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September 4, 2017
Labor Day Resolve

What is it like to be a diversity and inclusion trainer/speaker in America on this Labor Day 2017?

In a word, “embattled.”

Embattled because of near daily socio-political events that highlight, and even exploit, our differences.

Embattled because I work with constituents and clients who are trying desperately to keep hope in their hearts.

Embattled because it's simply darn difficult to talk about our commonalities as a pathway toward inclusivity when I fear that some in the audience (and/or their families) feel emboldened to discriminate by a relatively intolerant few.

And embattled because sometimes, all the fear and images of violence can be simply overwhelming.

Yet, I push on. It's not in my DNA to do anything but double down and work even harder to message that it truly is possible to create a lasting, more inclusive America. An America where each person is valued for the goodness in their heart and, as Dr. King said, the “content of their character.”

I got into this business by happenstance; after transitioning genders in 2009, I was asked me to speak on what it's like to be transgender. From what were informal presentations grew a formal “Transgender 101” talk that I've now given hundreds of times.



After that, I developed a general inclusivity training, “Gray Area Thinking™”, a phrase that I've trademarked. This is an all-human focused training that provides a toolset for how to better interact with those whom society deems “other” or anyone who is “different” from “us.”

Truth be told, we humans can make anyone—regardless of skin color, socioeconomic class, religion, or anything else—“other.”

Audiences love my Gray Area Thinking™ training because it offers something that's in desperately short supply these days: hope.

I'm told that my trainings inspire listeners to want to be more inclusive and accepting of those who are "other." Still, I'm only one person in a country of three hundred million who are regularly hearing messages that are contrary to what I teach. It has the potential to be depressing as heck.

Again, though, I won't let depression seep into my veins. Rather, I am a hopeless idealist who derives strength and fortitude from the words of the "Special Ks"—Dr. King and Robert F. Kennedy. They would tell me (and so many others like me—which includes you, dear reader) to not give up, to persevere, and to push, push, push onward.

That's exactly what I intend to do. I know you will too.

Everything good takes *work*.

ellie