

Quadrant II Newsletter

Research shows that the difference between leaders who derail in their career and those that soar to great heights is social skills. Social skills appear in the second quadrant of Stephen R. Covey's Importance-Urgency matrix: social skills are important to a career but not urgent (Covey is author of the top-selling business book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*). Quadrant II provides an opportunity for business and technical professionals to learn and try out new social skills based in science.

7Feb2017, author: Valerie Patrick, PhD, *How to Leverage Visible Diversity for Improved Performance*

Quotable (*Key Message*)

Fight the natural resistance to suspend judgment and reach across minority lines with openness in order to leverage different viewpoints for creativity and innovation.

Quantify (*The Science*)

Behavioral scientists have identified a number of cognitive biases which seem to be a natural part of the human condition. One such bias is the salience bias (Tiefenbeck V. et al. *Overcoming Salience Bias: How Real-Time Feedback Fosters Resource Conservation. Management Science, Articles in Advance. 2016: 1-19*). The salience bias means that when something is salient or stands out, we tend to make judgment based on the feature that is salient. Applying this bias to visible diversity, when visible diversity is salient, such as a woman in a room full of men, then the people present will tend to make judgment based on the stereotypes they have learned about the person who is different. This is especially problematic when the stereotypes are negative but also problematic when those stereotypes limit the contribution or input of the

person who is different. Lauren Leader-Chivee, author of *Crossing the Thinnest Line: How Diversity from the Office to the Oscars Makes America Stronger*, has found from her work that developing empathy for people who are visibly different than you helps to prevent the tendency to pre-judge those who are visibly different. There is plenty of evidence that you need openness to different viewpoints in order to improve creativity and innovation which both correlate with improved performance (Sawyer K. *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration*. Basic Books: 2007).

Qualify (*Put into Practice*)

One way that Lauren Leader-Chivee points out in her book to help you develop empathy for someone who looks different than you and is in a minority is to experience being a social outcast yourself. In my podcast interview with Leader-Chivee (episode 23 at <http://scienceofsuccess.libsyn.com/podcast>), she points out a second way to develop empathy for a visible minority. That is to show genuine interest through openness and vulnerability by saying something like “I’m not comfortable talking to you and I want to be. Please help me understand more about this.” So the next time you see a person from a visible minority that you typically wouldn’t talk to, try reaching across the minority line with genuine interest to learn something.

Quip (*Fun*)



The unhealthy and destructive way to respond to discomfort with diversity is racism like Calvin Candie played by Leonardo DiCaprio in Django. The healthy and constructive way to respond to discomfort with diversity is empathy.

Quest (*Resources*)

To assess your gender intelligence in the workplace, take this gender-smart assessment for free:

<http://www.classroomclipboard.com/715727/Home/Test/1E8B3014F01D44059C08CFC731B53D02> (access code is T87LSCY).

Contact me (412-742-9675 or valerie.patrick@fulcrumconnection.com) to learn more about my new offerings: gender diversity fueling success, team leadership success, and improving workplace creativity.

About Fulcrum Connection LLC

Fulcrum Connection specializes in instructional design, training, speaking, facilitation and consulting to develop skills in leadership, innovation, sustainability, troubleshooting teamwork, and managing technical professionals.