

The CHOICE Connection

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CHOICES
Jean Strosinski, PhD, PCC, CPT



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Quotable Quotes

"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept and celebrate those differences."
~ Audre Lorde

"Diverse representation without a culture of inclusion spells disaster, while an inclusive culture without diverse representation lacks credibility." ~ Gilbert Casillas

"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."
~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one single story become the only story." ~ Chimamanda Adichie

Dear Jean,

Our featured writer this month, Susana Rinderle. Susana is an Albuquerque-based trainer, coach, facilitator and President of Susana Rinderle Consulting, LLC. She equips leaders and organizations to eliminate the gap between their good intentions and their negative impacts on people, creating environments where everyone's unique brilliance can flourish for the benefit of all. A native of Los Angeles, she has over 35 years of personal experience working across differences, and over 20 years of professional experience in multiple sectors in the U.S. and Mexico, including nonprofit, education, performing arts, government, corporate and healthcare. Susana was the first Manager of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for University of New Mexico Hospitals, where she oversaw all aspects of health equity efforts, diversity training, health literacy initiatives, and the Interpreter Language

Services department. Susana holds a B.A. in sociology from UCLA and an M.A. in intercultural communication from UNM. Susana has published articles on topics related to Mexico and U.S. Latinos in commercial magazines as well as academic journals. She was featured at TEDxABQ 2012, speaking on "Diversity is Necessary for Human Evolution."

I had the privilege of meeting Susana about a year and a half ago through a connection in our New Mexico coaching community. Since that time, Susana has shared her brilliance and passion for diversity with a few of us - all having a passion to support the unique brilliance of those who touch our worlds. Susana has an energy that knows no boundaries and a smile that lights up all who share at the table and in the conversation. Thank you, Susana, for stepping into my world and sharing your gift of diversity and its role in our lives.

*In the spirit of sharing our gifts,
Jean*

The 6 C's to Embrace Diversity by Susana Rinderle



Diversity. Even the word makes people react. Some cringe or brace themselves. Some get angry. Others retreat or withdraw. I see this all the time with clients and in workshops I teach, and if that was your reaction when you saw the word, I don't blame you! After having been steeped in "diversity" for most of my life and working in the field for over 20 years, I've come to understand that the reason we aren't making much progress in the area of "diversity" is because of the emotional reactions the topic provokes in us. We get provoked because of the way we've been having the conversation, which -- instead of being helpful and solutions-oriented -- often becomes more about guilt and shame, anger and blame.

Granted, we still have a lot of healing to do as a nation in coming to terms with the past and present of our particular history around "diversity" -- which is often used as a euphemism for race. But I believe we can simultaneously have a new conversation that moves us forward and gets us unstuck. I believe that new conversation can look like this:

1. Human beings are profoundly similar (genetically, as a species) and deeply different (as cultures, nations, and individuals) at the same time.

2. Everyone is different somehow but not all differences are treated equally. Almost everyone has had the experience of feeling different, left out, weird, or marginalized in some way. However, some differences (being smart, very handsome, or a fast runner) give us advantages while others (being poor, not being able to see, being very short) give us disadvantages. Most differences (being female, being White, being Catholic) might give us advantages or disadvantages depending on the context.

3. Everyone is biased, but biases aren't bad. Our biases (unconscious orientations) have kept us safe and helped our brains order our experience for thousands of years as a species. And they still do! These biases are the way our brains work, and are part of what make us human.

4. These biases are the reason that diversity is necessary for human evolution and give us better results. Our body picks up on about 40 pieces of the 2 million stimuli coming at us every second. The more different you are from me, the higher the probability that you're picking up on a somewhat different 40 pieces from me -- literally. These biases -- unconscious orientations and

filters -- cannot be taught, which is why inclusion of diverse people and perspectives is necessary to get better results. In fact, research by mathematicians and economists has shown that diverse groups outperform individuals, nondiverse groups and even a group of the best (!?) when it comes to tasks like cognition, prediction, problem solving, coordination and cooperation.

5. Good intentions aren't enough. Despite the fact we currently have a record high of over 1000 active hate groups in the United States, more damage is done, and more opportunities lost, by the millions of good-hearted, well-intended people who miss things because of their filters. Diverse groups outperform nondiverse groups when it comes to providing quality education, healthcare, effective laws and policies -- even higher profits -- because a diverse group has more access to more of the possibilities. Literally.

6. We need everyone's brilliance, which gives us access to as many of the possibilities as we can get, to solve the large, pressing problems facing our species. We shouldn't "do diversity" because it's "good" or "right" but because diversity in people, combined with equity and inclusion, gets us better results.

Tools and Resources FROM THE BOOKSHELF

Reinventing Diversity by Howard J. Ross

The subtitle sums it up: Transforming Organizational Community to Strengthen People, Purpose, and Performance. Ross has been working in the diversity field for decades, particularly around unconscious bias, and outlines an innovative new paradigm for rethinking this topic.

The Difference by Scott E. Page

Groundbreaking book that outlines some of the research that demonstrates how we are better when we are diverse.

The Inclusion Paradox: The Obama Era & the Transformation of Global Diversity by Andrés T. Tapia

Takes a look at the demographic shifts in the United States and challenges the idea that the melting pot leads to inclusion on its own.

THE INTERNET CONNECTIONS

[Diversity is Necessary for Human Evolution](#) by Susana Rinderle at TEDxABQ 2012 Talk (9 minutes)

[Implicit Assumption Tests \(IAT\)](#) - a long standing project out of Harvard University to test people's implicit biases. Startling results often inspire test takers to reflect on the source of orientations they didn't expect, and how we can develop negative biases even with good intentions.

[Susana Rinderle Consulting, LLC](#) - is a training, coaching and consulting firm which equips leaders, individuals and organizations to eliminate the gap between their good intentions and negative impacts on people, creating environments where everyone's brilliance can flourish, for the benefit of all.

Reflection

I believe our major barriers to accessing everyone's brilliance, our own brilliance, and the maximum number of possibilities is internal and emotional. Research shows that just putting "diverse" people together does NOT lead to better results. In fact, it sometimes leads to worse results and new, serious problems! We get the benefits of diversity ONLY if the diverse group communicates effectively and gets along reasonably well. However, our ancient "downstairs brain" isn't well-equipped to help us trust or engage with people we perceive as different! Then all the wonderful

training we've gotten on effective communication, effective leadership, and conflict management goes out the window because our ancient brain has been triggered, and our "upstairs brain" goes offline!

The critical internal skills I've found -- through experience, reflection, and research -- to being able to keep our entire brains online and reap all the benefits of diversity are **the "6 C's": courage, consciousness, curiosity, changeability, compassion and control.**

What do you find comes up for you when trying to work with, supervise, or relate personally to individuals that are different? Which of the "6 C's" would you find to be most helpful in working through that?

Choose To ...

Consider how diversity and inclusion can bring you better, meaningful results in your professional and personal lives ... Reflect on what some of your biases might be -- both unconscious and conscious ... Be curious about what you might be missing, or what some of your unintended impacts on others might be, because of your biases ... Own what your brilliance is and feel more compelled to manifest that ... Reach out to others and start a new conversation around "diversity".



Administrivia

My Constructive Choices Audience...

- * Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
- * New managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
- * Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, live their voices, and...
- * Coaches who choose to step out, show up, and say - YES, it IS all about YOU!

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