

Richard Levick – It's Complicated



“Human beings are not born once and for all on the day their mothers give birth to them, but...life obliges them over and over to give birth to themselves.”

– Gabriel Garcia Marquez

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In the 1940s, my grandfather Lou loved baseball so much that he not only went to Washington Senators' games at old Griffith Stadium, but when the Senators were on the road and the Homestead Grays of the old Negro League played there (splitting their time between Washington and Pittsburgh), he would go to those games, too. Years later, I would buy a

reproduction of their old warm-up jacket for my father. It looked so good, I bought one for myself.

Belief in fairness and equity were always a huge part of the value system my grandfather and father passed on to me. Yet there were limits, for even Jewish liberals who suffered antisemitism and saw so many parallels with Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. In 1968, when my parents returned from the Mexico City Olympics, my father said, "I support the message of Tommie Smith and John Carlos raising their fists, but did they have to do it there, on the medal stand at the Olympic Games?" Even at age ten I remember thinking, "Well, perhaps not, but where else would they get the world's attention?"

Bigotry is easy to spot when it is intended. It's a half century later and I can't get the photos of Bull Connor, the Birmingham Commissioner of Public Safety and other anti-civil rights thugs out of my mind. The dogs, the fire hoses, the chewing tobacco, the smugness, daring you to integrate "their" city. But unintended and unconscious acts of bias and exclusion? Those are harder to spot because they often occur in the synapses of our minds and take the form of omission or compliance with existing policy, not evil intent.

Over the years we have done an immense amount of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion work under a variety of names, #MeToo, anti-Arab and anti-racist work, LGBTQ rights, religious liberty, not to mention all the times we have represented foreign companies and countries and had to confront all the biases – and often regulations – which made their lives and opportunities much more challenging. We also have come to see some patterns, in those who seek cultural change and those who resist it. Not to mention in the thousands and sometimes millions of observers who, in the age of social media, weigh in with everything from support to false narratives to doxing, which has, I might add, resulted in risks to life and home.

We have a new eBook coming out next week on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, comprised mostly of our own observations, recommendations, broadcasts and best practices, along with a few guest columns, and we also have a series of DE&I infographics ready to release today. So far there are three in the series: one for corporations trying to figure out if now is the time to lead; one for people inside companies who lean on something between fear and an excuse when they don't embrace the need for cultural change; and one for each of us. You and me. Mirrors if you will, that call upon us to "speak truth with love, not anger" as Paul Anderson-Walsh, Director of The Center for Inclusive Leadership, suggests. They call on us to not only embrace the change but also recognize that while we are almost all victims at one time or another, we can also all be victimizers. Make "good trouble" as John Lewis so adroitly told us through the decades, but also do it with love, not violence, anger or self-righteousness.

What did we miss? What did we get wrong? Please let us know and we will update the infographics. Please stay tuned for the eBook in a week and let us know if you want to contribute.

"Be the change you want to see in the world." – Mahatma Gandhi



LEVICK presents Barriers to Entry: This is designed for those inside companies – who lean on something between fear and an excuse – when they don't embrace the need for cultural change. If any of these doors look familiar to you, it is time to reconsider and work on evolving your view.



LEVICK presents the History Meter: The risks have evolved. It is now far riskier to do nothing, do almost nothing or to take only symbolic actions.



LEVICK presents the Judgment Free Zone: A reminder for each of us on our journeys to practice grace and humility.