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Stepping Up: Exploring Men's Critical Role in Championing Gender Equity Change

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What is Gender Equity?

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What is Gender Equity?

“Gender equity”: According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (7th ed., 1982) equity means fairness and it is also a recourse to principles of justice to correct or supplement law. It is in this sense that specific measures must be designed to eliminate inequalities between women and men, discrimination and to ensure equal opportunities. Gender equity leads to equality.

Source: UNESCO

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What is Gender Equality?

"Gender equality" means equality between men and women; the freedom to develop and make choices unhindered by gender stereotypes, roles and prejudices; that the different behaviors, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favored equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on whether they are born male or female.

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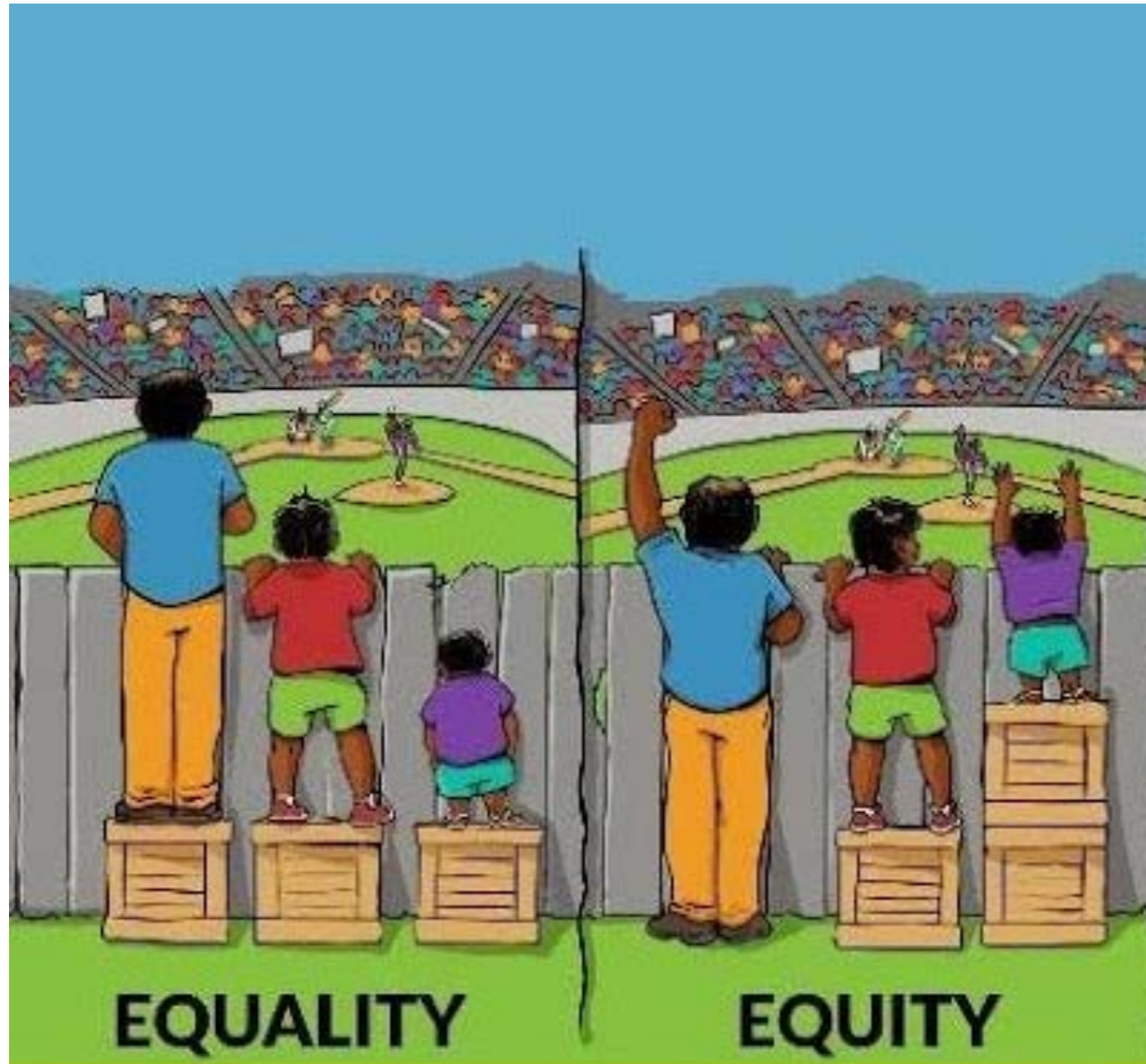
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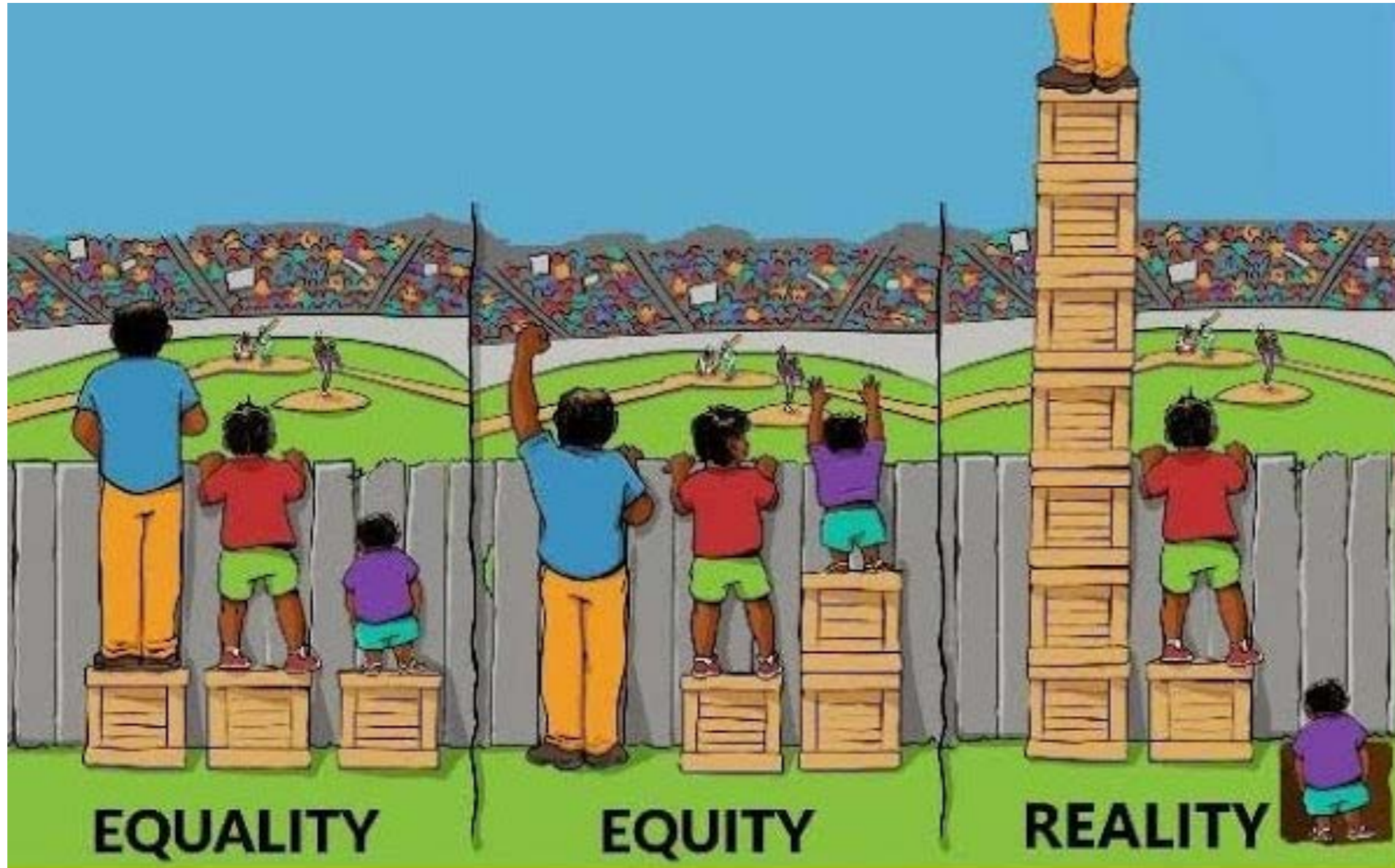


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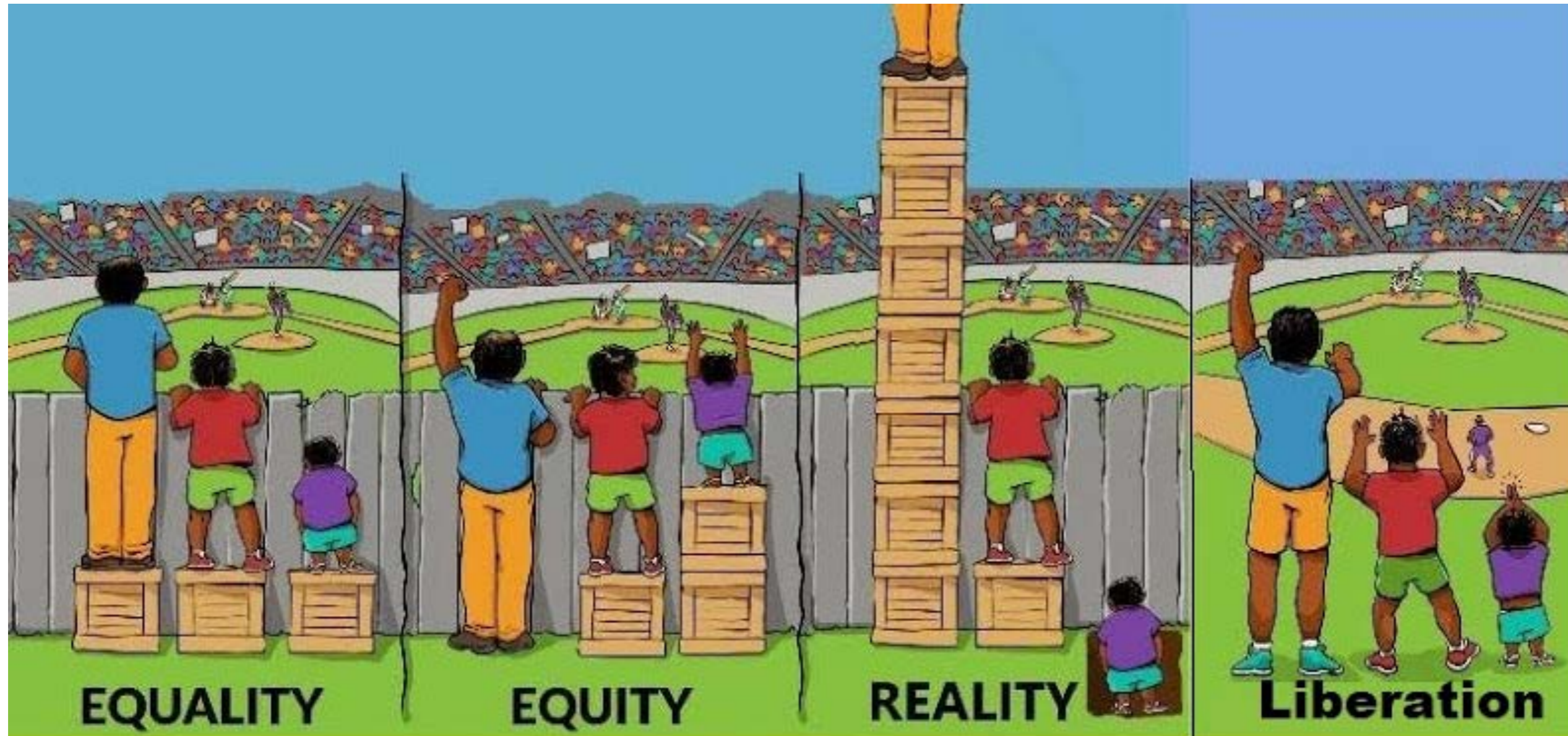


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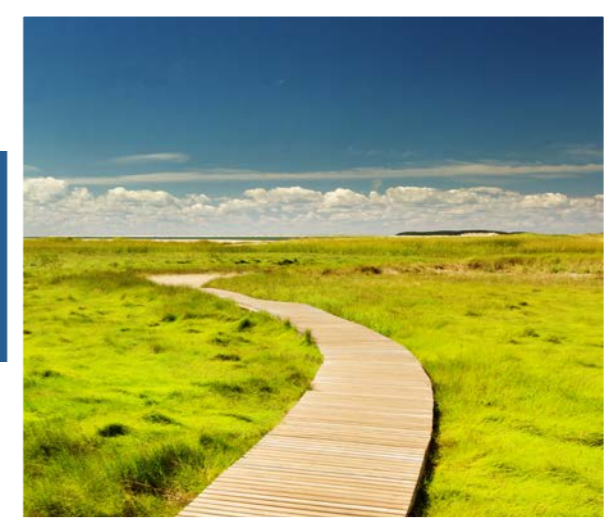
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Session Outcomes



- Explore assumptions and myths about gender equity and men, and the impact these have on employee engagement and partnership.
- Better understand the ROI for men—personally and professionally from gender equity efforts
- Identify what works and what doesn't both personally and organizationally to more effectively engage men on gender equity.

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Learning Reminders



1. Notice and challenge your assumptions.
2. Listen to understand rather than just to respond.
3. Try on and practice 'and/both' thinking. Notice when you are viewing something through an 'either/or' lens.
4. Notice what surprises you and/or makes you curious to learn more. Remain inquisitive.
5. Permission to accept or reject anything in this session.

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Historical Perspective

Dimension of Diversity	Focus	Unexamined
Race	Ethnic Minorities	White
Gender	Women	Men
Sexual Orientation	Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual	Heterosexuals

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What assumptions are out there about **MEN & GENDER EQUITY?**



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Assumptions about MEN & GENDER EQUITY

- Gender equity = women's issues.
- Making progress means we only need focus on women.
- Men don't know anything about gender equity and hence can't lead.
- Men have everything to lose from greater gender equity.
- Men are non-supporters of gender equity or the barrier/problem.
- Men don't get it – or worse, don't want to get it.
- Men are the only ones who need to change for progress to take place.

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What is the **impact on gender equity efforts** when these assumptions are **unchecked, unacknowledged and/or undiscussed?**

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Impacts

- Many men feel blamed (the human piñata complex).
- Reduced curiosity contributes to a “walking on eggshells” environment.
- Men are not expected to lead gender equity efforts.
- Authenticity of men questioned when they do speak up.
- Men don't seek out other men and instead defer to women.
- Women are expected to exclusively mentor, educate, and lead.
- Fatigue/exhaustion/isolation for women.

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Obstacles for Men as Visible Gender Equity Champions

Apathy

- Rooted in lack of self-interest: “Men will remain indifferent and therefore unlikely to support gender equality unless they appreciate how they can gain personally from changing the status quo.”

Fear

- Fear of losing status
- Fear of making mistakes
- Fear of other men’s disapproval

Perceived & Real Ignorance

- *Perceived*: “By virtue of being male, men are uninformed about issues of gender and, therefore, lack the knowledge they need to be effective.”
- *Real*: “A lack of awareness of gender bias.”



What should you know about Men at Work?

- Men are like fish in water. They often don't think of ourselves as part of a group but instead first as individuals.
- Men have a culture. This culture is usually synonymous with the dominant org culture. Men are often the last to realize the impacts that culture has on others including themselves.
- Many men are afraid of breaking rank with other men and/or making mistakes on this topic.
- Men are not all the same. Negotiate sameness/difference.
- Most men are unaware of the male privileges (unconscious benefits) they hold because of their gender.
- Men's actions regarding gender equity may come from a place of not knowing they don't know (unconscious incompetence). This can easily be misinterpreted.
- Most men want to be gender equity partners.

How does your (**unconscious**) current mindset impact your gender partnerships?

What **gets in your way** of partnership with the other gender?

What is the **work you need to do** to expand your gender mindset?

How would **you benefit** from expanding your gender mindset?



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Which “Don’t Do” organization tip **are you most interested in discussing further** to avoid or recover from?

Why that tip? What do you want to know/ get better at?

Which specific leadership “Don’t Do” action **do you most need to monitor?** Why this one?

Org Tips and Leadership Behaviors Not to Do

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Which “what works” tip does your organization do currently well?
What have you learned that might be helpful to others struggling with this tip?

Which “what works” tip is most difficult/challenging for you that you want to make forward progress with?

What leadership action is the one you most want to get better with?
Why this action?

Org Tips and Leadership Behaviors To Do

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One thing I learned or relearned here was...

An action I am committed to take moving forward is...

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