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From time to time I see or hear something that I think is worth sharing. This blog serves that purpose. It is an ongoing work in progress that I will add to from time to time.

My hope is that what interests and shapes me personally and professionally may be of interest to others. If something I share resonates for you, I welcome your contributions and feedback.

Let’s talk about diversity and inclusiveness

21 March 2019

Two events in two days. Both left me inspired and heartened about the positive direction some organisations are taking with regard to diversity and inclusiveness. I am delighted to share some of the gems I took from these moments.

Opportunity for inclusiveness through tragedy
First, it is important to mention that both events were held in the week following the tragic shootings in two Christchurch Mosques. I have nothing but awe for NZ PM Jacinda Ardern and her response to this tragedy. I hold enormous hope that the spirit of our nation will continue to become more relational and values-based through her leadership. However, I do have to disagree with her words “this is not us”. Unfortunately, while individualistic, punitive, neo-liberal, approaches to institutions, business and politics continue to dominate our society, the hatred and violence will continue to characterise “us” to some degree.

Unfortunately, Aotearoa does have a long history of violent assaults on community groups. The assault on Māori at Parehaka and the Night Raids on Pacific people are two infamous examples. And, sadly, there are more. Encouragingly, the recent events in Christchurch, and the violence that have impacted so many Muslim people and communities, have sparked the kind of outrage that leaves me with hope that people may engage in more examination of ‘conscious’ and ‘unconscious’ biases and move towards more inclusive ways of relating. This segues nicely into Event 1 where this kind of examination was called for.

Event 1 – Celebrating Diversity
The occasion was LinkedInLocal Hamilton. The topic that drew me to attend was Celebrating Diversity. Guest speakers included Rogena Sterling PhD, Jovi Abellanosa, Ellie Wilkinson, Meleane Burgess and Stefan Doll. I decided that the most eloquent way to respond to their presentations
was through the following rescued speech poem \(^1\) composed of some of the speakers’ words\(^2\) that captured my attention:

Unity with diversity
We need to know our bias, to be more inclusive
Personal connection
Get to know people on a personal level
What are our similarities?
Create a safe space to be who you are
Connect
Belonging
Appreciate you for who you are - for your contributions
One-size-fits-all is not appropriate
Pathway to leadership is through service
Connect through hearts not mind
Building respect
Doesn’t matter what you know
How much you care will get more out of your team
Commonalities and differences
Provide opportunities to celebrate and share
Unconscious bias – understanding our motivations
Conscious bias – not getting interviews because of your name
Inclusive leadership
Civic engagement
Tolerance means putting up with
Equality means equal treatment - sameness
We are not the same
Human Rights
Dignity for the human person and moral value
Basic human right
Basic humanness
For all without distinction
Diversity is critical to community
Unity within diversity
Everyone’s life is interconnected
Reciprocity of enabling the dignity of each other
Unity with diversity – I like that
‘Isms’ exist - racism, sexism, ageism
Open space for people to come together

As I witnessed these moving and invitational words, some of my own emerged:

Humanness unites us
Diversity invigorates us
Commonalities interconnect us
Leadership progresses us
Management enables us

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\(^1\) Rescued speech poems are composed of selected quotations from spoken dialogue and arranged in poetic form.

\(^2\) I am not able to associate particular words with particular speakers who uttered them. Therefore, I have named the speakers and re-presented their words collectively.
I encourage you to read the rescued speech poem alongside the one comprised of Simon Moutter’s words and his 2018 Reeves lecture (see links below). Together, these sentiments resonate with the work of Adventurous Conversations. If you want more heart and inclusivity in your organisation, contact us today.

**Event 2 – A staff member endorsement**

I turn now to the second event, another business gathering. I was fortunate to strike up a conversation with a staff member from ANZ Bank. She asked me about my work. As I spoke about my relational and values-based approaches to leadership and culture, she responded with her experience of recent changes at ANZ.

She told me about the ‘speak out’ culture that was being promoted. Other measures included a focus on inclusiveness, abandonment of sales targets and encouragement to be more involved in community service. All of these initiatives were inspired by CEO, David Hisco. She spoke of the positive difference these developments made for her personally and for her team. And, unsurprisingly, all of this has led to increased productivity and profitability for the organisation and increased passion and commitment for her personally.

Well done David Hisco, and those who challenged and inspired you, for Adventuring into more relational and values-based organisational culture and leadership. It works.

**References**


**Adventurous Conversations Ltd work with organisations to develop values driven, people centred, relational and collaborative culture and relationships. Call, email, or book a no obligation 30-minute introductory consultation if you want to turn the tide towards more relational organisational culture and approaches.**