

WORKING ACROSS DIFFERENCES IS HEART WORK

Edith Lewis
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Working across differences is heart work. It is done over a lifetime and requires a willingness to learn before one teaches.

The principle of non-interference (with gratitude to John Red Horse and Ada Deer)

In order to enter a community and have anything to offer, one must wait to be invited. That means sitting on the outside of the circle, reverently listening and learning from those with wisdom on the inside of the circle. It requires reflection about one's own gifts in the context of the world views of those whose live inside that circle. One who wishes to work effectively with people of color must learn to wait, with humility, until they are invited into the circle – and then use the skills those inside the circle express as things they need. This is very hard when we have been taught that we know more than others due to our education, economic backgrounds or societal status)

Recognize that people of color in your area are being negatively impacted by the interactions of the pandemic and systematic racism. Find out what they need and work to dismantle the systemic forms of oppression affecting them – and also you.

Two Questions for the Discussions:

1. How will you use the principle of non-interference as you address your thoughts, feelings, beliefs and actions during the next 6 months? In other words, how will you specifically listen and learn?
2. What programs, books, articles, intergroup dialogues, discussions organized by people of color have you participated in during the last 10 years? Can you commit to increasing that number by 10 percent in the next year?

“Today, entertain the idea that everyone you come into contact with is different from you for a reason. Consider that each person is truly a unique individual with a gift to deliver to you...Plan social events that take you to different communities and expose you to different cultures. Break out of your comfort zone and step into God's creative zone.”

-Tracy Brown, from the Daily Guides for Spiritual Living, Science of Mind, August 22, 2020