

Finding Better Ways to Create a More Equitable World

by Michael Welp, Ph.D.

With the release of the Catalyst's research report, *Calling All White Men: Can Training Help Create Inclusive Workplaces*, I can honestly say I am even more proud to be a white man. Fifteen years ago my research verified that the burden of educating white men about diversity fell almost exclusively to women and people of color. We formed our company, White Men as Full Diversity Partners, to change that unsustainable dynamic. To create a more equitable world, we knew we needed to find better ways. One of these ways we call the White Men's Caucus learning lab. We've led more than 90 groups of 12-18 white men, sitting in an open circle for 3.5 days, to explore together what it means to be white, male, and (for many) heterosexual. Every caucus has been a palpable, unique adventure.

Many of the men describe the lab as life changing. Most begin the experience thinking there is nothing they can learn about diversity from other white men. They think their time with diversity is about helping other people with their issues. Twenty-four hours in they start to realize how much is at stake for them personally. Suddenly this exploration has everything to do with being an effective leader, as well as a better parent and spouse/partner. Their passion for full inclusion grows and they start relating to other white men differently as well, with more authenticity and a willingness to step up to their role of supporting and challenging each other to be full diversity partners.

Meanwhile, our women and people of color colleagues told us how much they wanted to be a fly on the wall in these white-male-only sessions. We created our White Men and Allies Learning Lab where mixed race and gender groups can practice partnership skills with each other. Women and people of color soon discovered they also have work to do around reexamining their assumptions about white men that get in their way of partnership. We created the Women of Different Tribes Caucus to address the historical tensions between white women and women of color and to focus on women's leadership development through cross-cultural partnership.

Catalyst's new research verifies the impact of these learning labs in both creating awareness of inequities and building skills for creating full inclusion. I love that the research showed that co-workers back on the job noticed lab participants using significantly more "inquiry across difference" even when lab participants were unaware of the change themselves. All these changes are a reflection of the courageous leaders and employees of Rockwell Automation who opened their minds and hearts to deep learning.

To those readers who oversee or sponsor diversity and leadership development functions in organizations, I say, stop believing these two are separate. Stop searching for the latest and greatest simulations to run in order to try to

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[MICHAEL'S BLOGS](#)

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER

FOR MEN

How does male culture impact how I, and other men, show up at work?

How does male culture affect my personal life?

FOR WOMEN

What do you have to navigate and/or negotiate (sometimes referred to as micro-inequities) that are often invisible to men?

How would your partnerships at work change if men were more aware of your reality?

FOR ALL

What do we need from each other (men from other men, women with other women and then also between the two genders) in order to craft more inclusive work environments?

grow leadership skills. There is nothing that will grow critical leadership skills better than putting people into candid, complex conversations around the issues of diversity and inclusion. They will experience and develop crucial skills like courage, connecting head and heart, listening deeply, navigating through ambiguity and complexity, and being able to sort out one's intent from impact. These skills, honed through inclusive partnership practice, bring fresh perspective to all of today's business issues.

To those who want to help white men get diversity, stop avoiding the words "white men." Stop making diversity only about respecting individual differences. White men already get that. What we don't understand is a sense of our Euro-American (white) male culture, which is most invisible to us and which we often equate with just being human. We often don't get that while our intent of "treating everyone the same" is equality, the impact is that others feel they have to fit into our box and keep us comfortable. We also don't understand how we have a different experience in the world from being white, being male, and—for some of us—being heterosexual. Don't let any fear you have about making white men uncomfortable keep us from leaning into our learning. Create white male executive sponsors for this focus and let them handle any anxiety from white men.

Today there are new ways for white men to become full diversity partners without putting the education burden solely on others. Every week I feel hope and gratitude through witnessing the courage and vulnerability of white men on their diversity learning journeys. Their impact on me makes me proud

to be a white male. I am grateful that Catalyst has documented core components of this positive impact on the workplace. I invite other white men to take this journey, which will benefit you and those around you more than you can imagine. At the other end of the journey awaits more satisfying relationships, flourishing productivity and a more equitable and peaceful world.

MICHAEL'S 2MIN VIDEO

HOW HIS VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA CHANGED HIS LIFE

