. We decide what's important to us; we do not have to bend to other people's issues.
6. When we do what we think is right for us, we feel better about ourselves and have more authentic and satisfying relationships.
7. We all have a right to express ourselves, as long as we don't violate the rights of others.
8. It is not essential that you be loved or approved of by everyone.
9. You do not have to be perfectly competent, adequate, and successful to consider yourself worthwhile.
10. Unhappiness is seldom caused by outside circumstances and past events.
11. It is never better to avoid difficulties and responsibilities than to face them.
12. There is not always a solution to every problem.
13. In honest communication, there is no "right and wrong," just "different."

## **Self-Check: Chapter 5 Review**

Answers appear on page 104.



1. We may have an easier time responding to prejudice or discrimination if we think of ourselves as \_\_\_\_\_ instead of starting a confrontation.
  
2. Before we confront behavior that we perceive as prejudice or discrimination, we should always \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
  
3. The D.E.A.R. formula stands for:  
D \_\_\_\_\_  
E \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What are the five steps of the formula you can use to deal with situations when someone breaks a promise to change behavior?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What does the repetition technique for dealing with touchy situations involve?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter *Six*

## *What Else Can You Do?*

### **Chapter Objectives**

- ▶ Recognize and change possibly offensive behavior.
- ▶ Project an attitude of caring for others.
- ▶ Create a plan for continued improvement.

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**Working effectively with diversity means recognizing the many types of differences in yourself and others.**

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**W**orking effectively with diversity means recognizing the many types of differences in yourself and others. It means capitalizing on each other's strengths and compensating for each other's weaknesses. It means being appropriately assertive, saying what you mean, and asking for what you want. It means developing patience and tolerance, and handling conflict and feedback appropriately. Here are some other specific guidelines to help you manage your diverse relationships.

### **Guidelines for Managing Your Diverse Relationships**

#### **Guidelines for Individuals**

1. **Be aware of the change that's taking place around you, and welcome that change.**

If we were to continue living as we have been for the last 50 or 100 years, our society would fall apart—as others have without growth. You can create your own future by creating your own change.

2. **Recognize and respect others and their individuality.**

In a free country, each of us has the right to be ourselves (as long as we don't harm or diminish others), and that diversity is wonderful. No one has the right to impose their ideas, ideals, or values on others.

### 3. **Think before you speak, and be sensitive to others.**

If you do accidentally offend someone, apologize immediately. To avoid embarrassing you, some people may deny that they felt offended. Even so, your apology will have been heard and silently appreciated.

### 4. **Talk about your differences and ask tactful questions about how people want to be treated:**

“Do you mind telling me . . . ?” or “How do you feel about . . . ?” or “I’d really love to know more about . . . ”

I’ve asked a lot of these questions in my career, and I’ve never had anyone take offense. Most of the time, they say, “I’m glad you asked rather than calling me something I don’t want to be called or talking about me behind my back.”

If someone does object to answering your questions, however, respect that decision. Some issues are too private or painful to talk about. By giving people an option to not answer your question, you can create a sense of respect and erase any fear that may exist. This results in trust and security—a positive climate.

### 5. **Listen more.**

Being listened to increases a person’s self-esteem and confidence. People who are listened to usually appreciate the person who is doing the listening and are more likely to cooperate with that person. Listening encourages people to be less defensive and to talk through concerns and solve problems. Careful listening can teach us a great deal about others’ thought patterns, belief systems, values, and desires.

6

Formula for Handling People:

- (1) Listen to the other person’s story.
- (2) Listen to the other person’s full story.
- (3) Listen to the other person’s full story first.

*Gen. George Marshall  
Former U.S. Secretary of Defense  
and Nobel Peace Prize Winner*

## ● What Else Can You Do?

### 6. **Recognize your own biases and prejudices.**

Prejudice is a natural human emotion. You don't have to like or agree with everyone, but you do have to treat each person with respect and equality. What you *think* is your business—what you *do* concerns others.

### 7. **Eliminate stereotypes and generalizations.**

You can't understand an entire culture based on the limited amount you know about a few people. Even people who share the same culture and background are not necessarily the same. Each of us is made up of many factors. We may act one way in one role, but if you put us in a different role or add another factor, we may act another way.

Avoid using words, images, and situations that suggest that all or most members of a particular group are the same, and identify people by race, gender, or ethnic origin only when those facts are relevant.

### 8. **Expose yourself to other cultures.**

Go to an ethnic neighborhood and see what goes on. Go to another religion's place of worship and see what they do. Go out to dinner with people from other cultures and eat what they eat. At the very least, read books, see movies, or look at almanacs. Most of us prefer to be around people who are like us, but we can't grow much that way. The best way for us to grow individually is to learn about other ways of doing things.

### 9. **Remember that your race/gender/personality style is not the center of the universe.**

Everyone is different. Respect people for who they are, and don't try to turn them into you. It's also important to remember that you are different too.

### 10. **Be careful with humor.**

Sometimes people are so eager to put their personality into their conversations that they forget to consider how off-the-wall comments or jokes might hurt others. Off-color, sexist, religious, political, or ethnic remarks are bound to offend someone. When they do, that person won't hear another word you say and might create trouble for you later. Your communication should meet the standards observed by



educated people in careful conversation. Communication that falls below these standards only decreases your listeners' attention, hinders the relationship process, and makes you look unprofessional.

### 11. **Lighten up!**

Don't take everything so seriously. Who cares what color a cookie is and whether the black or white part is on the top? Whether a wine is "old" or "vintage challenged," it has still been around for a while. Whether Rover is a "dog" or a "canine life companion," he still barks at intruders. We wouldn't feel so threatened by diversity if we allowed ourselves to chuckle at our own—and others'—shortcomings.

Recognize people's *intentions*, even if they step on their own feet—or yours. Most people really don't mean to hurt others. If they *intended* to hurt you, do something about it; if they didn't, forgive them for it. If you pull on a willow branch, it bends. If you pull on an elm, it stands firm. There are times to be a willow and times to be an elm. Make sure you know which is which.

6

### Take a Moment

Complete these final exercises to help you develop a plan to manage your diverse relationships better. On the first line, list the name of a person who is different from you in some way. Then think about how you and this person can have a better working relationship. After you've analyzed one relationship, try a few more!

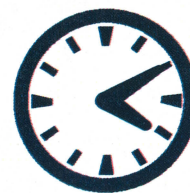
Person's name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Person's strengths: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**● What Else Can You Do?**

What stresses or annoys this person:

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How this person's diversity contributes to our relationship:

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How my diversity contributes to our relationship:

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How I can help our relationship:

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**Plan**  
List five goals for changes you want to make or behaviors you want to institute concerning diversity in your organization:

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### Guidelines for Organizations

Your organization has met EEOC requirements. You regularly hire and promote females, minorities, and individuals with disabilities. You've cautioned everyone to avoid biased language. Are you "diversity perfect"? No, you're just beginning.

Discrimination in our country will end only with awareness of how others perceive our actions. Managing diversity well means enabling every worker to perform at his or her highest potential. It means raising awareness, teaching employees about differences and similarities, and giving them the skills to act and think differently. When we do it right, people will not be advantaged or disadvantaged because of their differences.

What organizations fear, of course, is a lowering of standards, a "quota" system in which the best person doesn't necessarily win. We can't allow that to happen. Because of increased competition, high quality and competence count now more than ever. The goal is to manage diversity in a way that will allow us to maintain the same productivity and high quality we once achieved from a less diverse workforce. But we must learn to do so without discrimination.

Here are some things you can do to help your organization meet its diversity goals:

- 1. Be a role model, regardless of your job title or level in the organization.**

You can't expect other employees to adhere to humanistic behaviors and attitudes if you let incidents pass without confronting them or indicate that you secretly agree with disruptive behavior. If you don't interrupt and discredit unlawful discrimination, you're contributing to it.

Emphatically state (and uphold) that issues of human dignity, justice, and safety are nonnegotiable.

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**Discrimination in our country will end only with awareness of how others perceive our actions.**

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**Be a role model, regardless of your job title or level in the organization.**

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## ● What Else Can You Do?

2. **Celebrate all holidays or no holidays.**  
If you put up a Christmas tree, consider recognizing Eid, Hannukah, Cinco de Mayo, Laotian New Year, Tet, Kwanzaa, and other cultural holidays.
3. **Use nonprejudicial words in your marketing and service efforts.** Also make sure that all races, genders, sizes, and physical conditions are represented in your marketing materials. What kinds of people are shown in your annual report? Is your marketing truly representative of diverse people, or are you still holding up the American ideal of able-bodied, thin, white, and gorgeous?
4. **Hire people who are bilingual, and advertise that you speak/need other languages.**
5. **Offer ongoing diversity training for your employees—at all levels.**  
Incorporate training programs that teach diversity awareness, perception, relationship-building, communication, and teamwork. All workers need an understanding of diversity and how it affects communication, and they need more than an hour's overview or a pamphlet to achieve it.
6. **Check your pulse:**
  - ◆ Even after many workplaces throughout the U.S. have changed policies and procedures to include the term “Ms.,” and have stopped using only the “he” pronoun, women still still earn 71 cents for every dollar earned by men.
  - ◆ Are Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native employees still working at administrative and service jobs, or is your management staff also diverse?

The goal is not to bring minorities and women into a dominant white male culture and teach them how to get along; the goal is to create a dominant heterogeneous culture.

**Take a Moment**

Identify problems (and solutions) that diversity might cause in your organization:

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Identify a plan to prevent or handle these problems:

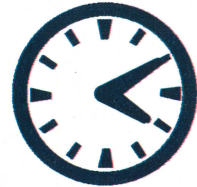
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## **Conclusion**

We will be stronger as people, as organizations, and as a nation when we can work together, maximizing the abilities of all of our workers and putting aside racism, sexism, and all those other “isms” that separate us. In short, we will have succeeded in managing diversity when we can live up to the values set out in our Constitution. I commend you for taking the first step by reading this book and challenge you to take diversity to its full potential within yourself and your organization.

The greatest challenge America faces in the era beyond peace is to learn the art of national unity in the absence of war or some other explicit external threat. If we fail to meet that challenge, our diversity—long a source of strength—will become a destructive force. Our individuality—long our most distinctive characteristic—will be the seed of our collapse. Our freedom—long our most cherished possession—will exist only in history books.

*Richard Nixon*  
*37th President of the United States*

## **Chapter 1**

1. Differences in people.
2.
  1. Understand and respect individual differences.
  2. Be assertive.
  3. Learn how others want you to treat them.
  4. Act as a force for change.
3. Strength.
4. Vegetable soup.
5. Fear springs from ignorance.

## **Chapter 2**

1. False—Diversity consists of many different factors.
2. Seers (visual), Hearers (auditory), and Feelers (kinesthetic).
3. True—You should try to adjust your assertiveness level to the level of others.
4. Type A—d; Type B—a; Type C—c; Type D—b.
5. True—Blacks/African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and American Indian/Alaska Natives make up a little more than one quarter of the U.S. population.

## **Chapter 3**

1. Prejudice—b; Stereotyping—c; Discrimination—a.
2. Situations in which we say or do something without thinking and end up hurting someone else.
3. True—Racial bias costs the U.S. economy about 4% of the gross domestic product each year.
4. False—A discrimination suit will cost your company money in legal fees and lost productivity whether it goes to court or not.

## ● Answers to Chapter Reviews

### Chapter 4

1. Do unto others as they would have you do unto them.
2. No more than 15 minutes.

### Chapter 5

1. Providing feedback.
2. Carefully analyze the situation to be sure it isn't just a misunderstanding.
3. Describe, Express effect, Ask, Review.
4.
  - a. Agreement—Describe what they said they would do.
  - b. How broken—Describe what they did.
  - c. Advice—Determine what you can do about the situation.
  - d. Desire or Incentive—State what you want or what you'll offer.
  - e. New agreement—Restate the desired outcome.
5. Calmly repeat what you want or believe until you receive a response.



# Quick Chapter Reference



1. **What Diversity Really Means**
2. **Factors That Create Diversity**
3. **Barriers to Diversity**
4. **Adapting to Cultural Differences**
5. **Confronting Prejudice and Discrimination**
6. **What Else Can You Do?**

*Diversity in the Workplace: Communication Is the Key* will help readers understand how their words and actions in today's diverse workplace affect their organization's bottom line, and why everyone needs to maintain and exhibit a positive outlook on diversity.

M. Kay duPont, CSP, CPDT, is recognized as one of America's foremost speakers and trainers in human communication and relationships. Her Atlanta-based company, The Communication Connection, offers consulting, training courses, and speeches in business relationships, image, and communication.

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