

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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Learning the Power of Inclusion from a Pew

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I never expected to learn the power of inclusion sitting in a pew on a Sunday morning. The church I attend has a congregation of over 5,000 families from within the local community, and all the Masses are in English. Our church was assigned a new priest, Father German Ramos, who came from a small town in Jalisco, Mexico.

Father Ramos spoke English with a very thick accent, an accent for which I am warmly familiar. Full transparency, I wondered how well he would be understood and accepted.

About a year into Father Ramos' service at our church, I attended a Mass he was leading. He shared how he was preparing for a trip back to Mexico to visit family. Father Ramos started sharing how, since his arrival at our church, he felt accepted and was treated like family. He shared some funny examples which brought the congregation to laughter. He went

on to share how he felt accepted and included in the community, how that made him feel inspired and empowered, and how it made him want to work harder for the community and families of the church.

As Father Ramos shared his story, it caught my attention, especially as a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council member. His story was a tangible example of the

power of inclusion.

I sat in the pew that Sunday morning, listening and learning. Father Ramos' inspiring experience demonstrates that no matter where you work, whether for a business that offers metal product solutions or an organization whose mission is saving souls, the impact of inclusion is powerful and can bring out the best in people.



Key Principles to Build Inclusive Habits

Can inclusion be a habit for leaders? According to Development Dimensions International (DDI), a global leadership consulting firm that has worked with firms for over 50 years to help hire, promote, and develop exceptional leaders, the answer is yes.

Inclusive leaders create a place of belonging by making people feel valued, heard, understood, trusted, and supported. These leaders appreciate people's unique differences and encourage each person to speak up and be part of business solutions.

DDI has identified the following key principles that help build inclusive habits.



ESTEEM: Maintain or enhance self-esteem – **so people feel valued and respected**

- Make eye contact and actively listen to and appreciate everyone's contributions in meetings
- Show appreciation for people's inherent value; express gratitude for effort and for personal characteristics like humor and humility
- Praise individual's unique contributions in the moment – their perspectives, experiences, and capabilities
- Equally recognize people's accomplishments



Empathy: Listen and respond with empathy – **so people feel heard and understood**

- Model active listening. Be present and don't interrupt or allow interruptions
- Be curious; proactively educate yourself about people and cultures different than your own
- Model and encourage team members to get to know one another through team meetings over lunch, team events, etc.
- Collaborate on projects with diverse partners; encourage team members to participate in projects that include people with different perspectives or experiences
- Notice your reaction to others. Are you taking automatic mental shortcuts?



Share: Share thoughts, feelings, and rationale – **to build trust**

- Transparently share important organizational information that affects the team
- Authentically express your commitment to inclusion and diversity at an organizational level
- Be vulnerable and courageous by admitting what you know and don't know
- Adopt a growth mindset and admit to your missteps
- Establish team expectations about hearing diverse perspective
- Emphasize a shared team purpose or mission
- Share your own diversity and inclusion story and why its important to you



Involvement: Ask for help and encourage involvement – **so people feel included**

- Remember that great ideas can come from anywhere
- Ensure people have equal airtime in meetings. Don't reward the loudest voices. Ask for input from the quieter employees or those who need more time to process
- Solicit diverse perspectives. Pay attention to who is not in the room but should be. Are we going to the same people we always rely on?
- Signal that inclusion is important by regularly asking team members to share examples of how they have included others or felt included
- Seek feedback for your own growth as an inclusive leader



Support: Provide support without removing responsibilities – **so people feel supported**

- Equally help others to learn, grow, and succeed while holding them accountable for commitments.
- Support others' ideas by advocating for good ideas to be actioned
- Act on your principles. Pay attention and advocate for those being excluded
- Be courageous and speak up for others when you see non-inclusive behavior. Model the kind of inclusiveness you want to see in others
- Attend gatherings to support, listen, and learn from diverse groups

Each CPNA employee contributes to fostering an inclusive culture and applying these valuable principles will help us in our D&I journey.