

THREE PARADIGMS FOR DIVERSITY CHANGE LEADERS

Adapted by The Koi Group © 2001 from an original article written by Judith D. Palmer, *Three Paradigms for Diversity Change Leaders*

PARADIGM	MEANING OF DIVERSITY	VISION & PREFERRED APPROACH TO CHANGE	ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT
<p>GOLDEN RULE <i>I treat everyone the same; I'm color blind, gender blind. I'm not a racist or a sexist. Oppression comes from a few "bad" or prejudiced people, in isolated incidents.</i></p>	<p>Does not see diversity issues as systemic. Differences are due to individual characteristics. Diversity means an atmosphere where everyone is appreciated regardless of differences. It is artificial to focus on the concerns of blacks, women, national or ethnic groups. Everyone is special and different. Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you. Rejects grouping people, minimize differences, values treating everyone the same.</p>	<p>Everyone can be an individual, with no prejudice or favoritism. Pleasant work environment where all can contribute and rise to their potential. Minimized interpersonal friction and better management. Patterns are not among "types" of people. Resist awareness training - it creates bad feelings and little else. Special programs or numerical targets to increase the representation of selected groups are unfair to other organization members. We should all just be decent to each other and treat people as individuals.</p>	<p>People see each other's uniqueness -- character traits, individual backgrounds, and family patterns. From the outside they look very much alike. Organization members don't usually stretch their experience by learning about the deep issues of people who are quite unlike themselves. They don't know how to put themselves in the shoes of someone very different because they try to treat everyone the same. The environment is not perceived as welcoming or nurturing to other kinds of people. Prefers methods that do not dwell on race, gender, class, Vs helping individuals work together.</p>
<p>RIGHT THE WRONGS <i>Rectify the injustices for specific groups who have been systematically disadvantaged.</i></p>	<p>The exact identification of the disadvantaged group (target) depends on the larger society the organization lives in. In Japan it could be ethnic Koreans, San Francisco, it could be homosexuals, in the US it could be blacks, women, Hispanics or others. Critical is the establishment of equality and justice for specific target groups. Correcting this situation is the driving priority. Once this is done, move to the next target group.</p>	<p>Injustice has been corrected, and groups who were selectively and systematically disadvantaged in the past are respected and participate equitably in the rewards of the organization. Business results benefit from the fresh perspectives of the disadvantaged group. Managerial and interpersonal effectiveness improves as the Group's skills and sensitivities are added to the mix. Improvement on how the organization recruits, retains, develops and rewards one or two target groups. Majority members learn how the Target Group feels, "walk a mile in someone else's shoes." Deal with the Targeted Group's needs first.</p>	<p>Changes bring tension and conflict may appear. Strong demands may be made to management on behalf of the Target Group in the belief "no one gives up power...you have to take it." Change Leaders are often thrust into an adversarial role with peers in their organization who do not share the same perspective. Frustration and impatience can run high on the part of Target Group Members; people are prompted to "take sides." Viewed as a split world and a struggle to bridge the gap. Usually polarized. Separate formal or informal structures and programs are considered important for fostering the disadvantaged groups.</p>
<p>VALUE THE DIFFERENCES <i>Groups as well as individuals are appreciated for their differences, working synergistically so that effectiveness is greater than the sum of all its parts.</i></p>	<p>Wants people to be conscious of what makes each other different. Expects everyone to understand and appreciate the heritage and culture of many different groups, as well as being responsive to the uniqueness of each individual. By not grouping people you don't minimize difference. Consciously and sensitively uses the talents of all types of differences: ethnic, racial, gender, problem solving and creative approach, professional discipline, native land, and language. All must learn to appreciate each other's contribution to better results.</p>	<p>Individuals reach beyond their own experience to appreciate and work effectively with a wide range of others. Organizational norms encompass many styles and approaches in the pursuit of excellence. Each contributes in his/her own unique way. Improvements in creativity, decision process and results, processes and solutions are found which were not thinkable in a more homogeneous organization. Leverage a wide range of significant differences and build into hiring, development and reward systems. Self-knowledge, interpersonal skills, learning about the culture or characteristics of many different groups and types are key.</p>	<p>Do not single out Target Groups for systemic change, but simultaneously and equitably work at addressing the unique needs of many different types of groups. May focus on a given group sometimes but not consistently. Convey sensitivity and appreciation for "differentness" and avoid polarized terms such as "blacks & women" versus "white males." People are interested and enthusiastic to learn about themselves and others, and all organizational systems are geared to maximizing diversity while honoring and pursuing the fundamental needs and integrity of the organization. The challenge of communicating with one another may be greater here than in Paradigms I & II.</p>

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REFLECTING ON POTENTIAL CLASHES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDING COALITIONS

WHO IS RIGHT	HOW TO PROCEED	COALITION BUILDING
<p>Of course each paradigm assumes that it is correct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The “Golden Rule” believes they are already sensitive and unprejudiced. ◆ Right the Wrong confronts Golden Rule on their lack of awareness and are horrified by the “global” scope of Valuing all the Differences and feels that Golden Rule is ethnocentric in attempting to do unto others...and that Right the Wrongs are serving the needs of a few at the expense of many. ◆ Golden Rule thinks there is no difference in how they and Value all the Differences sees things and can’t understand why Value all the Differences are impatient with them. 	<p>Develop a thorough understanding of all parties involved and their understanding as well. Don’t forget the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Don’t assume! ◆ Paradigm I gravitates to trouble spots within teams or between individuals, providing remedial or anticipatory action to smooth out friction. ◆ Paradigm II is singularly focused on the Target Group, viewing anything else as watering down the sources. ◆ Paradigm III prefers methods that demonstrate in deed as well as word that “valuing diversity” covers a broad range of differences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Have frank discussions of assumptions, goals, and expectations (paradigms) among Change Leaders valuing all viewpoints and not forcing people to subvert their views “for the good of the cause.” ◆ Rely on negotiation, politics and community action skills. ◆ Carefully define the areas where alignment exists and where paradigms differ. ◆ Define common goals and clarify the “boundaries” between what people agree on and what they don’t. ◆ Avoid squashing people into uneasy, over-generalized statements of “what everybody wants.” ◆ Share goals completely. ◆ Make decisions and handle areas of non-agreement. ◆ Don’t be tempted to judge “who’s right?” ◆ Learn how to accommodate the different priorities – what to do first, and why? What’s next? ◆ Work to understand in detail the other favored paradigms. ◆ Work toward allowing the coalition to produce new approaches that incorporate and go beyond everything that was known before. ◆ Work with each other with great respect, patience, and an effort to understand what’s behind the statement.

All three paradigms want to create a high performance, smoothly running organization where members are neither penalized nor advantaged by the “type” of person they are perceived to be. Understanding what is going on will prevent becoming trapped in “Paradigm Clash.” Whose paradigm is right? And How to proceed are the critical issues that will assist individuals and organizations in becoming more culturally competent (mature).

The coalition process is, in itself, diversity in action. Like blind people feeling the elephant; each of us has a close-up, personal experience of a portion of the whole, and we need other’s different views in order to create the future world we strive for.

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OPTIONAL REFLECTION ASSIGNMENT
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REFLECTING ON POTENTIAL CLASHES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDING COALITIONS

PARADIGM	MEANING OF DIVERSITY	VISION & PREFERRED APPROACH TO CHANGE	ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT
POTENTIAL CLASHES			
COALITION BUILDING			