

# Talk About Cultural Sensitivity

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During 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations, we typically discuss the diversity and cultural sensitivity of our nation's population. Through these discussions, I have learned:

“When people show you who they are, believe them” per Maya Angelou.

Be open to embrace other cultures.

We may not know a person's cultural norms.

Listen and trust that a person does not mean ill will unless their actions speak differently.

For example, when a white person passes a black person at the office and does not say good morning, it is considered insulting and rude. It is important for a black person to understand the meaning behind this person's behavior. The white person may not mean anything by her behavior and could be focused on

completing a work deadline or errand. The white person may not realize that they have broken a cultural norm. When I am working in Los Angeles, Chicago, or Florida, my black colleagues will greet each other in this formal manner per their cultural norm.

When you want to confirm the intent behind an action, consider the following responses:

Tell me about that perspective.

Why is that important to you?

Would that be valuable to our society as a whole?

Have you considered the impact of that position?

Which local political decisions are impacting the economic conditions of the community?

Is there a more equitable solution for a community challenge or problem?

When we as a society fail to pay workers a livable wage, then we contribute to the ills of our society. This economic shortfall traditionally falls upon people of color. For me, education is the great equalizer for students to become future business owners, entrepreneurs, and decision makers. Through education, we can improve our community's economy and bolster our democracy.

Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

Yvette

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