

The Brimful Life

**BRIDGING
DIFFERENCES
THROUGH
DIALOG
PLAYBOOK**



Practical steps to make the workplace (and world) better one conversation at a time.



It seems that we are far more divided today than ever before. These divisions have potential to negatively impacting our workplace environments. Politics, race, gender, sexual orientation and religion are some differences we struggle with. Not to mention difference in personality traits and leadership styles that can be annoying at best and cause team discord and dysfunction at worst.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

Conflicts can be resolved by taking small steps to find common ground. Biases, assumptions and even hatred can be replaced with empathy and understanding through relationship building. Dialog has the power to bring us together even when it may seem impossible.

This playbook provides easy to implement steps to help you lean into challenging conversations with a healthy dose of courage and caution in order to make diversity a differentiator for good to enrich your personal and professional lives.

THE PLAYBOOK

4 STEPS AND RESOURCES

- 1 MUSTER COURAGE
- 2 SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS
- 3 SET THE RIGHT INTENTIONS
- 4 TAKE ACTION

1

MUSTER COURAGE

We often think about what can go wrong with difficult conversations instead of what can go right. Build the courage to try by reflecting on how a relationship could be strengthened (not destroyed) by conversation. And consider the opportunity cost of not trying by keeping these benefits of bridging differences in mind.

- **It makes us healthier.** Harboring resentment, grudges and hatred increases stress that, over time, can negatively impact our health and mental well-being.
- **It makes us smarter.** While it's natural to gravitate towards people similar to you, it's important to replace biases with real experiences to inform your thinking. Having diverse relationships makes you better informed, more thoughtful and more interesting.
- **It makes us money.** Inclusive workplace cultures that harness the power of diversity for good have a 25% likelihood of financial performance above the national industry medium.

2 SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

BE REALISTIC ABOUT WHAT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED,
HOW AND WHEN

- **Be Patient.** Sometimes people aren't ready to engage. That's OK. It's best to wait for when the time is right.
- **Be Committed.** You may have to work at bridging differences a little bit over a long time.
- **Be Compassionate.** Bridging differences can be emotionally draining, but you are likely making progress even if it doesn't feel like it. Extend kindness, grace and forgiveness to yourself and others.



3

SET THE RIGHT INTENTIONS

The mindset you have going into a conversation will make all the difference in the world. Engage with these guiding principles in mind.

- **Engage with genuine curiosity.** Reflect on your intent for entering the conversation. Is it to argue your point or to broaden your understanding and deepen a relationship?
- **Seek to understand, not to agree.** Don't confuse understanding with agreement. Assume you can always learn even when you don't always agree.
- **Demonstrate patience and respect.** Know that your way or approach is just that, YOUR WAY. It is no more right or wrong than someone else's so respect all ways.
- **Express empathy and acknowledgement.** Notice what you and others feel. Sometimes the most important thing you can do is acknowledge someone's feeling.



4 TAKE ACTION

Don't worry about putting your foot in your mouth. As long as conversation comes from a place of genuine interest, you'll be fine. Use these 3 simple phrases to get started:

- **“I’m curious to know…”** – this is a way of asking what's on your mind without casting judgement.
- **“Tell me more…”** – allows someone to share in whatever way is meaningful to them.
- **“Thanks for sharing”** – thank the person for being vulnerable and reciprocate by sharing something about yourself.

AND FINALLY...

LET'S STOP BELIEVING THAT OUR
DIFFERENCES MAKE US SUPERIOR OR
INFERIOR TO ONE ANOTHER.

- CON MIGUEL RUIZ

MORE RESOURCES

- **Blog:** Click [HERE](#) to read my blog, "Want to Build a Diverse and Inclusive Workplace Culture? Start with Your Mindset First" to learn inclusive leadership behaviors.
- **Podcast:** Click [HERE](#) to listen to my BizTimes podcast interview where I offer guidance for companies starting their journeys to build more inclusive cultures.
- **Webinar:** Click [HERE](#) to watch my webinar, "3 Steps to Make Diversity a Differentiator in Meetings", to learn inclusive communications skills to harness diversity for better decision-making in meetings.
- **Consulting:** Want to have me to facilitate a diversity, equity and inclusion session with your team? Schedule a call to discuss [HERE](#).

CONNECT WITH ME FOR MORE HELP



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