

Minority Leadership Training Conference

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I was lucky enough to attend the Minority Conference in April. I learned that people often assume that we all share the same communication styles and cultural backgrounds as the people around us. We just experience slight variations such as personal choice of religion and holiday celebrations.

Working with refugees from Nepal, I realized they were coming to America with minimal understanding of American life. Simple kitchen appliances are baffling to them. I understood this as obvious cultural and experiential differences.

At the conference I gained new insight. I realized that I assume my friends and co-workers were raised in the same culture as I was, and therefore “see” things the same way I do. That may not always be the case.

As people in the same community, we have learned to view people the same as we see ourselves. Good? It would be better if we could see and appreciate many people of color in our communities, and value different ethnic cultures that bring rich contributions to our everyday lives. Each of us would like to be seen as who we are and be understood in the way that we communicate. To do this we must recognize that Americans are Hispanic, Asian, Native American, White, Indian, Middle Eastern, Puerto Rican, African Americans, Pacific Islanders and a wide range of other peoples of color and mixed racial heritage.

In other words, please see me as I am and accept that I may have been raised with different traditions and a different way of communicating than you might have been. I must remember and embrace the same for you. I should ask what your feelings are and not judge your opinions, rather, I should appreciate the importance of cultural viewpoints.