

Understanding the power of narratives

Small Group Activity and Discussion

OBJECTIVE: *To cultivate an awareness of the power of narratives by reflecting on moments in which you were challenged by a single story.*

VIEWING:

“The Danger of the Single Story” by Chimamanda Adichie for TED Talks:

http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html

ACTIVITY:

Identify a *specific* experience you have with a single story, whether it be a time when you accepted the single story of another or when someone had a single story of you. It should be an experience that you are comfortable sharing and that stands apart from other moments in your life in that it made you stop and think and/or challenged your beliefs, values, attitude or behavior. Importantly, the experience you share does not need not be a dramatic event.

Share your experience with your group in *one* brief sentence beginning with “I would like to reflect on...” For instance, if you were Chimamanda Adichie, you might say: *“I would like to reflect on the moment my college roommate asked me to share my tribal music.”*

Take 10 minutes in silence to reflect personally on your experience. Use the DEAL (Describe, Examine, Articulate Learning) Model of reflection describer below. As you are thinking about your experience using the questions below, write your thoughts in a notebook:

1. Describe the experience objectively
 - What happened?
 - Where did the event unfold?
 - Who was involved—primary, secondary, and tertiary players?
 - When did the event occur?
 - Why did the event unfold?
2. Examine the experiences
 - Focus on each specific element of the incident—not just the whole experience.
 - What assumptions, strengths, weaknesses, skills, or values emerge in your description? Do any of these things need to change given the new experience?
 - Make connections between this experience and past learnings in order to identify new concepts or areas for growth
3. Articulate areas of learning
 - What did you learn?
 - How did you learn it?
 - Why is it important?
 - What will you do — new or in a different way — because of it?

Come back together in your group for a discussion.

DISCUSSION:

In your small group, share any new insights or learnings you discovered about your experience or memory through the process.

If there is time remaining after sharing, consider these prompts to guide your discussion:

1. Describe the process of going through the reflection questions and sharing your learnings with others in this setting.
2. Examine the specific elements of the process that were most helpful to you and why.
3. Articulate anything that may have surprised, challenged, or strengthened you and how the personal reflection questions could be helpful in various settings of your life.