

Diversity, Change and Social Justice

By Maurice W. Dorsey

Diversity and social change begin with you! Do you know who you are? If yes, how do you know? Using yourself as an instrument of change (K. K. Smith 1990) is what this paper is all about; your presence, influence, and intervention skills at the individual, interpersonal, group, organization and systems levels of change. The goal here is to achieve self-knowledge and self-management.

To bring about a change in you, you must maintain an open mind, you must be open to deconstructing self, and you must open yourself to rethinking of self. If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always gotten!

Diversity and change entails reexamining your position on issues of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, social class, and other categories of diversity and social justice that are often very uncomfortable, especially when you look in the mirror.

We are a world society of groups: white, black, male, female, rich, poor, gay, straight, young, old, professional, non-professional, abled, differently abled, light skinned, dark skinned, etc. Groups are divided into dominant and subordinated categories. If you are in the dominant groups the world looks pretty good to you, but if you are in the subordinated group the world is less than perfect.

Further groups are divided by generational differences such as the veteran generation (1925-42); the baby boomers (1943-62); generation X (1963-

81); and millennium (1982-2000). These distinctions further divide older employers and younger employees, parents and children, old-school thinkers and new age thinkers.

What groups are you in? How do you feel about being in these groups? We are all members of various groups in society, some more powerful and/or privileged than others, and the various memberships we have in these groups intersect to create each person's unique social location. If you are in the socially privileged groups in the US - white, male, Christian, heterosexual, middle-aged, professional, abled, rich, etc. - you are privileged and in most cases don't have any idea of what it is like to be in the subordinated groups, which include people of color, females, non-Christians, gays, non-professionals, the poor, and the differently abled. Moreover, if in the latter group, you are likely to be a victim of dominant-group power, control, and authority. People are often unconscious of how they oppress others on a day-to-day basis, especially if they possess more privileged social locations. Regardless of the logical explanation, the pain and hurt of oppression still impacts those who have been victims. Some oppression leads to abuse and violence, either mental, physical, and/or emotional.

There are two types of oppression: institutionalized and internalized. Institutional oppression is when a group, organization, or system maintains and imposes the wants and needs of highly dominant group identifications, i.e. white, male, Christian, heterosexual.

Internalized oppression is within you, when you deny your subordinated group identification. Former President Roosevelt could have been a spokesperson and poster child for the differently abled had he publicly acknowledged his disability during his presidency. Other examples of internalized oppression include: women who state that they hate working for other women; gays

who hate flamboyant gays; blacks who hate other blacks because of color or complexion; or Christians who condemn other Christians. These behaviors inspire social scientists to ask how oppressed groups oppress other oppressed group? We are all in it together regardless of internal oppression and regardless of the logical response.

The Johari Window (Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham) is one of the most useful models describing the process of human interaction. A four-paned "window" divides personal awareness into four different quadrants: open-self, blind-self, hidden-self, and the unknown-self. Your open-self is the self you and others know and what is known about you (conscious); your blind-self includes things that others know about you but you do not (unconscious); your hidden-self encompasses things that you know about you and others do not (conscious); and your unknown self includes things about you that you and others do not know (unconscious). See Table 1.

Quadrant Behavior Theory, created by Cathy Royal, also utilizes a four-paned "window" dividing white males, white females, black males, and black females. White males are assigned a plus-plus for white and male, two dominant groups; plus-minus for white female, a group with one dominant and one subordinate intersection in terms of social location; minus-plus for black males, with one dominant group affiliation; and minus-minus for black females, with no dominant group identification. This theory is very powerful when analyzing group dynamics and provides a great insight into how dominant and subordinate groups interact. This theory also is an excellent instrument for tracking behavior patterns at the interpersonal, group, organization, and systems level of change. When thoroughly studied, this theory unveils why conflict arises between dominant and subordinate individuals and groups.

Tracking Behaviors (Elsie Cross &

	Known to Self	Not Known to Self
Known to Others	1 OPEN	2 BLIND
Not Known to Others	3 HIDDEN	4 UNKNOWN

Table 1. The Johari Window



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Associates, Inc. and Delyte D. Frost, et al.) is a useful way of tracking and analyzing group participation. Considerations when tracking/observing group interaction and participation include: observing who is in the group; observing who is talking and who initiates. We can also ask: Who interrupts whom? What patterns do you see? Generally speaking, the answer to each question is the dominant group. Dominant groups dominate the group, talk the most, initiate more frequently, and interrupt more frequently. Subordinate groups are more often silent. Subordinate groups need to ask themselves: What is the impact on ME? How does this make me feel? What am I going to do about it? The single best thing a subordinated person can do is make certain their voices are heard. Silence perpetuates all “isms.”

Path to Diversity Competence (Elsie Cross & Associate, adapted by Jack Grant & Delyte D. Frost) describes diversity competence in four major stages: denial,

fear, integration, and competence. Denial is a position of “nothing is wrong;” fear is an understanding of what is wrong but the individual is immobilized i.e. “frozen;” integration is starting to make changes in behavior or “defrosting;” and competence is the habit of doing the right thing toward subordinated groups all of the time. This is a very difficult stage to attain.

Understanding yourself is gaining a clear understanding of you by knowing your dominant and subordinated group status and memberships; claiming and accepting each of your group identities; understanding that power, privilege, and control come with dominant groups; understanding and discerning institutionalized and internal oppression; knowing your blind and hidden self; seeking knowledge of your blind self and learning to track human interaction in your interpersonal and group relationships; and, finally, analyzing the impact all of this has on YOU!

Who are you? And how do you know? 🏠

Author’s Picks for Further Reading

NTL Institute

🏠 <http://ntl.org>

Elsie Y. Cross Associates, Inc.

🏠 <http://eyca.com>

For more information on Cathy Royal or Johari Window, simply enter the words into a Google search and numerous references will be queried.

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