



“Tell me, and I’ll forget.

Show me, and I may remember.

Involve me, and I’ll understand.” -Native American Proverb

The Circle Project: diversity, inclusion, leadership

Experiential approaches to diversity issues

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

With offices in Seattle, Washington and Asheville, North Carolina USA

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WHAT IS THE CIRCLE PROJECT?



WE PROVIDE innovative learning experiences in communities and organizations by creating surprise, energy, depth, and relationship around difficult issues like diversity and inclusive leadership. We do so using story, theatre and experiential processes, forming creative and safe spaces where people don't have to be clever, but are free to truly learn and explore.

WE HELP individuals in organizations deepen their working relationships across difference, transforming how they work together in the process and enhancing their capacity for innovation. Our work is more oriented toward learning (a process that leaves *us* changed) than toward problem-solving (a process focused on changing our surroundings)

because we believe that changing our surroundings can only come after we ourselves are changed in some way.

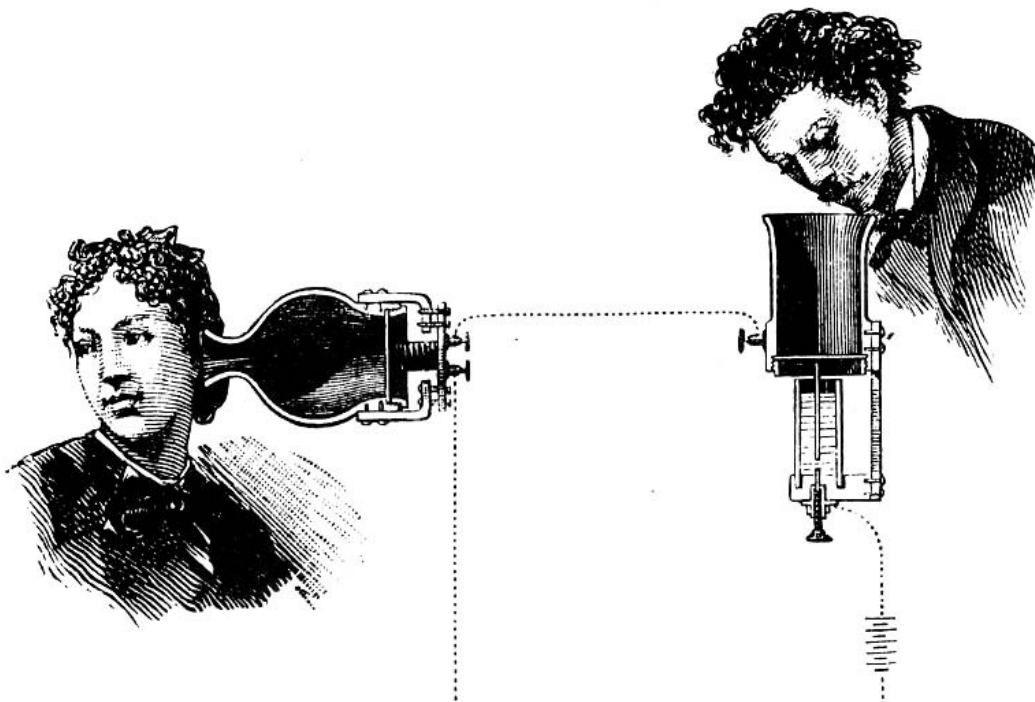
The Circle Project has SEVERAL KEY OBJECTIVES:

- To help people build inclusive organizations that connect, collaborate, and create
- To access group wisdom for inspired results
- To provide a solid grounding in diversity and inclusion issues and how they impact individuals and organizations
- To help people have open and honest dialogue about things that matter
- To show how culture affects all of us, all the time, and how it affects our work
- To involve people in *creating* an inclusive environment, not just hearing about it

Our work is centered on our deep understanding and twenty years of experience with a broad array of diversity dimensions such as race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, geographical location, tenure, management status, and title or rank, among others. We pay particular attention to the Self and Other, privilege, status and rankism, dominant culture, and the impact of culture and culture change.

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

- Learning should be a beneficial search for surprise
- Traditional diversity training often puts people in untenable positions where they can't learn because they feel defensive
- Learning is most effective when it is embodied and experiential, not just intellectual
- To understand diversity, we must first understand culture and dominant culture
- People learn best by “doing” and then by extracting the meaning from that experience
- Moving people from “playing to win” to “playing to learn” helps organizations innovate
- Story is a guide that can teach us how to live in relationship with others
- Success comes when we experience our self as part of something larger
- Training must create the capacity for intrinsic responsibility
- What comes out of the training becomes part of the story of the organization itself
- “Getting it” comes with giving “others” the same level of specificity and humanity that we give ourselves...



HOW ARE WE DIFFERENT FROM TRADITIONAL DIVERSITY TRAINING?

Our experiential approach differs from traditional diversity training in the following ways:

- From debate to **story**
- From facts & statistics to understanding facts & statistics through **metaphor**
- From being content driven to being **experience driven**
- From attendee as observer to **attendee as active participant**
- From intellectual learning to **embodied, experiential learning**
- From left brained to **left & right brained**
- From averting crisis to **enlarging capacity**
- From supplier bringing meaning into the room to **meaning co-created in the room and "unpacked" from experiential learning experiences**
- From supplier designed to **participant as guided co-designer**

HOW DO WE WORK WITH CLIENTS?

We work with clients who want to co-create innovative, experiential, challenging and meaningful learning experiences around issues of diversity, inclusion, culture, status, and privilege. We begin our work with clients by asking one question: **what is the transformation you need?** We have created a “menu” of experiential learning that centers around content areas such as: understanding culture and culture change, moving beyond conflict, building inclusive leaders, exploring white privilege, taking responsibility for inclusion, being a diversity change agent, challenging “isms,” using diversity to enhance innovation, and others. Once we understand fully the “transformation” and learning that is needed, we create a targeted and customized experience to achieve those goals using this “menu.”

WHAT KINDS OF PROGRAMS ARE OFFERED BY THE CIRCLE PROJECT?

- CULTURE, WHAT CULTURE?
- WHAT IS INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP?
- GOING BEYOND DIVERSITY
- UNDERSTANDING RACIAL/CULTURAL IDENTITY
- BEING OPEN TO DIFFERENCE
- CULTIVATING A BIAS-FREE WORKPLACE
- IMPLICATIONS OF GLOBALIZATION
- LEVERAGING DIFFERENCES IN GROUPS
- UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL MINDSETS
- DIVERSITY AS A TOOL FOR CREATIVITY
- THE NATURE OF PREJUDICE
- TEACHING FOR DIVERSITY
- THE ART OF DIVERSE TEAMS
- UNMASKING SELF & OTHER
- DISCUSSING DIFFERENCE: COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

THESE TWO MODELS SERVE AS A BASIS FOR OUR WORK

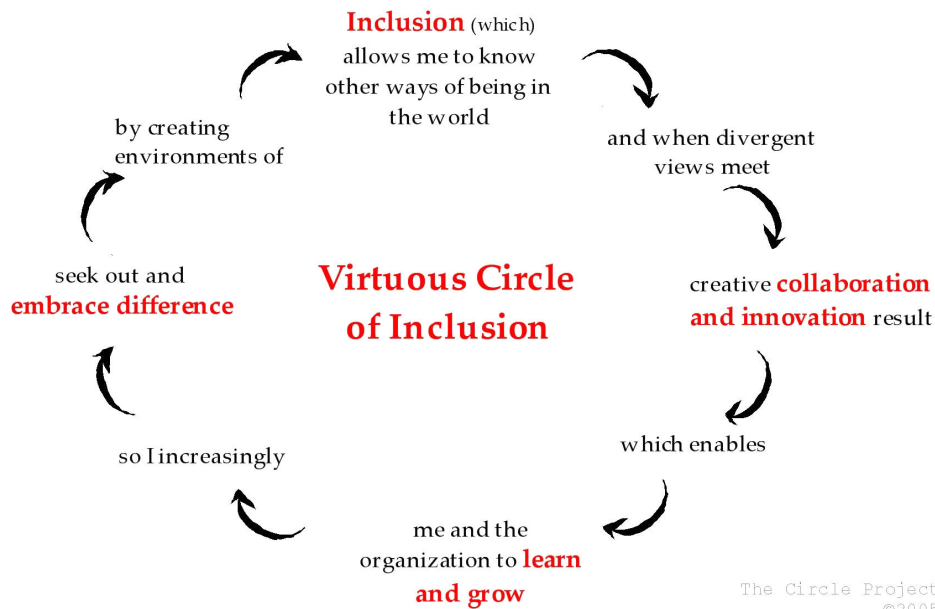


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THE CIRCLE COMPETENCIES

HELP MOVE INDIVIDUALS, COMMUNITIES, AND ORGANIZATIONS

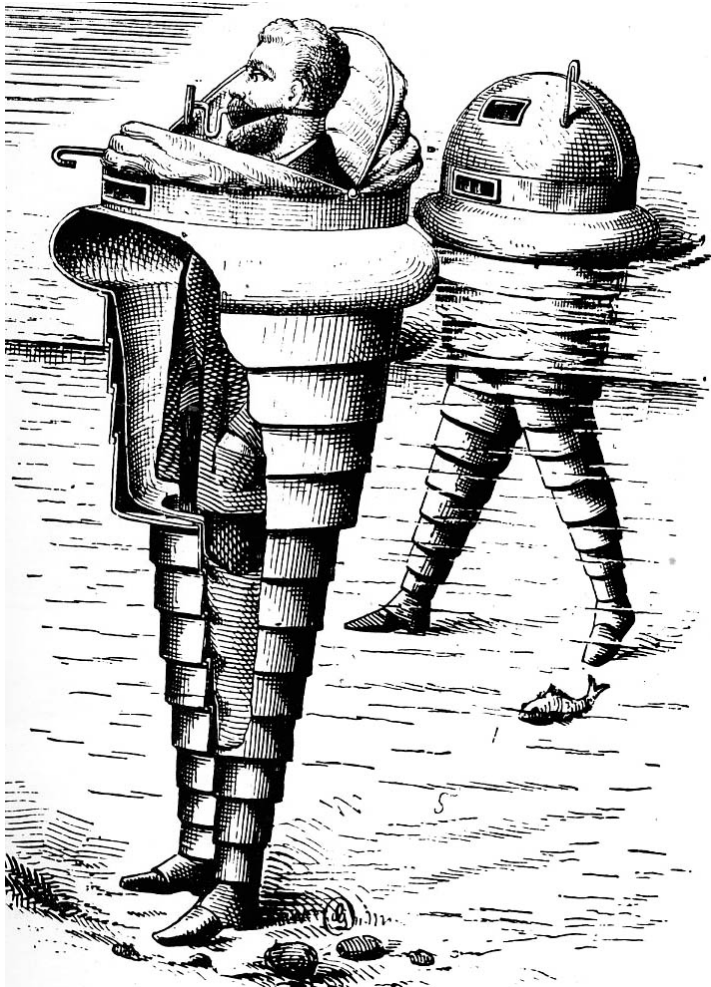
FROM THE VICIOUS TO THE VIRTUOUS CIRCLE



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WE BELIEVE IT ALL COMES DOWN

TO A MEETING OF SELF AND OTHER...



WHAT IS THE DISTANCE
between how you want
to be seen
and who you believe
your Self to be?

**THE SHORTER THE DISTANCE,
THE HEALTHIER THE PERSON...**

WHAT IS THE DISTANCE
between how you see
the Other
and who they believe
themselves to be?

**THE SHORTER THE DISTANCE,
THE HEALTHIER THE COMMUNITY...**

WHAT IS THE DISTANCE
between how you see
your stakeholders
and how they see your organization?

**THE SHORTER THE DISTANCE,
THE HEALTHIER YOUR BUSINESS.**

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE CIRCLE PROJECT...

- Wow! Thank you for this powerful exercise
- Great facilitation!
- Fascinating and all new for me--I enjoyed it at all levels.
- Unique and exciting experience! Very stimulating!
- It opened my eyes to see myself differently--thank you!
- Great facilitation and useful, unique work--very creative.
- Profound.
- Thoroughly enjoyed your open, welcoming, reassuring facilitation
- I felt my edges, enjoyed letting go, and allowing myself to retreat.
- I'd love to have done a full day; wish we had longer together.
- Great modeling of safe and comfortable experimenting.
- New ideas--very different--let's have more next year!
- It was a wonderful self-discovery trip.
- This was a very unusual experience for me--thank you for taking me to a different world.
- A very unique and different experience...Loved it--insightful--would like more!
- An opening through which I will continue to move over time...
- Great opportunity to explore self and connection to other

FROM A RECENT PARTICIPANT

Wow! This was unlike any training class I have attended in the past. The instructors used experience-based exercises instead of lecture. A few of the insights I and many others walked away with were: The physical and psychological habits I use to protect myself from uncomfortable engagements with people not "like" me... but also prevent me from truly engaging with others as they really are...How group cultures can be erroneously perceived, leading to inappropriate work agendas created by the dominant group culture to "correct" the perceived weaknesses, leading to poor productivity and friction... The act of truly "seeing" and "receiving" others. (Sounds simple doesn't it?) One very simple skill I developed from this class is personal comfort when greeting strangers.

How participants describe their experience of our work...

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| ▪ Insightful | ▪ Meaningful |
| ▪ Thought-provoking | ▪ Gentle |
| ▪ Eye opening | ▪ Worthwhile |
| ▪ Informative | ▪ Intriguing |
| ▪ Valuable | ▪ Introspective |
| ▪ Enlightening | ▪ Beneficial |
| ▪ Relevant | ▪ Challenging |
| ▪ Entertaining | |
| ▪ Fun personal growth | |
| ▪ Necessary | |
| ▪ Awesome | |
| ▪ Great | |

WHAT LENGTH ARE OUR SESSIONS?

Learning is a process of unpacking meaning over time. Optimally, we find that one- or multi-day sessions are most beneficial. Retreats often offer the most freedom to explore. That's ideal, but not always possible, we understand. Where even a full day isn't possible, we offer half-day sessions. If you are looking for a session less than 3 hours long, you might be better served by looking at other options.

WHAT SIZE GROUPS CAN WE WORK WITH?

We design sessions for both small teams and large groups of 100-300 people.

WHAT CAN SESSION PARTICIPANTS EXPECT?

Our sessions are not information-dumps and we don't ask participants to do anything that's not comfortable for them. We engage people in dynamic experiences that clarify their diversity challenges. By creating a safe environment where people feel free to engage fully, we ensure that participants don't feel "put on the spot" or "on stage."

WHAT SHOULD PARTICIPANTS WEAR?

Our sessions are not sit-in-a-chair-paper-and-pencil kinds of sessions. Participants will move around, engage in some physical activity, and have fun. We don't believe learning necessarily needs to be painful. Participants will be most relaxed and able to participate fully if they wear comfortable

clothing—jeans or casual pants, casual shirts or t-shirts, and flat shoes.

WHAT SHOULD PARTICIPANTS DO TO PREPARE BEFORE THE SESSION?

Nothing. We will use the knowledge, skills, imagination, and willingness we find in the room to create a community dialogue and learning around issues of culture, diversity, change, and inclusion.

WHAT DO WE NEED FROM YOU?

A strong commitment to the work, insight about the transformation you need from the session, and a desire to engage fully. Logistically, we need a room that's big enough to move around in, one table for our materials, and chairs around the edges of the room. We bring everything else with us.

WHO SHOULD I CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Patricia Digh
pdigh@realwork.com
1-828-280-5766

or

David Robinson
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Co-FOUNDERS

PATRICIA DIGH has designed diversity initiatives and training for clients around the world for the past 20 years. Her first book, *Global Literacies: Lessons on Business Leadership and National Cultures* (Simon & Schuster, 2000) was named a "Best Business Book for 2000" by *Fortune* Magazine. Her most recent book is *The Global Diversity Desk Reference* (Wiley, 2003).

Patti has published over 75 articles on diversity and intercultural issues, having traveled and worked in over 60 countries. She was formerly the Vice President of International and Diversity Programs for the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the world's largest association of human resources professionals with over 195,000 members worldwide. While there, she created the Institute for International HR, the award-winning SHRM Diversity Initiative, Diversity Train the Trainer Certificate Program, National Diversity Conference, and diversity newsletter, *MOSAICS*.



Clients have included Achva College Israel, Amdocs Israel, the Australian Human Resources Institute, the New Zealand Institute of Personnel Management, the Government of Guyana, the U.S. Postal Service, PBS, Shell Oil, The Center for Association Leadership, The American Society for Quality, The American Psychological Association, The American Cancer Society, and DaimlerChrysler, among many others.

Patti serves on the faculty of both the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication and the University of North Carolina at Asheville. She has served on the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and on the Diversity Advisory Councils of the National American Red Cross, the AARP, and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.



DAVID ROBINSON is a strong artistic leader with extensive experience in theatre, visual art, creativity, and education innovation. His 20 years of professional directing experience help him design programs for academic and corporate environments utilizing theatre techniques to discover the creative impulse. As a life long visual and theatre artist, he has mastered the competencies that are now being recognized by contemporary organizations as invaluable to their health and sustainability: creative, artistic, imaginative, symphonic, and mythic.

David has been Artistic Director of The Dimensions Theatre Project, General Manager of The Seattle Shakespeare Company, and Artist-in-Residence for the Lincoln Unified School District. He has taught for The Seattle Repertory Theatre, The Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, The Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts, and Bringing Theatre Into the Classroom, and has served as curriculum consultant for MacMillan-McGraw Hill, The Teacher's Curriculum Institute, and Lincoln and Hayward Unified Schools.

David was founder and director of The McCandless Communications Academy, dedicated to teaching core curriculum through experiential learning processes. As a consultant to school districts and curriculum developers, David has developed extensive knowledge and experience engaging the multiple intelligences, which he continues to use in a variety of contexts. David is on the faculty of Antioch University and a member of the National Storytelling Network. Recent clients include The Society for Humanism in Medicine, the Hudson Institute, The Fetzer Institute, Prudential Financial, and the San Lorenzo School District, in association with Dell and Microsoft.

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