



## Walking the Talk: Change Starts With The Self

### *A Tool for Self Reflection, Assessment & Development*

Many leaders in the community building field have a strong commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity. They recognize the importance of drawing upon the unique strengths of our increasingly diverse communities. They believe that people of all backgrounds should have a voice in shaping the direction of their own lives as well as the future of their communities. They work to ensure their organizations play a leadership role promoting equal opportunity and equitable access to resources—within their communities and the institutions that serve them. This assessment tool offers an opportunity to specifically think about how you as an individual are and could be further promoting these values in your own efforts.

While egalitarian and democratic values are an important foundation to the development of a just society, making sure that each one of us realizes them in the way we do our work isn't always easy. Often in the course of our daily lives and work, we move away from our beliefs without even noticing it. We may fail to live up to these values because we are responding to pressures such as lack of time or resources, or peer expectations to conform to existing norms. Sometimes, we en

gage in an exclusionary practice because we are unaware of its harmful impact. Or we may feel unsure of how to take a stand given our particular role or position. In some cases, we start off on the right foot but aren't able to sustain the effort.

This tool focuses on you as an individual because you can make a difference. Successfully addressing issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity requires ongoing vigilance. It requires that each of us take the time to clarify and deepen our values and beliefs; and equally important, that we take the time to examine whether our actions promote our values and beliefs—about inclusion, equity, and justice. Self-assessment is essential, if we are to celebrate our successes and achievements and work to change those things that are not working. This tool is designed to help you engage in such personal reflection and assessment; it is also designed to assist you in developing personal strategies for learning and growth.

Personal growth around diversity and equity does not happen at once—through one training or a couple workshops; it takes place over months and years—as our experiences and knowledge deepen and expand our awareness and our capacities. The change process starts with each of us taking steps to recognize our strengths and our biases. It is deepened and sustained as each of us learns to respect and appreciate differences and as we work with others to create a more democratic and egalitarian society. Our hope is that you won't just use this tool once, but rather that you will use it repeatedly over time. And that as you track your own learning over time, you will modify and strengthen the tool to meet your changing needs.

#### Included In This Resource Kit:

- Introduction (page 1)
- Directions (page 2)
- Self Assessment Tool (Insert)
- Guidelines for creating your own Learning Plan (page 3)
- Resources To Support Your Work

## The Foundation For This Assessment Tool

### Ways to Use Tool:

- 1) Read through each principles. Consider how your own values and beliefs connect to the principles. Ask yourself if you agree with the principles and or the beliefs and values that underpin them. Think about how you generally live out the principles in your interpersonal, professional, or societal spheres of influence. Discuss or share your reflections with a trusted colleague or friend.
- 2) Choose 3 to 5 (or all) of the principles you strongly believe in and answer the questions associated with those principles in the assessment questionnaire that is provided in this toolkit.
- 3) Use your reflections and observations to develop a personal learning strategy to deepen your knowledge and capacity in 1-3 areas you want to strengthen.

You must be the change  
you wish to see in the  
world.

Mahatma Gandhi

This assessment tool is based upon and designed to promote the implementation of nine interrelated principles that have emerged out of the experiences of people engaged in community-building work across difference throughout the United States. The principles were identified with the help of an ethnically, geographically, and professionally diverse 35 person advisory panel (through a series of interviews, focus groups, and forums conducted between 1996 and 1999).

Since that time, the principles

and the assessment tool have been used, refined, and expanded by a similarly committed and diverse number of practitioners and organizational development specialists working with diversity and equity advocates in the fields of: community leadership development, community organizing, early childhood development, family and community health, youth leadership development, religious and inter-faith organizations, and philanthropy.

Although these principles have been embraced by many in these sectors, we at California

Tomorrow know that these nine principles are not “the only ones” or even “the best ones” to assist everyone who is working to make their organizations and communities more inclusive and equitable. In that spirit, we invite you to modify or add to these principles as your own experiences, values, or the particulars of the context you work in demand of you. Similarly, the assessment tool can also be modified to include indicators and activities you believe are more appropriate measures of your practice in this area.

## Principles For Promoting Equity and Embracing Diversity

**Draw Upon the Assets of Diverse People and Groups:** I build upon the assets of my own ethnic group and I value the strengths and resources of people from other backgrounds.

**Build Personal Relationships and Trust:** I nurture personal connections and trust across boundaries of race, language, culture and class.

**Develop and Promote the Power of Cross-Cultural Leadership:** I value the knowledge and skills of people who understand and draw upon their own group's history and culture and language and are able to work respectfully and effectively with other groups.

**Recognize Multiple Realities and Identify Common Ground:** I work to develop a deeper understanding of the different value systems, perspectives, ways of doing things, and challenges that exist for the various groups within a community. At the same time, I foster opportunities for people to identify common values, goals, and needs across lines of race, language, culture, and class.

**Promote Community Self Determination:** I support the right of all people to be involved in deciding what happens in their own communities, whether those communities are defined by geography or collective interest.

**Fight Exclusion:** I work to ensure that racism, sexism, language bias, class biases, or other forms of domination or marginalization do not create barriers for full participation .

**Stand Up Against Bias:** I strategically address individual behaviors, institutional practices, and public policies that result in an unequal distribution of goods, services and power.

**Support Ongoing Personal Growth Around Diversity and Equity:** On a regular basis I deepen my understanding of race, language, culture, class and equity and increase my capacity to work with people of diverse backgrounds.

**Take Stock:** I hold myself accountable to improving the well-being of my community and regularly assess how effectively I am addressing issues of equity and diversity.

## *Creating Your Personal Learning Strategy & Plan:*

Learning styles and approaches are as diverse as the communities we are trying to bring together through this work. We suggest you take the time to consider what styles and approaches best suit your own sensibilities, needs, and interests. Whether you feel best learning in a formal educational setting (e.g., a classroom style training or workshop), assimilating knowledge through reading a book or watching a film or video, or learning by taking action (e.g., participating in a variety of social, cultural, or community activities) there are plenty of groups and resources to assist you in your personal development journey. We have included contact numbers for some of these resources on the last page of this toolkit. These resources are intended to be used as entry points for your own personal searches.

The questions in this section are intended to provide you with a framework for utilizing the insights you gain from your reflection and assessment with the Change Starts With The Self Tool. Take a few minutes to think about and write down your overall reflections, observations, objectives, and plans.

What are two or three strengths that I bring to this work on diversity and equity? In what ways could I build on these strengths? In what ways could I deepen my knowledge or capacities in this area?

Are there particular principles or questions in this tool that prompted or provoked a strong emotional reaction for me? What are those feelings? Are my feelings a response to a past experience dealing with others on issues related to this principle? Or a reaction to a perceived bias or lack of understanding that underlies the principle or question? What can I do to respond to my feelings in way that honors my own experienced and perspectives and at the same time helps me to understand and honor the experiences or perspectives that are provoking those feelings?

What are two or three gaps (or challenges) that I want to work on?

Over the next six months to a year, what activities could I undertake to strengthen my capacity to work across differences of race, class, culture, and language (check as many as you wish)?

- Read the following books or articles: \_\_\_\_\_
- View the following films/videos: \_\_\_\_\_
- Meet with and discuss these issues with: \_\_\_\_\_
- Attend a lecture or presentation on: \_\_\_\_\_
- Participate in the following training or workshops: \_\_\_\_\_
- Participate in the following cross-cultural community events: \_\_\_\_\_
- Join or organize a small discussion or study group focused on: \_\_\_\_\_
- Volunteer with the following organization that promotes or organizes cross-cultural work in my community: \_\_\_\_\_
- Join or support the work of the following organization that advocates or organizes for the equity concerns of a group that is marginalized or discriminated against in my community: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other activities: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other activities: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other activities: \_\_\_\_\_

What resources would I draw on to assist me in these activities?

I will sit down again on the following date \_\_\_\_\_ to evaluate my progress and development and to update my learning plan.

This self-assessment tool (I-Tool) is part of a set of strategies and tools California Tomorrow has developed and refined for use by change agents and advocates who are working to change their organizations and communities. Although it can be used independent of other exercises and resources, the I-Tool is designed for use within a holistic set of personal and organizational change strategies organized groups of individuals can draw on to:

- Initiate and sustain an organization-wide dialogue about diversity and equity concerns within their organizations;
- Carry out individual and collective assessments of their personal and organizational inclusion and equity principles and practices; and,
- Organize and conduct a series of participatory strategic planning and program development activities to move from assessment to action.

**For More Information Contact:**

**California Tomorrow**  
**1904 Franklin Street, Suite 300**  
**Oakland, CA 94612**  
**(510) 496-0220 Fax: (510) 496-0225**  
**[www.californiatomorrow.org](http://www.californiatomorrow.org)**

---

## *Resources for Diversity, Inclusion, & Equity Work:*

Because the area of “Diversity” is a growing field with so many education and support organizations, agencies, and consultants, you will need to be careful in researching and selecting the resource that most closely matches your needs and objectives. If your City or County has an Human Relations or Human Rights Commission, you may want to contact them first to seek assistance in learning about resources in your community. If your region does not have such a commission, the following organizations may prove helpful in identifying a resource close to you.

**Diversity & Anti-Racist Training:**

The National Conference For Community Justice ([www.nccj.org](http://www.nccj.org))

The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond ([www.thepeoplesinstitute.org](http://www.thepeoplesinstitute.org))

The (ADL) World of Difference Institute ([www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org))

The National Coalition Building Institute ([www.ncbi.org](http://www.ncbi.org))

**Models for Dialogue to Action/Leadership Development/Community Conflict Resolution & Organizing:**

The Study Circles Resource Center ([www.studycircles.org](http://www.studycircles.org))

Project Change ([www.projectchange.org](http://www.projectchange.org)) & Institute for Democratic Renewal ([www.race-democracy.org](http://www.race-democracy.org))

The Network of Alliances Bridging Race & Ethnicity ([www.jointcenter.org/nabre/](http://www.jointcenter.org/nabre/))

The Leadership Development in Inter-Ethnic Relations Project ([www.apalc.org](http://www.apalc.org))

The MultiCultural Collaborative ([www.labridge.com/mcc/](http://www.labridge.com/mcc/))

The Center for Third World Organizing ([www.ctwo.org](http://www.ctwo.org))

**Action Research & Promising Practices:**

Colorlines Magazine & The Applied Research Center ([www.arc.org](http://www.arc.org))

Institute on Race and Poverty ([www1.umn.edu/irp/](http://www1.umn.edu/irp/))

Aspen Round Table On Race in Community Development ([www.aspenroundtable.org/](http://www.aspenroundtable.org/))

Urban Strategies Council ([www.usc.org](http://www.usc.org))

Policy Link ([www.policylink.org](http://www.policylink.org))

---