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THE NEXTIONS IMPACT

Should Inclusion Include *ALL* Perspectives?



I was recently presenting on the importance of diversity and inclusion in business intelligence to a group of business leaders when the subject of people getting fired for "hateful views" was raised. One gentleman specifically asked the following question: *If diversity and inclusion are about learning from different points of view, shouldn't views like those of white nationalists and men who think women should not work outside the home be included in diversity?"*

This question has come up every now and then over the last twenty years that I have been doing work on diversity and inclusion, but the frequency and intensity with which it is asked have increased significantly in the last two years. The following is my response to this question. I hope it gives you some food for thought in formulating your own responses to this question because whether or not you are being asked the question explicitly, the question is a palpable (albeit often invisible) component of the majority of conversations on diversity and inclusion today.

Diversity is who we are - all of who we are. Diversity encompasses all the things that make us different from each other from differences in identities and abilities to differences in preferences and styles. Based on the history and culture of any geographical context, some of these differences may be called out and governed specifically by legal, political and/or social systems. Some of those differences can be perspectives that are hateful or dangerous.

Inclusion is what we do with these differences; inclusion is behavior. The behavior of inclusion is comprised of four distinct actions - how we **seek out**, **listen to**, **understand** and **integrate** differences into our ways of seeing and thinking about the world around us. The more we seek out, listen to, understand and integrate perspectives that are different from our own, the more our intelligence expands.

Regardless of the point of view in question, each of us can and should seek out, listen to, and understand all perspectives, even ones rooted in hate and/or ignorance. However, it is in the integration of different perspectives into our own points of view that we can and should separate perspectives that are rooted in equality and humanity and genuinely differ in interpretation from ones that are rooted in inequality and inhumanity. All perspectives should be sought out, heard and understood, but not all perspectives deserve to be integrated into the way we think.

As an advocate for more inclusion in this world, I believe that every point of view should be heard and understood, but points of view that argue for exclusion and segregation do not have to be integrated into how we think and what we do. That said, how we think and what we do in pursuit of inclusion cannot be informed or effective if we haven't heard and understood the perspectives we need to challenge as we journey to inclusion.

Mahalo!
Arin



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