

Book Review

***Four Days to Change: 12 Radical Habits to Overcome and Thrive in a Diverse World.* By Michael Welp. EqualVoice, 2016.**

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Four Days to Change is an easy read, recounting four men's participation in a 4-day training. However, it was also at times an enraging return to the scabs of decades of the "wounds of difference" I have experienced as a gay white man, trying to understand the mysteries of white, heterosexual men from their perspective while working diligently to make a difference in the diversity world. The result, however, was a deepening in my exploration of white privilege and its influence on my own diversity lens.

The author, Michael Welp, co-founded *White Men as Full Diversity Partners* with Bill Proudman over 20 years ago. They have dedicated their passions toward creating a diversity discussion that infuses a commitment and investment from White Men, who, in their view, are paradoxically at the center and marginalized from contemporary diversity discussions. The culmination of their work is a set of *12 Radical Habits, or New Mindsets*, that offer a set of building blocks for diversity. These tenets are infused to restructure their world to look at how—in truly reversing roles with the players in their day-to-day existence in the safety of their White brethren—men are able to re-story the issues of diversity through inclusion of others in their world. In short, in honoring others' points of view, our world is enriched in return.

None of the action methods utilized in the training are new material for sociometrists, but perhaps even radical when penetrating the privileged and protected world of the white heterosexual male, who, in the author's view—and in his defense, that of his participants—can live in a place of perceived persecution and blame for all things out of place in our increasingly diverse universe. Because I believe both the goal of this review and the underpinning of the psychodramatic process is an exploration of sociometry, what I concentrate on needs to be through the eyes of a sociometrist.

The work of the 4-day diversity training recreated in the book is experiential and effective in bringing about a reflective and vulnerable container. I came away with wanting more as a sociometrist, but what interventions were utilized (role play, a nurturing exercise, and other experiential interactions), I felt could be strengthened by the addition of more sociometric exercises to get the participants

“warmed up” in a more succinct manner. This is meant as an observation and not a criticism, coming from the years of finding value in less talk and more action in any venue I inhabit.

In any of the realms I have operated in significantly—the LGBTQ community and the worlds of disability and recovery, I have not advocated for the separation of marginalized groups into the seeming safety of sameness. In my experience as a gay man, the members of the LGBTQ community are not best served by remaining in the protection of a gay-only world; the same is true of the disability and recovery worlds. There are a lot more “them” than “us.” If our goal is connection and integration, this end is not served through discounting the contribution of those who are different from us. The more we narrow our social atoms, the more limited our sociometric view. As Moreno stated, we are both wounded and healed through relationship.

What I have learned from concentrating on the value of illuminating the connections within seeming difference is that the safety of sameness can be a valuable beginning point. Because of the dynamics of trauma caused by lifetimes of marginalization from a group, healing is impossible within the microcosm that inflicted that trauma. So the effectiveness of LGBTQ, people with disabilities, female, etc. groups indeed hold merit when applied to a greater sociometric whole. To affect change in a deeply imbedded wound, we sometimes must incubate the change in the comfort of sameness. Thus we return to the legitimacy of the author’s lifetime of work and the commonality we all share: We are all wounded. White heterosexual males created the sociological maelstrom we are all subjected to, but they are indeed also among its victims.

As I review the power of the *12 Radical Mindsets* that are the destination of the journey for these 4 days, I feel I cannot leave them without comment. A blueprint for open communication, the connection of mind and heart, and the valuable risk of vulnerability that comes from safety—the Mindsets are a laudable tool for any trainer in the diversity world—or any world.

We all negotiate the current diversity climate constructed of movements such as, “Black Lives Matter,” “Me, Too,” and the rise of the transgender community. This is in sharp contrast to, and perhaps a result of, our political climate that has become a bully pulpit for the white, heterosexual men so wounded by the culture they created that they would never consider the vulnerability to their psyches offered by *White Men as Full Diversity Partners*. We may have never seen a time where any entry into this world that strives to result in systemic change has such value. Sometimes in exploring our sameness, we discover the gift of difference.