

MILLENNIALS'
GUIDE TO
**DIVERSITY, EQUITY
& INCLUSION**

What No One Ever Told You About The
Importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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Advance Praise for *Millennials' Guide to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*

"The *Millennial's Guide to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion* is a great read, full of amazing content. Each chapter asks thought-provoking questions, helping the reader think more deeply about their identity and the impact culture has on how we see ourselves and the world around us. The authors challenge us to own our bias and be mindful of how bias shapes our engagements. Do you want a crash course on diversity, equity, and inclusion? If the answer is yes, then pick up this book right now and start reading it. I can't wait to share this with some of my clients."

-Glen Guyton
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Consultant
GuyStar Enterprises, LLC

"*Millennial's Guide to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion* is an intelligent, thoughtful conversation starter and personal journey mate. As an educator, recognizing, understanding, and appreciating diversity, equity, and inclusion have been the forefront of my practice. As a Millennial, I found value in not only seeing myself through the eyes of the authors but also in acknowledging the importance of doing the continuous work to truly understand myself AND others -- an understanding that highlights differences in an "also" not "only" style. The topics were dual reasons and reminders that in these ever changing times, we all need course correction to serve as an inclusive compass leading us to live as our best selves; which ultimately will make the world a better place for everyone."

-Amanda Marie Spivey, M. Ed.
Professional Educator

"For more than two decades, I have worked with thousands of Millennials at campuses nationwide. Millennials are known for their concern for social issues and advocacy to make the world a more equitable place. As diversity, equity, and inclusion has moved to the forefront of our consciousness, this comprehensive guide is the perfect solution to educate and empower millennials to make a difference. The *Millennials Guide to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion* serves as an essential guide to heighten their understanding and empowerment to create an equitable and just world. Everyone should read this!"

**-Elaine Pasqua, CSP
Certified Speaking Professional and President
Pasqua Productions, Inc.**

"I enjoyed the opportunity to read the *Millennials' Guide to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*. As a Millennial and DEI expert, I found the book to be very insightful and full of a-ha! moments. I loved every chapter, as each chapter provided a deeper understanding of self, culture, and stereotypes, as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion. The book highlighted so many aspects of today's world! *Millennials' Guide to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion* is relevant, relatable, and timely."

**-Tonia Morris
Founder & CEO
Simply HR Inc.**

"*Millennials' Guide to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion* is an amazingly helpful guide to understand diversity, inclusion, race, gender, and social practices that affect people living within today's society. It will help those who read it develop sensitivity, awareness, and a strong understanding of people from varied socio-cultural experiences, which, in turn, can assist in developing a more peaceful and gentle society."

-Rev. Kelly U. Farrow, Ph.D.

"Before becoming the leader of an organization, as a Millennial growing my career, I had to learn about the power of bringing my whole self to work the hard way. Learning how important, and special, it is to do this took a lot of trial and error. *Millennials' Guide to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion* book provides a solid plan and advice to figure out how to approach your career in a way that lifts you AND your organization up without sacrificing your integrity."

-Thomas Chernick

Director, New York Chapter of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce

"As a community development executive who has led nonprofit organizations and government agencies, I know that it has been my Millennial colleagues who have the burning desire to foster positive social change. I am pleased to provide them the space and support to do so. I am thrilled that I now can also arm them with this how-to manual to guide them through their leadership journeys as they get into - as the late Civil Rights Movement activist and Congressman John Lewis called it - good trouble."

-Taneshia Nash Laird

President & CEO

Newark Symphony Hall

"*Millennials' Guide to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion* is a must read for both established professionals and emerging leaders alike. The authors' scholarly -- yet practical -- approach leads readers through the much needed process of self-reflection and empowers with tools and techniques to navigate real world situations. This will be an instant addition to the York Early College Academy Library!

-Reginald Madden

Academic Affairs Manager

Liaison to York Early College Academy

Millennials' Guide to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion is NOT just for Millennials. This book is the single most effective guide to success in the "real world," -- to changing the real world for the better -- that I have seen. It's short, to the point, thorough, and chock-full of wisdom. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are the topic, but life, success, and fairness are the goals this book leads you to. This is MUST READING for everyone in the public sphere: clergy, business, political, education leaders - all will find this guide invaluable for navigating the post-Covid world.

Rabbi Burton L. Visotzky, PhD
Director, Milstein Center for Interreligious Dialogue
Jewish Theological Seminary

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Chapter 1.

Who Am I?

You may think that you have no control over the culture in your world or at the organization where you work. Not so! Not only do you impact your culture, but it is important to remember that you are a *part* of the culture in your world -- a very important part! *Who you are* shapes the culture around you. But first things first: do you know who you are?

1. **Often individuals, especially young people, feel that they have little to no say in the structure, environment and overall character of their world** or the organization for which they work. Know that your voice is important and you *can* impact the culture of your organization. Knowing who you are, and how you show up in multiple roles in different groups, can increase your impact in the world.
2. **Everyone has multiple aspects of their identity.** Identities may include ethnic, racial, national, gender, regional, sexual, personal, and organizational identities. These identities act in concert with one another, making you unique. Some parts of your identity you were born with (nationality, ethnicity). Others may change over time (group membership, religion, political affiliation). *Who you are today* is a result of countless interactions over time in which you discover who you are and how you fit into the world. What are some of your identities? These may be as a son or daughter, Puerto Rican, lesbian, child of immigrants, Muslim, New Yorker, or many more. Write down your current identities.
3. **Within the world, you are part of a larger group.** In fact, you're part of several larger groups. You are a part of your family, your community, social organizations, political clubs, professional organizations, religious groups, a generation, and

more. Even sports teams and social media groups count. And of course, your workplace. Write down a list of the various groups or organizations to which you belong, starting with your family.

4. **For the identities that you weren't born into, you have various ways of identifying how you fit into other groups.** These can include considering how you became a part of the groups you now affiliate with, increasing our awareness about the nature and history of those affiliations and identities, understanding rituals or rites of passage associated with these groups, attending events with others in this identity to build affiliation, and more. How you become affiliated with these groups can vary widely, from completing a membership form to apply to an organization, attending a ceremony or ritual and sticking with it, or a more formal initiation ceremony.
5. **Because society changes, along with the groups which make up our society, identities change as well.** Thinking back to when you were a child, how has your identity changed over the years? Have various parts of your identity become more important or less important over time? Are there parts of your identity that you would like to be more prominent or less prominent?
6. **Each of the groups you listed has its own values, norms and expectations,** which can be written, but more often, are unwritten. They're simply "known" – or in many cases, they are assumed to be known by all. Pick one of the groups that you belong to, and identify any values, norms, and expectations that may be written down. Then consider what values, norms, and expectations you believe the group shares that are not written down. Note these may be different from the written ones. These can include how the group determines its membership, how people treat outsiders, how members treat each other, how decisions are made, and more. Once you have a good list, share the list with a trusted other member of the group and see if you are in agreement.

7. **Once you have a sense of the values, norms, and expectations of a group**, identify whether you agree with them. Are they applied consistently and fairly to all members? What happens when members have different behavior or attitudes that conflict with the values, norms, and expectations in place? Do you think that the members of these groups are open to new ideas? Why or why not?
8. **How a group treats outsiders is an often-overlooked indicator of the group's values.** Often members within a group feel comfortable with one another so they feel that they can make remarks about outsiders that may seem harmless. Ethnic jokes, jokes about women or jokes about LGBTQ individuals might not seem like a big deal, but they are really the first level of prejudice. Have you ever heard others in any of your groups make such remarks? If so, how might that change the values, norms, and expectations you wrote down above? *Antilocution*, or hate speech (which includes jokes), lays the breeding ground for discriminatory practices and racism. If you've heard such comments before, how did others respond? How would you handle the situation if you heard someone in one or more of your groups using disparaging remarks or jokes about outsiders?
9. **Once you've written down this information**, hold on to it. We'll return to it later in the book. Feel free to update it as you need to, and to discuss it with others. And congratulations -- you've made a huge step forward in understanding who you are and how you fit in the world!

See also: **Chapter 2:** What is My Culture?
 Chapter 4: What are My Values?
 Chapter 5: How do I Define Myself?

Chapter 2.

What is My Culture?

Many people think that culture has to do with ethnic foods or perhaps the clothing that they see others wearing. But culture is far more than material aspects such as food and clothing. This can be problematic when we box culture narrowly into material and tangible elements. So ... what is culture?

1. **There are many definitions for culture.** A good, solid definition is that culture is *socially learned and transmitted behavior*. Culture is *what we do*. Yes, it's what we wear and what we eat. But it's also what we value and what we believe. These values and beliefs impact what we think of ourselves and how we interact and treat others.
2. **Beliefs are the assumptions that we choose to make about the world in which we live; they are part of our culture or subculture.** These may be associated with our group membership. For example, most religions profess a belief that killing people is wrong. Some religions profess a belief that killing animals for food is also wrong. Some of our beliefs are consistent with what our groups believe; others may be different from what our groups profess. Write down some of the assumptions or beliefs you have about the world. These could be about basic rules we should follow, the value of people or things. In general, if you think, "People should ..." or "Certain people should ..." what follows is one of your assumptions. Write it down and come back to it when you think of more.
3. **As a result of assumptions and beliefs, we think and behave in various ways.** For example, if we believe that all people are generally good, we behave differently than if we believe

all people are generally bad. We must remember that our behaviors affect not only our own outcomes in life, but those around us—particularly those groups in which we belong to—including our families and our workplace.

4. **Remember that culture is *learned*.** It is not innate. As we are continually learning and therefore changing, our culture also changes. As others learn and grow, they also change the culture. This includes our culture as individuals and the culture in our particular settings. This learning is both formal and informal. How do you learn about culture?
5. **There are several methods in which culture is transmitted to us.** We learn about our culture through methods such as those below. When you look at the assumptions and values you wrote down, how did you learn about them?
 - a. *Direct instruction.* This is when we are directly taught what to believe about our culture. For example, many of us in the U.S. are taught in school colonists discovered the Americas (even though there were people living here already) and that Native Americans had primitive societies. This instruction reflects the values of the people teaching and may or may not be completely accurate.
 - b. *Rewards and punishment.* When we do what we should be doing in our culture, we are often rewarded. Examples of these rewards are celebrations for achieving an educational accomplishment. Similarly, when we step out of line, we may be punished in some way, such as by disapproving looks, being ignored, or in some cases, physical punishment. Many times, people implement these rewards and punishment without really thinking about it; they're just repeating what they were taught.
 - c. *Imitation and experimentation.* We often imitate people we admire, whether it's smoking because "cool kids" are smoking, wearing fancy clothes, or disliking the same

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people they dislike. Sometimes we experiment with who we want to resemble, so we try on those same behaviors and beliefs.

- d. *Role playing.* Similar to imitation, we can try on roles. Many times, young children assume different roles when they are playing, such as parent/child, teacher/student, or cop/robber. This helps them figure out what people in those roles do by play-acting. As adults, we sometimes take on roles, such as leader, which allows us to try on different behaviors and views as well.
 - e. *Interaction.* Finally, interacting with others -- especially those different from us -- helps us better understand our culture and their culture. There may be subtle differences, such as comfort with eye contact while speaking, or significant differences, like impropriety of speaking with someone of a different gender. The more we approach these interactions with an open mind and curiosity rather than judgment, the more we can learn about culture, both ours and others'.
6. **Although culture is transmitted using methods, agents are the conduits for those methods.** These agents may be authoritative, or personal to us, or not related to us at all. Agents include our family, school, peer groups, religion, workplace, and of course mass media. Consider the ways in which you were influenced by these different agents and how we all continue to be influenced by them. To look further into agents, go back to some of your group affiliations from Chapter 1. Consider what agents taught you values for those groups. If you're not sure, ask! For example, you could ask a parent or sibling about some of the beliefs instilled into you by your family. Or you could identify what messages you're receiving from mass media by watching television shows from the time when you were growing up. What were the lessons those shows displayed? Some lessons you might have picked up from television include: Hard work will/won't pay

off, life is/isn't fair, women and men make/don't make similar contributions to society. What are you finding?

7. **Remember your understanding of culture begins at birth and the transition continues throughout your lifetime.** It's an ongoing process! Be curious!

See also: **Chapter 1:** Who Am I?
 Chapter 3: Who are My People?
 Chapter 7: My Stereotypes

Chapter 3.

Who are My People?

How you approach the culture in your organization and in society is largely determined by your own understanding of culture and by your identity. The important thing to know about identity is that it is your self-definition. Your identity is self-defined by your distinct beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors. Each of us is a product of our culture.

1. **Your culture is multifaceted.** This means that the various aspects of culture mentioned above and the degree to which they exist vary from person to person. When you think about all of the identities you have, what are the groups associated with these identities? Do you feel like you're a part of each of those groups? Do you relate? Do you feel these are your people?
2. **If there are groups that you do not affiliate with as “your people,” think through why.** For example, someone who immigrated to the U.S. from Kenya as a teenager might or might not identify as “African American,” even if it is technically accurate. Some people whose behaviors and feelings would indicate they are bisexual don't identify as part of the LGBTQ community – or may not even self-identify as bisexual! Are there any beliefs you have about groups or how those groups are perceived that make you not want to have them be your people?
3. **Studies show that more and more Americans are comfortable transitioning from one identity to another.** If you've changed any part of your identity (e.g., sexual orientation, profession, nationality, religion), how does that affect whether you affiliate with that group? Why do you

think this is the case? If you transition away from a group, there may be a process of grieving as you leave that part of your identity behind.

4. **Quite a few people attempt to mask their identity in order to fit in with dominant groups.** This is called “passing.” The person is able to conceal their race, place of origin, or ethnicity, and publicly identifies as someone else. This could be for safety reasons or for other reasons. For example, some people who are LGBTQ “pass” as straight because many people assume heterosexuality, and it may be safer for them to let people assume they are straight. Are there any ways in which you actively or passively mask your identity? Do you know anyone who does this, and why they might? For most people, safety is paramount.
5. **Another practice that is used in the workplace is called code-switching.** This is when members of a particular group automatically adjust their language and vernacular to fit in with those in the mainstream or with another group to which they belong. Code-switching is not necessarily to hide one’s identity. For many, it has become part of a natural behavior enabling the person to assimilate into the working environment. For example, many people temper their accents or slang when they are at work compared to when they are at home or with their peers. Do you do this in any way? Do you know people who do this?
6. **Be aware that seemingly equivalent aspects of “my people” may be different across different groups.** For example, many white people find aspects of ethnicity as equal: Italian-American is of roughly equivalent import as being Irish-American or African-American. But this false equivalence ignores the significant socially enforced structural inequality between some groups; people who are Italian-American or Irish-American have very different experiences in U.S. society compared to Mexican-Americans or African-Americans. Note these hierarchies changed over time; earlier in U.S.

Who are My People?

history both Italian-Americans and Irish-Americans were viewed as inferior to others.

7. **Even the terminology we use defines a dominant group as a supposedly neutral standard.** For example, referring to people as non-white defines white as the standard, or referring to people as minority (even when they may be the statistical majority) defines the majority as the standard. This denies individuals in those groups the identity on their own terms without comparison to others. In what ways do we perceive our role in the socially constructed hierarchy?

See also: **Chapter 1:** Who Am I?
 Chapter 4: What are My Values?
 Chapter 5: How do I Define Myself?

