



"DIVERSITY IS HAVING A SEAT AT  
THE TABLE, INCLUSION IS  
HAVING A VOICE, AND  
BELONGING IS HAVING THAT  
VOICE BE HEARD"

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

july newsletter

# Accepting Differences



**All** of us are naturally drawn to people who are like us. We feel connected and understood when we find someone else who looks like us, does things the way we do, or has experienced something similar to our experiences.

While this is normal, it can however lead to discrimination and a lack of compassion for those who are different from us. Focusing on only getting to know people who are like us can cause us to see life through a limited perspective and believe that our way is the "only" way or the "right" way.



Our differences – whether based on ability, race, gender, mental health, sexual orientation, age, religion, culture, appearance, or origin – improve our world. Bringing together people of various backgrounds with different life experiences actually generates more creativity, new ideas and perspectives, and increased productivity.

*"Research shows that understanding and appreciating differences promotes an individual's cognitive development, mature decision-making, and positive behavior."*

The youth of today live in a multicultural, global community that is growing more and more connected through technology. Diversity is a fact of life for us.



We can learn to be more accepting and spread awareness in some of the following ways:



## *Empathy*

Empathy is being able to understand how someone else feels, and it is a skill that requires practice. Practice empathy in situations that you see. Whether it is a sibling that you are fighting with, a friend who might be acting strangely, or a person with a belief that differs from yours, learn to consider the other person's point of view.



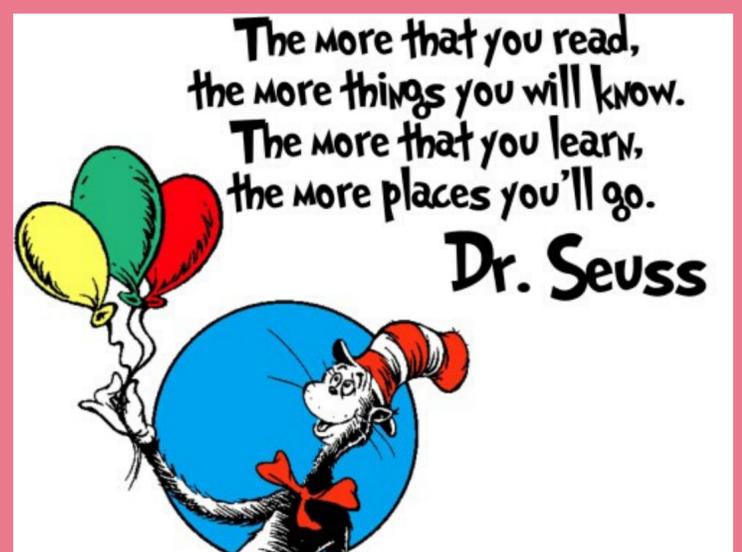
## *Talk to new people*

Getting to know people different from yourself leads to reduced prejudice and increased understanding. Strike up a conversation with people who are different from you.



## *Introduce diversity in your life*

Read books by authors from diverse backgrounds. E.g. like an author from a different country or an author who has faced various challenges. Engage in conversations with friends and family about how cultures or religions are both similar to and different from your own.



## ★ *Challenge "normal"*

Generally, people are treated differently because they are seen as "the other." All of us are born unique with different strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes etc. So who defines what is and isn't "normal" anyways? Try to acknowledge both differences and similarities in a person who seems different from you.

However, ignoring differences can actually make discrimination worse, so it is a good idea to also point out what we have in common with someone who seems very different from us.



## ★ *Don't give in to misconceptions*

Look up accurate information to reject harmful myths and stereotypes. We might hear stereotypes at school; try to confront these misconceptions with truth. Prejudiced attitudes and behavior impact life in larger ways than we think.

## ★ *Practice what you preach*

We cannot embrace diversity by remaining set in our ways, beliefs, and thoughts either, so be open to new ideas. Listen, accept, and welcome people and ideas which are different from your own. Be mindful of your language;

avoid stereotypical remarks and challenge those made by others. Speak out against insults that target people or groups.



# Around the World

There is a lot happening around the world right now and we cannot even imagine how people are being affected both mentally and physically. Right now is the time to stand up for what you believe. If you really want a change you need to be the change.

Some of these issues like the racism in the US are systemic, and there isn't always much we can do from an entire continent away. But speaking up about it and spreading awareness is the first step. We need to recognize where these issues exist in our society, like the colorism in India (although on a much smaller scale), and work to overcome them. We also need to educate ourselves on issues going on in our own country. However, when speaking up, we need to remember to not do it in a way that creates actual conflict. Attitudes take time to change.

The least we can do is support and be kind to every individual we meet since we are not aware of what they go through on a daily basis or what they have gone through. By doing our part and being kind we cannot guarantee a complete revolution but we can bring change and make it a better place.

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