

Inclusive Leadership

Transforming Diverse Lives,
Workplaces, and Societies

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Michael Welp and Edgar H. Schein

Many diversity and inclusion efforts fail because they don't know how to engage the majority group, which in many cases in the U.S., Europe, Australia, and beyond, is White men. Diversity efforts habitually simply don't speak to White men; in fact these efforts often either ignore them or blame them as the problem. This creates apathy, anger, and resentment among White men. Signs of this exist everyday in the media, as a growing critical mass of frustrated White men in organizations struggle with efforts to build greater inclusion. Or even worse, they create a recoil wave throughout a whole nation against the global shift toward greater diversity of groups represented at all levels of power. Yet, many in organizations and in society don't know how to respond in ways that transform this challenge into more passion for diversity and inclusion. This chapter is about the unique challenges along the path of White men becoming what we call "full diversity partners." This means being more actively engaged with White women, people of color, LGBT people, as well as supporting and challenging other White men to be better allies for diversity. Being the insider or dominant group in many organizations creates for White men unique challenges in discovering and overcoming our own biases in order to become inclusive leaders. This chapter looks at White men both at the individual and at the group or cultural level. Each level adds collectively to a more complete picture of what the White male leader who wishes to be more inclusive may be culturally up against.

One reason White men are left behind on diversity efforts is because of the mindsets commonly used to examine diversity. An exploration of race is usually focused on people of color, while an examination of gender often focuses on women. Similarly, an examination of sexual orientation or gender identity is focused on people who are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, or transgender. Attention to race rarely focuses on exploring being White and gender explorations hardly ever examine men. Thus, heterosexual, cisgender White men are not focused on or examined. This leads White men to think diversity is not about them, and to think diversity is about

helping other people with their issues. It is also assumed that those who are usually the focus, White women, people of color, and people who are GLBT, should be the leaders and teachers of diversity efforts. This mindset limits the role of White men to that of more passive supporters who don't see the crucial role they have of engaging their own group to grow their consciousness, competence, and courage to lead inclusively.

The White Men's Caucus (Welp)

My (Welp's) dissertation research in the 1990s (Welp, 1997, 2002) found that most White men learn everything about diversity from women and people of color and don't look to each other for any learning. This places an enormous burden on others to educate White men, which is not sustainable, especially in the many organizations where a majority of senior level positions are held by White men. It is also inefficient because the very biases we are trying to learn about as White men can cause us to minimize the perspectives of people of color and White women. In addition, White men are less likely to project onto other White men that they have an "agenda" or a "chip on their shoulder" around gender or race. To create a more sustainable path, in 1997 Bill Proudman and I started regularly hosting four-day residential learning labs called White Men's Caucuses. The goal was to grow awareness around what it means to be White, male, and, for some of us, heterosexual, and then to use that awareness to build better partnerships and greater inclusion.

The idea of a White Men's Caucus is often disorienting and provocative for many White men—yet many have found it life-changing. On the first night, asking White men what it was like to tell others they were coming to a White Men's Caucus reveals experiences of awkwardness or avoidance. One man took a pair of scissors and cut the title out of his pre-reading on the plane so others next to him would not misinterpret and think he was part of an extremist group.

One aspect of the path to advocating diversity for White men is to become conscious of what it means to be White and male, and for some heterosexual and cisgender. I have found a multidisciplinary approach helpful by combining two group level viewpoints: a multicultural perspective and a power structure perspective. A power structure (or social justice) perspective, using the concepts of privilege or systemic advantage, helps contribute to an understanding of how White men are not having to navigate challenges that other groups deal with on a daily basis. The word *privilege* refers to not having to negotiate or navigate dynamics or challenges that other groups often have to deal with, at the same time assuming that others should recognize that we have worked hard for what we have. For example, having able-bodied privilege means I don't have to spend time navigating my way through buildings in

a wheelchair or worrying about accessibility wherever I go, but I may also believe I have worked hard on taking good care of myself and staying out of harm's way.

The multicultural perspective looks through the lens of culture. Edgar Schein describes culture as the shared, tacit assumptions we take for granted as the way to perceive, think about, and act in a given situation (Schein, 1985; Schein & Schein, 2017). The multicultural perspective illuminates the possibility of the existence of a White male culture and we can then explore what its impact might be on inclusion and partnerships at work and beyond.

In cultures where White men are the dominant or insider group (North America, Europe, Australia, etc.) most White men do not, in fact, see themselves as a group. They see themselves as individuals. White men don't identify with the wide gamut of what is attributed to them, which can lead them to resist identifying with their group. This is partly because our White male culture emphasizes rugged individualism. It is also because we have never had to see ourselves as a group, which is common for any group that is the dominant group in any organization or system. We are like a fish in water. Because we have usually never had to leave the water, we have the least awareness of the water we are in.

Most White men who attend the White Men's Caucus talk about having new eyes and seeing themselves for the first time as a member of a group with a distinct culture and unique experience of the world that is different than the experience of White women, people of color, or other "outsider" groups. They learn about the individual-group paradox, that they are both unique individuals unlike anyone on the planet and at the same time part of a White male group that shapes how they see and experience the world.

In the White Men's Caucus we examine this idea of a White male culture before we explore the concept of systemic advantage or privilege. In this chapter we focus on this White male culture.¹ White men typically do not consciously focus on themselves and do not think they have their own culture. We think culture is something other people have. Many writings about American or U.S. culture don't identify the culture as White male, further confusing the issue. For example, Geert Hofstede's (1980) classic studies identifying U.S. culture were initially based on studying all White men who worked for IBM, which makes Whiteness and maleness an invisible part of the cultural literature as well. According to U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/RHI705210/06) data on the racial composition of California, the largest state in the U.S., in July 2019 the White non-Hispanic population was only 36.8% of the total and not even a plurality, with Hispanic/Latinos making up 39.3%.

White Male Culture and its Organizational/Managerial Impact (Welp/Schein)

When we attempt to identify White male culture, White men often assume we are going to critique it and say it is bad. This is, in part, because of their scar tissue from feeling blamed in the past for diversity problems. As we explore White male culture we have to remember that culture is neither good nor bad, but a response to historical events and what groups learned in adapting to their environment. It is helpful to simply explore what the culture is without initially attributing positive or negative value. Cultural traits that helped a group to adapt to one set of circumstances can become negative and maladaptive when circumstances change, a process that is sometimes called cultural lag. A White male culture that evolved when White men dominated the process of conquering the frontier and building a nation can become dysfunctional when historical circumstances create a more culturally diverse nation and new values around the role of women and gender. The problem of cultural lag is that the group that is still living by the old values does not realize it and, therefore, continues to behave in a dysfunctional manner. After initially describing White male culture one can reflect on how some of its assumptions impact White women, people of color, and other cultural groups.

It is nearly impossible to describe a whole culture. Culture describes the major shared characteristics of a group, but not every individual in the group has the same characteristics to the same degree. We find strong core themes that most White men identify with, but there is also considerable variance across regions of the U.S., and by age demographics, sexual orientation, industry, organizational function, religion, and class.² Let's look at seven characteristics.

Rugged Individualism and Competition

Escaping the confines of being told what class and religion they were, many a White male pioneer took risks to come to the U.S. in order to "make a place for himself." They valued being able to "stand on their own two feet," and "pull themselves up by their bootstraps." This characteristic is symbolized by characters such as John Wayne and The Marlboro Man. In fact, the most common statue in Washington DC is of an individual on horseback.

In the U.S. we say "the squeaky wheel gets the grease," whereas in Japan (or some other Asian cultures) they say "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down" or "it is the tall poppy that gets cut." In many Asian cultures there is more of a focus on harmony. In the U.S., you are expected to speak up if you have something to say; in many Asian cultures you do not speak up until the higher-status members of the

group have spoken. In the U.S., creative innovative out-of-the box thinking and proposing is valued as a source of inventiveness and entrepreneurship.

With individualism goes competition and the assumption that getting ahead means competing with others, the encouragement that “may the best man win,” and the acceptance that one gains status by winning. This automatic assumption of competition in the economic system gets carried over into individual competition inside organizations and becomes dysfunctional as team work becomes more necessary. It is also easy to see how White men competing with other White men might bond together when they see a threat to the whole White male tribe from other cultural groups.

Individualism impacts our motivational theories as well, with the top of Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs being “self-actualization.” Organizations build their entire career systems around individual potential and individual accountability. Harmony, teamwork, and collaboration, which might be central values in other cultures, tend to be dismissed as problem-solving mechanisms we occasionally need to get things done, but that are not intrinsically valued or developed. Asking for help or saying “I don’t know” can be seen as a sign of weakness. Confidence is valued over humility, leading to a hierarchical form of organization in which power and rank become synonymous, sometimes resulting in what we might call “the divine rights of management” (Schein, 1989).

Low Tolerance of Uncertainty

This characteristic can be traced back to Calvinistic thinking, emphasizing dichotomous “either/or” logic such as “you’re either with us or against us.” This can lead us to see the world in absolutes and miss the gray area in today’s complex world. We tend to ask questions from an either/or logic such as: is male aggression caused by nature or nurture? This can prevent us from seeing the “both/and” answer.

This same desire to remove uncertainty has us wanting to know what the rules are around diversity. We may secretly wish for the wallet card that names the ten things to do or say to avoid mistakes in dealing with women or people of color. For example, one White male asked: “Should I open the door for women or not open the door for women, which is it? I’ve been chewed out for both.” The complexity of today’s diversity resists simplification and demands skills of accepting and even thriving in environments of ambiguity.

Our managerial culture that has evolved from linear, mechanistic, engineering-based logic has worked extremely well in building an industry and has led management to be dominated by the need to measure and control. Even the analysis of culture is viewed as “soft stuff” and avoided by line managers because they cannot see how to control

a complex socio-technical system. This avoidance often leads to cultural issues like diversity being delegated to the human resource function, which then creates policy that, however, male White line managers only accept because some equal opportunity law requires it.

Action Over Reflection; Task Over Relationship

Value is created by doing, by getting things done. We take pride in our problem-solving ability. We often try to fix something before we fully understand it. Our spouses may remind us they sometimes don't want us to fix their situation, they just want us to listen. Our identities come primarily from our work roles. A stranger meets someone new and asks, "What do you do?" Other cultures around the world would describe themselves not by their work role but by their family or where they grew up.

Our focus on action includes a can-do optimism that anything is possible, "the impossible just takes a little longer." We also take an ultimately pragmatic stance, "do whatever it takes," "leave no stone unturned." Our strong action/fix-it orientation leads us to the belief that we can dominate nature rather than be subservient to, or try to live in harmony with, nature.

Focusing on the task is also more important than focusing on relationships. We spend only enough time on relationships in order to get the task done. Doing is more important than being or relating. Other cultures would never step into a task without first building a strong relationship connection, exemplified best by the Asian need to precede work meetings with drinking and dinner in which personal relationships can be forged and trust built up. We end up not trusting each other, so we create contracts and written deals in place of handshakes and verbal promises. When we do spend "relational" time with each other, such as in golfing and fishing, it is notable how these activities are traditionally more male-oriented, much to the chagrin of women executives who are aware that important deals are made on the golf course from which they are often excluded.

In his book *Humble Inquiry*, Schein (2013) describes how "doing and telling and acting" are valued more than "reflection and inquiry" because that might reveal not knowing, uncertainty, and possibly weakness and vulnerability. White males don't realize how much of what they advocate as appropriate, especially in leadership positions, ensures their invulnerability and reinforces their sense of power.

Rationality over Emotion

Technical rationality, often illustrated by quantitative measurement and the seeming objectivity of numbers, is often the source of our credibility,

especially data that we can use to solve problems and get things done. The “either/or” mentality mentioned above and the low tolerance of uncertainty play out here. We assume we can be either rational or emotional but not both at the same time. Since rationality is more linked to our credibility we can leave our emotions behind for fear of being seen as irrational. We may have more permission to show anger as a sign of passion whereas compassion, sadness, or fear are seen as signs of weakness. Value is placed on having silent strength, as in the saying “run silent, run deep.”

Time is Linear and Near-Future Focused

Along with a focus on action is a sense that time is linear, and therefore limited: “Let’s move—we are burning daylight.” Our time is “monochronic” in that we assume we can only do one thing at a time, leading to appointments and careful scheduling. Hall (1959) points out that in many cultures time is “polychronic,” in the sense that many things can be done at once and a unit of time is over when everything has been done, rather than by the clock. The leader holds council and deals with all the member issues in a single meeting. The nearest thing in White male culture is the dentist who works on four patients simultaneously.

Some say linear time is a survival mindset from the limited crop-growing season in northern Europe. Other cultures have more of a cyclical notion of time, including those who could grow crops year around. Time controls when our meetings start and stop, whereas in some other cultures it depends more on the energy and emotions that develop in an exchange.

We are focused on creating the future—“we are going to put a man on the Moon in ten years”—but our managerial culture is focused on the next quarter and we have designed some measures of economic health to be the *daily* stock price.

Status and Rank over Connection

Historically many White men came to the U.S. to make a place for themselves and believed in the power of hard work to achieve their own status. Alongside this drive and our rugged individualism is a belief in healthy competition for rank, status, and power. There is also a resonance in the notions that everyone has a fair chance and that the playing field is level—anyone can make it who works hard, the Horatio Alger myth. This belief in meritocracy can make it hard for us to see when the playing field is, in fact, not level and that it is White male culture that has tilted it in its own favor.

Given our tendency to not show weakness or “show no chinks in the armor,” we can use bantering as a way to connect. This is a way to

playfully challenge each other with our status and rank, a behavior one executive team called *smacktalk*. According to linguist Debra Tannen (2001), women have more permission to be directly vulnerable with each other as a way to connect. In contrast, vulnerability for White men historically has been used by each other as an opening to tease through bantering or in some cases even to bully. The use of power in the hierarchy is an accepted way to coordinate tasks and achieve organizational efficiency.

Managerial Culture is Transactional (Level 1) rather than Personal (Level 2)

The technically rational culture associated with organizations as machines led naturally to breaking work into separate roles, well defined by job descriptions, and designing organizations as hierarchies of connected roles that could be filled by anyone with the proper qualifications and training. With this design also came the assumed value that the organization would work best if people in their roles kept the appropriate social distance, often labeled as being “professional.” Coordination would occur through the rules of design and personal relationships would be basically transactional—role to role. Schein (2016) called this a Level 1 culture to distinguish it clearly from what can be observed as work becomes more complex and interdependent even across hierarchical levels. Complexity and collaboration require that people have to get to know each other more personally in order to build openness and trust to deal with all the contingencies that the work situation creates. Getting to know the whole person, not just the role performance, is a Level 2 relationship, what many in the organization already have—the “old boy’s network.”

Schein and Schein (2018) argue in *Humble Leadership* that managerial culture will have to evolve to a much more personal level (Level 2), even between managers and their direct reports, to build the levels of openness and trust that will be required to do the ever-increasingly complex work that technological and cultural complexity are forcing on work systems. It is White male culture’s individualism and competitiveness that might initially resist this change most, and that, in turn, raises the question of how this move from Level 1 to Level 2 impacts inclusion.

Is Inclusion a Level 1 or Level 2 Issue? (Schein/Welp)

The identification of White male culture as primarily a Level 1 culture is a critical step in understanding how cross-cultural issues can both aid or hinder inclusion. In particular we need to understand the impact of White male culture on organizations and the whole concept of work relationships. As this chapter brings out, one could almost say that Western capitalist managerial culture has been basically a White male

culture and it is only in the last few decades that we have begun to understand how many of the problems of product quality, safety, and lack of innovative capacity are the result of this same Level 1 culture, built on values of rugged individualism, competition, pragmatism, and “rules of the game” defined by those who were in power, that is, White men.

As described above, the industrialization of the U.S. has favored the machine model, the technical rationality that has created a Level 1 transactional culture built on the idea that organizations and hierarchies are structures of “roles” in which the people are interchangeable (Schein, 2016; Schein & Schein, 2017). Job descriptions and training programs define the competencies needed in the role occupant and the organization chart defines the connections to other roles to insure a smooth work flow.

This meritocratic, hierarchical, bureaucratic system of job descriptions, roles, and rules, organized around recruitment and training programs that would fit incumbents into these roles, also could easily lead to the implicit assumptions that the best employees would be people just like us; let’s reproduce as best we can our successful culture by not allowing minorities with possibly different personal characteristics to enter even if they had the qualifications. This was correctly identified as *discrimination*, which became illegal. Various affirmative action programs were launched to ensure that minority applicants who had the formal Level 1 job qualifications had to be included and given a job.

However, when it came to internal movement in the organization, cultural norms that superseded norms of “job qualification” entered to form a different kind of discrimination, best exemplified by the “glass ceiling.” For example, being very emotional was typically considered to be inappropriate for a manager, and especially so for a higher-level executive. No matter how competent a woman or minority might be, if she was someone who might cry or have an emotional outburst at work, that would make her suspect for a high-level executive role.

For example, Schein was present at a meeting of the personnel promotion committee of a corporate board of the Italian subsidiary of a big U.S. oil company and watched them disqualify the head of their Italian subsidiary for the job of European CEO on the grounds that “he is a good man, but much too emotional.” Schein raised the question of what this meant and why it would be a problem, and found that this White male board politely but firmly told him that it was essential to be completely rational at all times at that level, so they could not risk appointing someone who showed evidence of occasionally becoming emotional at a meeting. At the same time, they admitted to being regretful because he was such a good performer and was so well qualified for the job! In the same vein, we have heard over and over again that a woman crying on the job would be inappropriate without ever hearing a job-related argument.

In other words, segregation and discrimination can only be partially dealt with by formal legal means because of the further exclusion that occurs within the work organization based on subtle subcultural criteria in the dominant subculture of White men. A further irony in the Italian case is that the company had done very well integrating different European cultures, had overcome some of their national stereotypes, yet was totally oblivious to the power of their assumptions about emotionality. It may well be that one conclusion is that the White male managerial culture has to evolve from being stuck in transactional bureaucratic relationships to a more personal “Level 2” set of relationships.

Can Organizational and Managerial Culture Evolve to Level 2 Personalized Relationships? (Schein)

The essential difference between Level 1 and Level 2 is that relationships in Level 1 are based on rules, job descriptions, and on formal norms of maintaining appropriate social distance between role occupants, whereas Level 2 implies that members of the organization treat each other as total human beings, above and beyond their formal roles. They *personalize*, to introduce a new term, the relationship by seeing the whole human being who occupies the role.

When we *personalize* a work relationship we are trying to see the other person, who may be a subordinate, a team member, or even the boss, as a colleague working with us in relation to our common goals of accomplishing something. We are not necessarily trying to build a friendship or get into issues that society’s norms would define as deeply personal or intimate, (which we would think of as a Level 3 “intimate” relationship), but to get to know enough about each other to get the jointly shared goal accomplished.

We prefer the term *personalize* because personalization is usually associated with identifying some customer characteristic in order to tailor our product or service to their needs, a kind of trying to figure out the unique characteristics of a customer or friend, client, or patient. What we want *personalize* to mean is better conveyed by wanting to get to know the colleague in relation to our shared goals and our relative contributions to the process of accomplishing them. We are more likely to hear their perspective, broaden our view as we learn from them and come to appreciate their skills and resources. We are less likely to exclude, harass, or lie to a fellow employee whom we know personally.

If an organization can function well at Level 1, is it then enough to overcome the discriminatory forces with legislation and foundational diversity trainings operating within Level 1, or is it, in principle, necessary to define inclusion as *personal* knowing and acceptance of others from minority cultures (tribes)? Does inclusion mean accepting others with different cultural backgrounds, different ways of thinking and

being, different values and goals? If we believe that inclusion has to occur at this more personal multicultural level, how will this play out in the White male culture we have described? We believe that Level 2 relationships are the minimum first condition for inclusion, even as institutional inequity and other social barriers prevail.

White men must then learn how to leverage Level 2 relationships to shift from the conscious or unconscious maintaining of exclusion to being a force for inclusion. White men can relate to each other at Level 2, seeing each other as human beings, and still reinforce an exclusive old boys club. We think this is more likely when the White male cultural traits such as viewing “emotions as negating rationality” and seeing “vulnerability as weakness” inhibit the learning necessary to shift this peer dynamic. In the White Men’s Caucus, White men step *outside* these cultural norms by engaging head and heart and showing the vulnerability through exploring their blind spots around diversity. This normative re-education allows new Level 2 relationships to emerge, full of the challenge and support necessary to begin to see the blind spots and find the passion to become a peer network supporting inclusion. Transcending some of the White male cultural norms allows Level 2 relationships among White men to evolve attitudes and behavior that support inclusion rather than supporting denial of their biases in their exclusive clubs. This also removes the historical burden placed on women and people of color and other outsiders to be the sole educators of White men around their diversity blind spots.

Will White male culture consider it to be enough to provide opportunities to get jobs in formal work roles in Level 1 bureaucracies, be satisfied with meeting the legal affirmative action requirements, and remain blind to the fact that their unconscious biases and their tendencies to want to reproduce themselves will severely limit what we want inclusion to mean? Or, do we aspire to include members of minorities and all other cultures at Level 2, in which case we would need both institutional reform and the kind of program that the White Men’s Caucus offers as minimal condition to make White men aware of their own culture and to teach them how to *personalize* in deeper ways with each other and eventually with another culture or subculture.

Here, White men must also learn to transcend other White male cultural traits in order to partner more effectively with White women and people of color, and other outsider groups. White men generally lean toward engaging others from a problem-solving perspective, jumping directly to action without fully understanding another’s world. We have observed White men often asking questions such as “What are the three things you want me to do differently to support diversity?” This reflects the White male cultural focus on doing, action, fixing, and the lack of emphasis on being, relating, and reflecting. We have observed that White men can create new Level 2 relationships with women and

others when they first ask questions outside their cultural box such as “What’s it like to be you in our organization?” We tell White men “you can’t fix what you don’t understand.” Humble inquiry becomes a critical skill not emphasized by White male culture, yet is one of the keys to effective partnerships across differences. Inherent to humble inquiry is the building of Level 2 relationships. A Level 2 relationship across the gender subculture boundary, for example, immediately reveals that what things mean inside one subculture can mean something completely different in another subculture. The explosion of women speaking up about having been sexually harassed and molested by powerful White men is testament to the degree to which those same White men had huge blind spots around the implications of their own behavior and their conscious or unconscious use of power.

Inclusion, as an issue, reminds us forcibly that it is inevitable in all societies to form tribes within the main tribe (subcultures)—occupational groups, social groups, and eventually classes based on occupation, social background, and material accomplishments. Each of these groups, organizations, clubs, and often whole occupations think of themselves as wanting to include people like themselves and, at the same time, to set up conscious or unconscious mechanisms to exclude people not like themselves. When new members are to be selected, the insiders have learned through experience what the signals are to determine whether a newcomer is okay or not, but to describe those criteria accurately becomes almost impossible. For example, in many start-up organizations or companies that feel they have very distinctive strong cultures, newcomers are put through various kinds of tests to determine whether they fit or not. Google claims that some of their new employees have to go through as many as 20 interviews. But they often cannot tell you what they are looking for. As one executive recently stated, “We say we want the *best* employees but think about who was here when ‘what is best’ was defined?” White men running businesses and other kinds of organizations will not be aware that they have evolved complex criteria of who fits and who doesn’t.

The White Men’s Caucus program brings this to the fore by making White men aware that they are a club of sorts and that their privileged power position automatically makes it difficult for people to enter this club if not invited. Even if White women or people of color are allowed to enter, they remain visible for an indefinite time as special cases or tokens. The discomfort of being in the token role is sufficient to make them resist accepting the invitation. For example, in a retirement home that we visited recently we learned that there are no African Americans in the independent living complex because a couple who were thinking about coming there declined when they discovered that they would be the only African American couple there. They said they might come if there were two or more couples coming, but they did not want to be the lone stand out.

Overcoming the White Male Cultural Blind Spot through the Caucus (Welp)

Most of us in organizations dominated by White men have learned how to operate in this White male culture, so we likely don't think of it as being unique only to White men. Similarly, since White men often don't think they have a culture, they equate their culture with simply being a good human or a good American. From that perspective, they hire and promote others who fit into their unknown-to-them cultural box and mentor others to be like them. They might even say we don't see color or gender, they just treat everyone the same. While their intent is equality, others often hear it as having to assimilate and fit into our cultural box. White men don't even realize they are forcing others to assimilate.

The four-day program creates a cultural island (see Schein and Schein, Chapter 5, this volume) in which a variety of experiential tasks and focused dialogues enable the participants to begin to see their own culture. With a growing awareness of their own culture through the four-day program, White men gain the ability to see how we may be unconsciously expecting others to act like us and choose new employees who fit our cultural box. We can start to see how others may be leaving part of themselves at the door to fit into our culture. At some point we can start to see how we have also left part of ourselves at the door to fit into the White male cultural box.

This is a tipping point that lights a fire under White men to show up as sustainable passionate advocates for diversity and inclusion. They shift a fundamental assumption. That assumption is that, as diversity advocates, White men are helping others (White women, people of color, LGBT people, etc.) with their issues. The wake-up call here is that we gain through this diversity learning just as much or even more so than other groups. By learning to see our culture, we become more choiceful about when we want to use our strengths as well as claim the freedom to step outside of our culture when it serves us more in our roles as leaders, parents, spouses, and friends and colleague of others, including other White men.

For example, we might want to step outside of the rugged individualism and ask for help or say "I don't know." Maybe we want to accept more ambiguity and not try to remove some of the uncertainty in the world. We can choose to stop fixing what we don't understand and shift from doing and telling to humble inquiry. We can also allow ourselves to be both rational and emotional at the same time, and be more in our hearts relating even deeper to those around us. We use these shifts to create more connection with ourselves and others. Most White men discover in their White Men's Caucus that they are learning a sense of freedom and liberation to be more themselves. This tipping point often fuels lifelong passion around diversity.

There are several mindset shifts that happen for White men in this process. Here are three (of 12) that I (Welp, 2016) initially referred to in my book *Four Days To Change*:

- 1 My view of the world is not wrong, more likely it is incomplete. Multiple views give me a more complete picture.
- 2 A strength overused can become a weakness. Stop overusing my cultural habits when they don't serve me.
- 3 Vulnerability is not a weakness; it's actually a form of courage and creates more connection than I imagined.

With these shifts in mindset we find that both White men and others improve their ability to listen, integrate their head and heart, and see accept the complexity of diversity through multiple mindsets and seeing systemically. This leads to more willingness to engage in difficult conversations to improve workplace partnerships and become agents of change for inclusion.

If you are a White man, what can you do immediately? Here are some suggestions:

- 1 *Realize* you are part of a group and have a culture.
- 2 Take time to *reflect on* your culture and its impacts.
- 3 Step outside your cultural norms when new behavior serves you better.
- 4 Try to *notice* when you unwittingly impose your culture on others.
- 5 *Notice* when your impact is not congruent with your intent and *learn from it*.
- 6 Use reflection and inquiry to identify ways the playing field is not always level.
- 7 Take a public and active learning stance regarding issues of inequality and oppression.
- 8 Accept the critical role you play in educating your White male colleagues so that White women and people of color and others don't carry that burden.
- 9 Use your privilege honorably to *intervene* with other White men to support a level playing field; don't be a bystander.
- 10 Look at reward systems, formal and informal, to see to what degree your organization is really walking the talk of inclusion and diversity.
- 11 Convene a group of White men, or a mixed group, and watch Michael Welp's TEDx talk *White Men: Time to Discover Your Cultural Blind Spots* (TEDxTalks, 2017). Then discuss your reactions. What surprised you? What made you curious? What new questions surfaced? What is one take away you can apply at work or in your whole life?

Conclusion

We have explored in this chapter the unique challenges and critical role White men play in being inclusive leaders. Current mindsets place the burden of educating this insider group on outsiders. Elements of the White male culture itself make it hard for White men to understand the complex dynamics around inclusion and act on their awareness. We explored the White Men's Caucus as one current practice that creates the learning for White men to become change agents for diversity and inclusion. This includes learning how to create Level 2 relationships with each other to develop the insights and courage to grow together into positive change agents for inclusion. In doing this they experience many other benefits as they rely on the best of their cultural traits and gain the freedom to step into other ways of seeing and being when it better serves them and their organizations and families. New Level 2 collaborative partnerships with others become possible. This is critically important work that needs to expand across our society for inclusive organizations to thrive. It also serves as a strong example of the role insiders play across the globe in creating an inclusive space for those who find themselves as outsiders in any system.

Notes

- 1 For an exploration that includes both, see Welp's TEDx talk *White Men: Time to Discover Your Cultural Blind Spots* (TEDxTalks, 2017), which provides an overview, or Welp's (2016) book *Four Days To Change*, which gives an in-depth "fly on the wall" experience of being inside the White Men's Caucus.
- 2 Based on patterns of immigration across U.S. history, Woodard (2011) identifies 11 different cultural patterns in different regions of the U.S. based on where immigrants landed, established themselves, and settled in. All are basically White-male-based.

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