



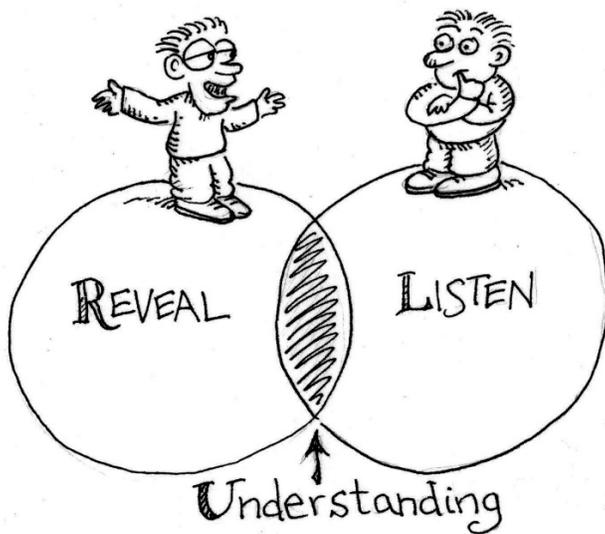
Helping Leaders, Individuals and Teams

Learn,
Communicate &
Connect

KCS

Kacik Consulting Services, LLC

Our Workers Need Compassion, Empathy, Understanding *and* Perspective-Taking



We are a people in crisis, in turmoil, with anxiety, grief, fear, struggle and hardship, along with being a people in support of others, bewildered in a desire to help one another, with hope, warmth, caring, compassion and success in moving forward toward a better tomorrow for all.

We are in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic as people are taking to the streets in protest of racism and the death of black lives at the hand of police.

And the workplace is going on and must go on. So



We at Kacik Consulting Services stand in solidarity and support of all those who have come forth through various means to protest the inexcusable and horrific death of Mr. George Floyd at the hands of police in Minneapolis.

We grieve with you at the loss of not only Mr. Floyd, but also Ms. Breonna Taylor, Mr. Ahuad Arberry and so many others who have been murdered by racist police and a white supremacist culture that is alive and growing within our country.

We want to be part of eradicating racism from our culture. We don't have the answers, but we are

what can we do in the workplace in the midst of all that is happening? How do we react? How do we know what to say, what not to say and how to help and not make the situation worse, even with the best intentions?

I do not have all the answers I just posed, but from a webinar I recently attended by Dr. Paul White, who co-wrote, with Gary Chapman, the book *The Five Languages of Appreciation in the Work Place*, I learned some things that are of value in sharing with you at this particular time. Sneak peak: next month's article is on appreciation vs. recognition in the workplace.

The workers we lead, serve and who work alongside of us are dealing with a lot. We all are. And we are all experiencing the world right now in different ways, with different needs at different times, sometimes changing from day to day. We can lead, we can manage, and we can work with each other in ways that show one another compassion, empathy, understanding and also "perspective-taking".

While the work must go on, we are all well-served right now to slow our pace a bit where others are concerned. By slowing down a bit, we can stop and take time to gain a little perspective about where the other person is right now. We can take a little time to understand what is happening in their world and for them as a person. And when we understand, then we can show empathy, and true compassion that allows others to feel your support and know they are not alone in dealing with whatever they may be trying to handle.

So what is empathy? I found these two definitions that may be very helpful. Sympathy is not the same as empathy. **Sympathy** is largely used to convey commiseration, pity, or feelings of sorrow for someone else who is experiencing misfortune. This sense is often seen in the category of greeting cards labeled "sympathy" that specialize in messages of support and sorrow for others in a time of need. You feel bad for them ... but you don't know what it is like to be in their shoes. Unlike *sympathy*, **empathy** has come to be used in a broader way than it was when it was first introduced; the term is now most often used to refer to the capacity or ability to imagine oneself in the situation of another, experiencing the emotions, ideas, or

seeking to learn how we can be part of the change that must happen now. The racism and disproportionate impact to all communities of color and those of other minority groups is unacceptable. So we are seeking to learn and act accordingly.

In a recent webinar I attended, I learned a definition of the difference between inclusivity and exclusivity that struck me as a sound place to start in changing our perception as a society.

Inclusivity views all people as "We are one, as humans".

It is a frame of mind and belief system that, as humans, we are inextricably linked to each other. We are linked whether or not we know each other, whether or not we understand each other, and whether or not we like each other.

Treating everyone as you would a friend - that is inclusivity.

If someone cuts you off in traffic, you handle the situation very differently if it is an anonymous individual than if you look over and see the other driver is a friend of yours. Operating from the frame of mind of inclusivity means that "Everything I do to "you" comes back to

opinions of that person.

So how do we gain the perspective? How can we start the conversation? It is helpful to know that anxiety is both present and can be a very immediate emotion and also be in the background at the same time. Seeking to understand another's perspective requires you to lay a little ground work. There is a difference between asking a person questions to be nosy and asking them questions to understand and because you care about them. Explain before you start asking questions, especially if you are their manager, that you want to understand what is going on in their world to know how you can as a manager, or colleague, be helpful to them. **As a manager, it may be helpful to let them know that you care that they have a support system and that they are doing things to take care of themselves.** So below are some questions to consider, but always be sensitive to a person's willingness to answer, and be sure they know your intention is not to pry but to be a support.

- **What has changed for you in the last (x period of time)?**
- **How have those changes impacted you favorably or unfavorably?**
- **What are you hopeful about?**
- **What are you anxious about?**
- **What are your work challenges? How can I help?**
- **What's going on in your life?**
- **Where are you finding joy?**
- **What have you done in the last two days for your own self-care?**

Once you have done some "perspective-taking", then think about what you have learned and what you heard about the ways you can help. What can you and what will you choose to do to show empathy and compassion in a way that supports this person, lightens their load, their anxiety or both?

We all need compassion, empathy, understanding and perspective-taking. Let us seek to understand one-another, and show each other a level of compassion, empathy and understanding that will make our world a better place tomorrow and a better day for each other.

"me" in same way as we are inextricably linked as human beings.

Exclusivity views others as "We are separate".

It is a frame of mind and belief system that, as humans, we are forever separate and distinct from each other. I can "like" you and still see you as separate and inferior to me – sometimes called "tolerance". And example the speaker of the webinar, Mr. Shariff Abdullah, gave is the white slave manager who still loves the black slave nanny who raised him yet still sees her as inferior. One can like someone and even love that person and still see them or others like them as inferior. Exclusivity is based on our "isms" such as racism (based on race or ethnicity) or sexism (based on gender).

Fear and exclusivity in our workplaces and communities can come from confusion, misunderstanding, suspicion, negative assumptions and negative interactions among other things.

It was Steven Covey, in his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* who identified one of the habits as,

Remember one of Steven Covey's "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People", which is "Seek First to Understand, and Then to be Understood."

Listen and spread compassion,



"Seek first to understand, then to be understood."

At Kacik Consulting Services, our work is built on a premise that people seek to do the right thing, to do their best and generally have positive intent. We believe, together with our clients, we create better workplaces and more leadership and team success when we start from that assumption. We continue to stand for that premise in how we treat others and how we teach others to do the same. In addition, we pledge to be more open to understand, be watchful and be ready to stand alongside those who are not treated with inclusivity.

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Our mailing address is:

2408 West Street
Brookfield, VT 05036

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