

# Heart

A JOURNEY TOWARD CULTURAL HUMILITY

Dr. James L. Knight





In the 21<sup>st</sup> century context, a multicultural society/environment demands cross-cultural skills and cultural wisdom. I believe that humility, specifically cultural humility is key in gaining cultural wisdom and skills in order to effectively lead across differences.

What gift best describes you?

ARTIST

ACTIVIST

COACH

HEALER

PARTNER

**What would happen if we put arrogant or prideful in front of the words artist, activist, coach, healer or partner?**

**For example, what if we said the following,  
“Mike is an arrogant partner.”**

What would happen if we put **humble** in front of the word partner so that it now reads...

**Mike is an humble partner (*not an arrogant one*)**

**I read a proverb one time that said...**

**Where there's humility, wisdom is present.**



Research on organizational culture found that millennials listed **humility** as one of the top three most important traits in a leader, along with strategy and ethics.

Globally, 48% said they look for humility in their leadership, while in the U.S., more than half (54%) said this.

*Source: Egon Zehnder 2019 Leaders & Daughters Global Survey*



The hidden costs associated with not having cultural humility which leads to cultural wisdom/cross-cultural skills are:

- 1) Absenteeism
- 2) Employee turnover
- 3) Damaged morale
- 4) Lost productivity
- 5) Impact on quality
- 6) Damaged reputation
- 7) Increased work stress





**Culture** – the shared beliefs, behaviors, values, customs, and traditions. The social environment and goals of a organization.



**Culture** – the tilling of land, act of preparing the earth for crops. From Latin *cultura* “a cultivating, agriculture,” figuratively “care or honor,” from past participle stem of *colere* “to tend, guard; till, or cultivate.”



# Toolbox 1





# Toolbox 2

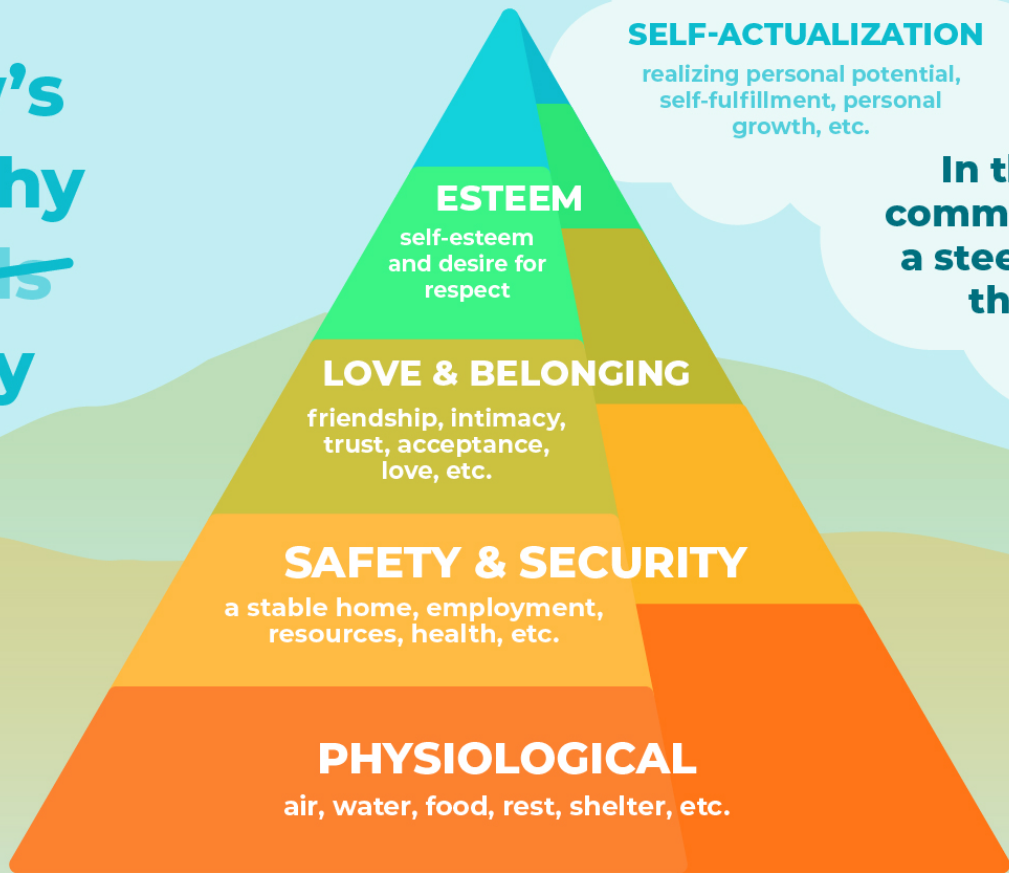


# Which toolbox would you choose?





# Maslow's Hierarchy of ~~Needs~~ Inequity

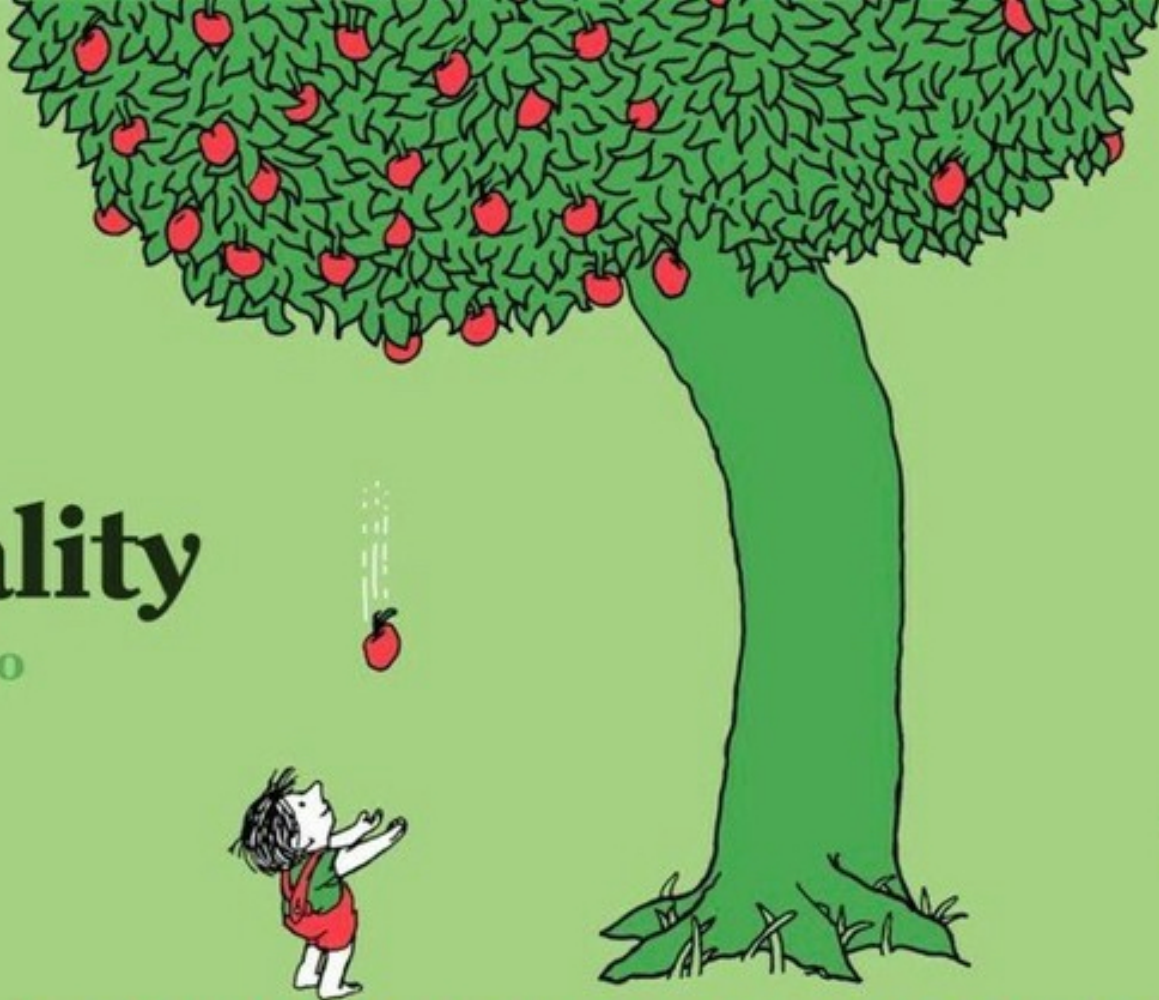


**In the United States, communities of color face a steeper climb to fulfill their basic needs.**



# Inequality

Unequal access to  
opportunities



# Equality?

Evenly distributed  
tools and assistance





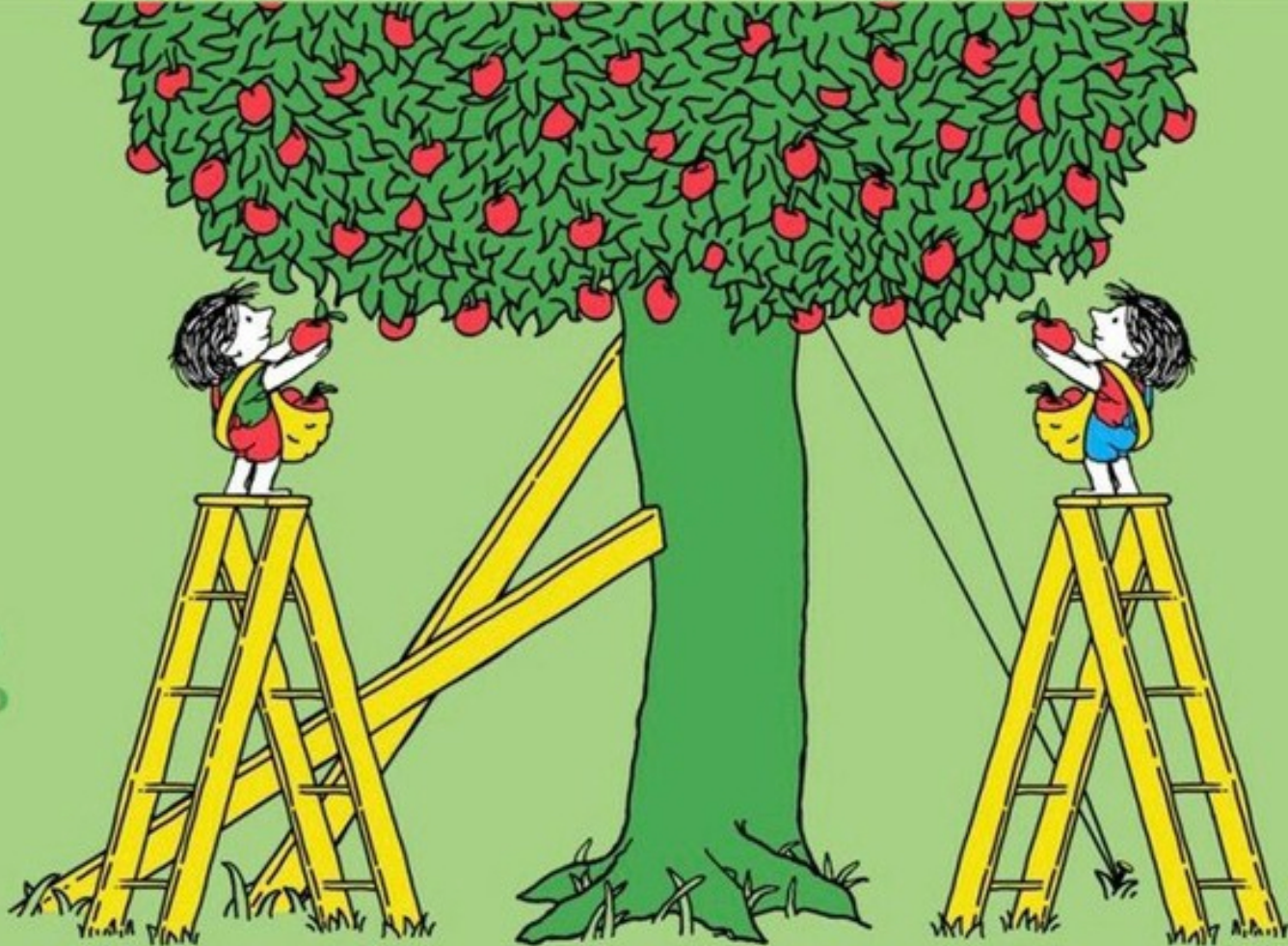
# Equity

Custom tools that  
identify and address  
inequality



# Justice

Fixing the system to offer equal access to both tools and opportunities



# Inequality

Unequal access to opportunities



With apologies to Shel Silverstein from @lunchbreath

2019 Design In Tech Report | Addressing Imbalance

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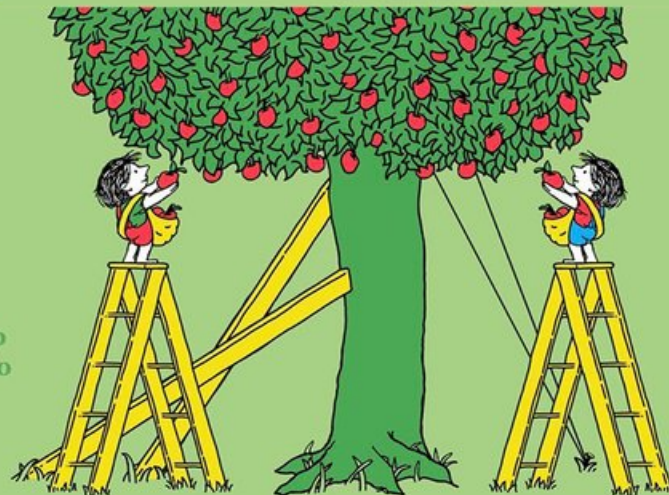


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# Justice

Fixing the system to offer equal access to both tools and opportunities



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One of the goals of cultural humility  
is to create spaces for healing  
and equitable learning so that  
all are seen, heard, valued,  
loved and supported.

- James Knight

# TENETS OF CULTURAL HUMILITY

1. Lifelong learning  
& Self-Critique
2. Redressing  
Power Imbalances
3. Institutional  
Accountability

*Choose*

**CULTURAL  
HUMILITY**

**NOT COMPETENCE**

# Cultural Competence vs Cultural Humility

Attributes	Cultural Competence	Cultural Humility
<b>View of culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● group traits</li><li>● group label associates with a list of traditional traits and practices</li><li>● de-contextualized</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● unique to individuals</li><li>● originates from multiple contributions from different sources</li><li>● can be fluid and change based on context</li></ul>
<b>Culture definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Minorities of ethnic and racial groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Different combinations of ethnicity, race, age, income, education, sexual orientation, class, faith and more</li></ul>

# Cultural Competence vs Cultural Humility

Attributes	Cultural Competence	Cultural Humility
<b>Traditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Immigrants and minorities follow traditions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Everyone follows traditions</li></ul>
<b>Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Majority is the normal; other cultures are the different ones</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Power difference exist and must be recognized and minimized</li></ul>
<b>Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Promotion of stereotyping</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Promotion of respect</li></ul>
<b>Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Differences based on group identity and group boundaries</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Individual focus on not only the other but also of the self</li></ul>
<b>Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● A defined course or curriculum to highlight differences</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● An ongoing life-process</li><li>● Making bias explicit</li></ul>
<b>Endpoint</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Competence/expertise</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Flexibility/humility</li></ul>





Cultural Humility is a humble approach to learning and listening that requires us to open our hearts to self-reflection, curiosity, and empathy when encountering new & diverse perspectives. It calls for us to recognize the value and strength in other cultures--understanding they too have something to give that enriches us through partnership.



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How do you know you are loved?



Love is . . .



**LOVE** is giving others what they  
need so they can be  
their best selves



“We are not necessarily thinking machines. We are feeling machines that think.”

-Antonio Damasio, MD, Ph.D.



The biggest mistake we make about who we are is believing that we are cognitive beings. We are emotional beings who on occasion think. Too often we don't pay attention to emotion.

“If you hold a hot cup of coffee and you spill it on your hand. The pain centers that light up in your brain are the exact pain centers that light up if you feel socially excluded, rejected, or isolated. We neurobiologically process emotional pain the same way that we process physical pain. We’re emotional beings, and pain for us, as members of a coalition species, is being on the outside. That’s real pain for us. It’s not any different than physical pain for us.”





Diversity is a reality.

Equity is a choice.

Inclusion is an act.

Belonging is a result.



# There's a difference

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There's a difference between assimilation, limited inclusion, and belonging.

***Assimilation*** says, “be like us and leave parts of you behind.”

***Limited inclusion*** says, “be a part of us and bring some uniqueness, but not too much.”

***Belonging*** says, “you belong here; this place is better because you are here, and you are free to take up space.”

- *Terence Lester*



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## **Golden Rule**

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

## **Platinum Rule**

“Do unto others as they would want done to them.”



**LOVE** is humble



+ Remember, it's not always about you.

+ It's okay to not know. Ask questions!

+ Confront your prejudices & biases.

+ Avoid the language of pride.



+ Amplify the voices of diverse communities.

+ Speak out against hate/discrimination.

+ Use my power to uplift others.

+ Never show up empty-handed.

+ Cultivate empathy and patience.

+ Avoid making judgments.



# THE CULTURAL HUMILITY WHEEL

**BE HUMBLE**  
and ADAPTABLE

**BECOME**  
SELF-AWARE

WILL: DESIRE TO LEARN

OTHERS  
over  
SELF

SKILL: APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

FILL: GAIN KNOWLEDGE

**LEAD**  
MODEL and  
ADVOCATE  
FOR EQUITY

**UNDERSTAND**  
WE ALL HAVE  
UNIQUE  
WORLDVIEWS

**LEARN**  
WHAT IS MOST  
IMPORTANT TO  
OTHERS



+ Become a lifelong learner of yourself.

+ You are your BIGGEST life lesson.

+ Pay closer attention to what moves you.

+ Ask for feedback (and receive it well).



+ We are equal no matter our culture.

+ Diversity makes us stronger, not weaker.

+ Learn how others see the world.

+ Having multiple perspectives is a blessing.

+ Do not assume, interrupt, or compete.

+ Make time and make room for other voices.



## IN YOUR OWN WORDS

What does a culturally humble environment look like? What does a culturally humble leader look like?





What barriers or OLD cultural norms are in place  
that is prohibiting cultural humility?



What do you need in order to feel supported, SAFE, and effective in implementing cultural humility?



How does feeling included and valued impact  
your engagement and contribution?



Have you noticed the best ideas often  
come from unexpected sources?



SHIFT  
FROM  
ME → WE





"THE ONLY TRUE WISDOM IS IN KNOWING YOU KNOW NOTHING" -SOCRATES



# Representation Matters

- + Be intentional about diverse images, visuals, presentations, speakers, etc. *(Think of anything that has a face, or image, & think about how you can intentionally put this before the people.)*
- + Quotes—Who do we honor and who are we always quoting?
- + Diversity within the culture? Culture consists of food, dress, art work, achievements, customs, etc. *(How can we intentionally reflect diverse cultural expressions?)*



Chidiebere Ibe  
Twitter: @bereillushate





# Transparency is Key

- + Knowledge is power! Who has knowledge? Who has access to it?
- + How much power is yielded because of information or knowledge?
- + Be more intentional about sharing information and processes, vision, and goals
- + Power can be mitigated or lessened through open communication and involving people in the process



# Partnership is essential!

- + Incentivize teams, leaders and/or departments to connect with diverse organizations in the community.
- + True partnership is a partnership between equals for the purpose of creating something great. In true partnership, both successes and struggles are shared so that growth can take place.



# Accountability is a must!

- + What do we measure?
- + What we measure, we value.
- + Organizations and the leaders within them must emphasize humility as a desired trait. That means practicing it, modeling it, rewarding it, and evaluating it when considering individuals for promotion.



# Give Honor

- + The greatest seed a person can sow is a seed of honor.
- + Honor is the willingness to reward someone for their difference. It's the choice to celebrate the distinctive difference in another.
- + Honor is the seed we sow for access into new & diverse worlds, cultures, and environments.

# TENETS OF CULTURAL HUMILITY

1. Lifelong learning & Self-Critique
2. Redressing Power Imbalances
3. Institutional Accountability

@leadwithhumility

Thank You!

Follow me on Instagram or Twitter by searching Lead With Humility or Dr. James Knight

[www.leadwithhumility.org](http://www.leadwithhumility.org)

**"Listening is an art that requires attention over talent, spirit over ego, and others over self."**

- Dean Jackson -



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