WAR & PEACE

IN THE WORKPLACE

DIVERISTY
CONFLICT
UNDERSTANDING
RECONCILIATION

By: Jeanne Martinson

Image Source:
http://www.globalspeakers.net/books/book/war_and_peace_in_the_workplace

Jeanne Martinson

Jeanne is a local author from Regina, Saskatchewan. She is a managing partner of her own firm, Martrain Corporate and Personal Development. She is a diversity strategist who provides workshops and keynote speeches to various organizations.

She has written three books in total and "War and Peace in the Workplace" is a **national bestseller.**

She is the past president of the Saskatchewan Training and Development Association (Regina Chapter), the Saskatchewan Business and Professional Women, and Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan

Why can't we just get along?

Conflict in the workplace is triggered by our differences. Differences emerge based on our diversity. Diversity speaks to our differences in race, gender, values, marital and family status, age and/or thought processes.

While diversity can be wonderful and rewarding it can also be challenging and problematic. Diversity allows for many perspectives and can create a synergy to move an organization forward but, it can also cause conflict, toxic workspaces, low morale, harassment, misunderstandings and employee turnover.

In response to conflict, workplaces will develop respectful workplace or harassment policies to help manage people's differences. Martinson suggests these policies are not enough. She indicates that we must shift how we work with others. We need to be aware of our differences and continue to enhance our understanding of why we are different.

Image Source:
http://www.mcnallyrobinson.com/event-12151/Jeanne-Martinson----Book-Signing#.Uxqd1ijDPww

SUMMARY:

Ch. 1 - We Can't Ignore Diversity

Image Source:
http://www.alderkoten.com/institute/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/diversity.jpg

We Can't Ignore Diversity

Diversity can be challenging. It can generate conflict, toxic work groups, low morale, harassment, misunderstandings and employee turnover within an organization. However, it can also provide an organization with varied perspectives, which can

Martinson's diagram illustrates the choice we have working in a diverse environment. Diversity creates conflict. Once conflict exists, we have a choice to spin down into dysfunction (toxic work groups, low morale) or we can become aware and work towards understanding, reconciliation and synergy.
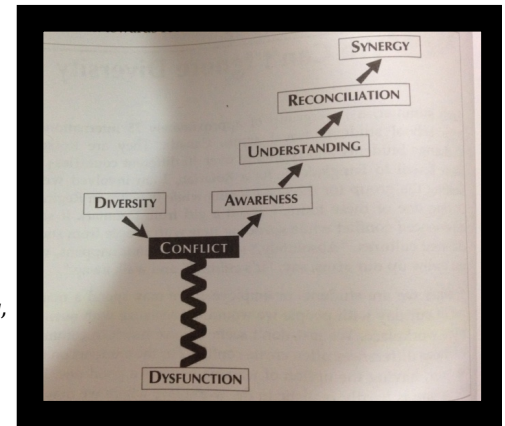
Image Source:
Martinson, 2005, p. 2

A Globe in a Oyster

Image Source:
Martinson, 2005, p. 1

Jeanne Martinson uses the image of a globe in an oyster shell at the start of every chapter. This image symbolizes our world, which is becoming smaller and more diversified. Our world is like the oyster pearl - we have many diverse layers.

"Overtime an oyster grows one of the most valued gems in the society by covering a grain of sand with concentric circles of nacre. Once we start to fully utilize the diversity within our teams and workplaces, our outputs will become more valuable – much like the fine pearls that an oyster produces" (p. 6 & 7).

An interesting fact Jeanne Martinson shared was that Toronto, which is Canada's largest city, is the most diverse city in the world.
There are 175 countries of origin represented in Toronto.

AWARENESS

What is Diversity Anyway?
The Myth of Presumed Sameness
Us and Them and We
We Made It – Why Haven't They
We's Not Me's

Image Source:
http://marketing-works.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/public_awareness.jpg

Culture "the whole collection of agreements that the members of a particular society share" (p.11). Culture helps to define what behaviours are good and bad and what is and is not acceptable in our society. "Our **beliefs** and **values** create our agreements. **Beliefs** are perspectives of what is right and true. **Values** are perspectives of what is good and better" (p.11 & 12).

Factor # 2 – The Disability Race

Factor # 5 – A Vital Element of Time

"The Royal Commission on Equality (1984) found that four distinct groups were under-represented in the workforce" (p.29). These four groups are:

- ➢ Aboriginal people
- ➢ Women
- ➢ Visible minorities
- ➢ Persons with a disability

Given the results of the Royal Commission on Equality, the government enacted the **Employment Equity Act** in 1986.

Factor # 3 – Entry into the Political System

The Employment Equity Act (1986)

"This {Act} made it possible for organizations to have special employment programs to attract and retain employees from the four equity groups. The goals was to have a representative work force, one that reflected the makeup of the working age population at different occupational levels" (p. 29)

Factor #1 – The Maturing Economy

Factor # 4 – Cultural Factors

We's, not Me's

In a previous book, Martinson discussed a leadership model that she feels works well for the diversity concepts discussed in this book. This leadership model is described below.

Awareness dares you to be courageous and think about how you judge people who you see as different. **Understanding** helps to develop insight into why we are different and the conflict that results from our differences. **Reconciliation** provides options as to how we can influence others through our behaviours. **Synergy**, suggests that if we incorporate insight, influence, and courage we will be able to work together, which will have a positive impact on the workplace.

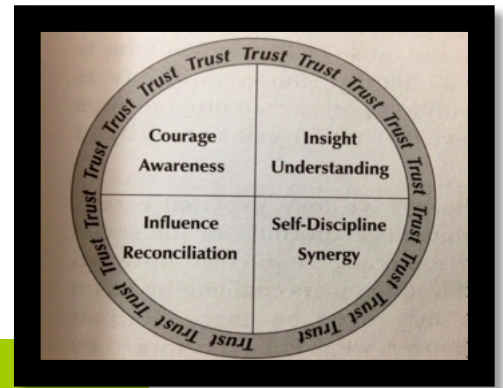*The four elements in the diagram are held together by trust. (p. 35).*

Image Source:
Martinson, 2005, p. 35

To become <u>aware</u> of diversity, we transition through four stages

Stage 1: We are unaware. We don't recognize how the structure of a group or organization inhibits the success of certain groups of people

Stage 2: We get to know our colleagues and start to understand what is important to them. This may be a time of struggle between the desire to remain within the comfortable norm vs. upholding personal values of fairness

Stage 3: We can identify with the diversity group.

Stage 4: We redefine the new norm and how we and others fit into it. We challenge the status quo.

"We cease to define the best workplace as one made up of 'me's', but a workplace made up of 'we's'" (p. 37).

Understanding

From Nations to Tribes and Back Again
Welcome Barneyland
My kind of Christian
Crossing Gender Divide
Leaping the Generation Gaps
Perspectives on Time
The Other Brain

Image Source:
http://blog.architexa.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/understanding-the-brain.jpgwww.blog.architexa.com

From Nations to Tribes and Back Again

The relationship between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people has transitioned over time. The **first stage** can be described as peaceful and friendly; the **second stage** occurred when the power started to tilt towards the non-aboriginal people and governments. The **third stage** included the removal of aboriginal people from their land and the assimilation to European ways. The **fourth stage** is upon us and is a time of recovery for the aboriginal people, renegotiation and renewal.

There were many events in history that affected the relationship between the aboriginal and non-aboriginal people.

~ Treaties and Proclamations
~ From independent nations to controlled bands
~ Cultural genocide
~ Physical control (pass system)
~ Ward of the state
~ Residential schools
~ Land movement and seizure
~ Veteran neglect and vote denial
~ The way back to nationhood (resistance to assimilation)

While we are in a time of recovery, renegotiation, and renewal we continue struggle with ongoing issues of misunderstanding.

Welcome Barneyland

Immigration has been and continues to be an important piece to Canada's success. While immigration has changed in Canada there still continues to be struggles. Canada needs immigrants but there are ongoing issues that hinder an immigrant's success.

Ongoing Issues:
Immigrants want to fit into the workplace all the while **maintaining their cultural identify**. Issues of language and cultural shock are still prevalent with the workplace.

Language barriers also create workplace divides and toxicity as people tend to gravitate to those who they can understand. Immigrants (just like non-immigrants) bring their **old grievances** into the workplace, this also affects the environment. Grievances need to be worked through as opposed to "gotten over." **Globalization** is another ongoing issue as we hear about events in other countries and inferences and generalizations are made that can interfere with workplace dynamics. Another ongoing issue is **education and credentials**. While immigrants immigrate to Canada for the opportunity for a high quality of life many educational backgrounds and credentials are not accepted in Canada making their transition difficult and troubling. Overall Canada relies on immigration however, it's difficult for immigrants when they have numerous obstacles in the way of their success.

My Kind of Christian
Different religions can cause conflict in the workplace because of the different sets of beliefs, traditions and practices. We tend to judge those who don't share the same beliefs as we do. As we become more diverse in the workplace challenges arise from differing religious beliefs. Furthermore, each individual believes their religion is the **right** one; that our own faith is the best. When individuals participate in ceremonies or practices that are not of their own belief system, they are left feeling uncomfortable, excluded and not respected. Individuals may choose not to attend certain events of other faiths however, this leads to people thinking ...will they still think of me as a team player? Will they think I am too good to socialize with this team? Do I attend and be uncomfortable?

This information reminds us that we need to stop trying to be the same and focus on our uniqueness.

Crossing the Gender Divide
Men and women working together in the workplace can also create conflict. Men and women are biological different and if we deny these differences we are not able to function to our full potential. If we accept without reasoning we fuel assumptions and create unfounded stereotypes. Some of the main differences Martinson describes are:
~Women hear better than men

~A man's brain is organized differently than a woman's brain – in a man's brain, the functions are compartmentalized while the functions in a female brain are more globally dispersed. Given this, women are better able to multitask but, a man can focus on a single task intently.

~ Women are more interested in faces while men are more interested in moving objects.

~Men and women express emotions differently.

~ There are differences between risk taking behaviours.

~Men and women also define relationships differently. Women see relationships as spending time together and talking while men develop relationships as a result of a shared project, interest, or activity.

Given the differences in gender and how we function, conflict is highly likely unless we take the time to understand our differences and use them to our advantage.

Leaping the Generation Gaps
Our age helps to define who we are. Our age identity has been shaped by our experiences growing up and these experiences also influence our values and how we interrelate in the workplace. Specifically, these experiences affect "our beliefs about work, power and money" (p. 109).

Different age categories have different perceptions. Martinson speaks to four different age categories and the different perspectives of each. *These are trends to provide some ideas about diversity among age groups – this information does not define the group.*

Traditionalist
- ❖ Born between 1922 and 1945
- ❖ Childhood is defined by conflict (war)
- ❖ Value steady, profitable employment
- ❖ Trust the organization
- ❖ Understand hierarchy and respect it
- ❖ Respect supervisor / authority
- ❖ Attitude towards the workplace includes loyalty, dedication, sacrifice, compliance, and diligence.
- ❖ Resist change
- ❖ Maintain formal relationships in the workplace
- ❖ Directive vs. collaborative
- ❖ Job change is a stigma

Baby Boomers
- ❖ Born between 1946 and 1964
- ❖ Desire a democratic, flat organization structure with higher control over their work
- ❖ Slightly bend the rules / challenge authority
- ❖ Collaborative style
- ❖ Have relaxed relationships in the workplace
- ❖ Self worth is tied to what they do for a living
- ❖ They are hard workers – often taking work home
- ❖ They live to work
- ❖ Expect job security / right to their positions
- ❖ Raised in a time of optimism, economic growth and expansion
- ❖ They believe anything is possible.
- ❖ Job change is a career stall

Generation X
❖ Born between 1965 and 1980
❖ Hurried childhood of divorce (became common place)
❖ Explosion of the internet made face to face contact secondary, books obsolete, and infinite knowledge on hand at all times
❖ Risk takers and prefer free agency over corporate life
❖ Parents were dual incomers - created children who had to take care of themselves. Independent, self-reliant, and pragmatic.
❖ Disillusioned with the corporate world
❖ Unimpressed with authority or seniority
❖ Believe that skills are more important than titles
❖ Independent workers / require little supervision
❖ Loyal to their manager – not the organization
❖ Engage in open communication when confronted with conflict
❖ Job change is necessary to build a career
❖ They need to feel valued in order to work hard
❖ Straightforward, flexible, brutally honest and non-political.

Generation Y
❖ Born between 1981 and 2001
❖ Globally aware / very tolerant towards multiculturalism
❖ Not uncommon for people to date outside of their racial or ethnic group
❖ Age of the internet, music downloads, instant messaging and cellphones
❖ Digital worldview as opposed to an analog (function in process) world view held by the generation x, baby boomers and traditionalists
❖ "Patience is a virtue" has been lost in this generation
❖ Ask WHY? Unless you can explain the rationale for doing something, they will resist taking action. (Telling an employee to do something without explanation typically worked with traditionalist, boomers, and gen X)
❖ No respect for authority based on title. They respect through the demonstration of competence and advanced skill.
❖ Value technical expertise
❖ Will do what they agree with; what makes sense (traditionalists and boomers does what they are asked to do because they are being asked by their boss)
❖ Loyal, but not necessarily to the organization, department, or manager. Rather, they are loyal to those they see walking the talk.
❖ Value integrity and commitment /

confident and expectant. They don't ask what they can do for the employer rather what can the employer do for them.

As you can see, depending on when you were born can influence your beliefs, values and work ethics. These differences can lead to conflict if you are not aware of and understand the differences.

Perspectives of time
The concept of time plays an important role within the workplace. As Canadians started to urbanize, the burden of the clock began to develop. Other cultures have other ways of managing their time. While some cultures manage their time with tight schedules and deadlines others have a more relaxed attitude towards time. There are two types of time.
1) Polychronic – concern is with the completion of the task rather than adherence to a preset schedule
Examples: Mexicans, First Nations / 'Siesta' time, 'Indian' time, 'Caribbean' time.
2) Monochronic – preset schedules are important, appointments are made, tasks are prioritized.
Example: North Americans

More people are entering the workforce that are coming from areas that follow polychromic time. 75% of the workforce perceives their time as polychromic yet most Canadian organizations adhere to the monochromic time. In addition to this this, more value is placed on individuals who go to bed early versus those who go to bed late (night owls). What is interesting is that body temperature and metabolic rates are in charge of our biological master clock and they determine if we are early risers or night owls (it's hardwired in us). Furthermore, the language we use to describe night owls and early birds informs how we feel about them.
~ Night is called the "dark" hours
~ Staying in bed is called "sleeping in"
~ Early birds are up "bright and early" and are "set for the day."

We require both early birds and night

owls within the workplace. 30% of Canadians are working non-traditional hours and therefore night owls are necessary. Again, we need to be aware and understand these differences to help mitigate the conflict that arises from the different perspectives on time.

The Other Brain
When understanding diversity, we also have to be aware and understand how our brains functions. We have two sides to our brains and pending which side is dominant – dictates how you will think and approach things.
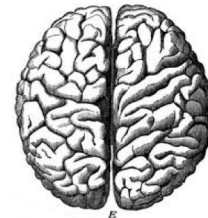
Left side
~Analytical
~Learn in linear sequential format (start with details and move to conceptual understanding)
~respond to word meaning, logical plans, punctual, sequential, rational, objective and can recall people's names.
~Ask what and how
~Process in sequence
~List makers, schedulers, daily plans, complete tasks in order
~Process symbols, comfortable with linguistics and math
~Uses information piece by piece to problem solve
~Pays attention to mechanics

Right side:
~Holistic & global
~lateral approach to learning (start with general concept then move to specifics)
~Random, intuitive, holistic, synthesizing, subjective, impulsive, and can recall people's faces
~Ask why and whom
~Random, moves from task to task and back again, seen by others as unorganized
~Concrete, they want to see, feel or touch
~Want to see a graph or a chart
~Has intuition / gut feeling
~Will tell you it "feels' right

Right brainers and left brainers function differently. This difference can lead to conflict within the workplace.

Books on organizing are written by Left Brainers bought by Right Brainers, and never opened."

Jeanne Martinson, Right Brainer

Reconciliation

What Can I Do As An Individual?
What Can I Do As A Leader?
What Can I Do As An Organization?

www.careercenter.illinois.edu

As An Individual: Often times our differences make it difficult to get along with our colleagues. Given this, Martinson makes three suggestions.

1) **Be aware when you are reacting instead of responding**
   - ❖ What people say or do may cause a reaction in us.
   - ❖ We judge people on their behaviour, NOT on their intention but we judge ourselves on our intentions rather than our behaviours.
   - ❖ Know what actions or types of communication trigger you. Ask for clarification; offer knowledge; admit to our misperceptions.

If you are triggered
   - ➢ Take a breath
   - ➢ Respond instead of react
   - ➢ Ask for clarification in a non-judgmental way

2) **Overcome your natural conflict style**
   - ❖ Diversity often creates conflict for example, if one person believes an outcome should be A while another person believes the outcome should be B
   - ❖ Challenge yourself to communicate in a respectful way. We aware and try to understand the rational behind the differences.
   - ❖ Try to work collaboratively on a solution that both can agree to.

3) **Reconsider you joking and teasing**
   - ❖ You can be funny without hurting other people.

As A Leader: Conformity and assimilation were the workplace standards. They determined what type of clothing was appropriate and how to behave and fit in. This does not speak to a diverse work environment. We are all unique and bring many talents to the workplace and in order to be successfully Martinson has suggested a few ideas to help:
   1) **Know who your staff really are and value their uniqueness**
   2) **Know your policies that relate to diversity** (do you understand employment equity and how it works, do you have Occupational Health and Safety Acts to follow, respectful workplace policy, do you know the difference between stereotype, tokenism, prejudice, discrimination and system

discrimination?)
   3) **Stay alert for red flags** (gender issues, language barriers, sexual harassment etc.

   4) **Be aware that different rules apply to you** (there is a power differential between the employees and the leader and requests that are not defined in a job description can be risky. Do not engage in romantic relations with someone who you supervise).

   5) **Clarify Clarify Clarify** (the more diverse your team the more communication you will require. Communicate & clarify what your teams goals are and what the roles are. Furthermore, you should communicate and clarify the rules within the team such as how are you going to manage conflict & disclosure).

As An Organization: Martinson suggests some ideas to create a diversity-friendly environment.
   1) **Utilize diversity based analysis**
      - ▪ Use group based analysis to ensure diversity in policy and decision-making process, this may prevent unintentional outcomes.

   2) **Create Diversity skilled managers**
      - ▪ This is necessary to provide feedback to employees as well as to change leadership styles to ensure a friendly diverse environment.

   3) **Utilize the diversity sitting dormant in your organization**
      - ▪ Examples may be: multi-lingual reps at a call centre, being open and flexible to switching holidays to accommodate religious holidays

   4) **Bridge people into the culture**
      - ▪ You may want to consider a buddy system

for new staff so they are informed about the organization's culture.

5) **Develop effective policies**

6) **Attach diversity initiatives to your performance management grid**
   - The organization may wish to consider implementing a process to ensure managers and senior leaders develop diversity initiatives in their workplace.

7) **Invest in training of staff on issues of respect, harassment and diversity**

8) **Have accountability frameworks**
   - Consider the following: does your organization make it easier to hire and promote individuals with the same cultural backgrounds as themselves?
   - Does your organization consider employment equity important?

These are ideas that an organization can consider when trying to develop a diverse friendly environment.

Synergy

www.referenceforbusiness.com

Having diversity in your workplace can improve the organization's interactions with an increasingly diverse world such as through customer service. A diverse workplace will also attract a range of job applicants with varying ideas

CRITICAL REVIEW

"War and Peace in the Workplace" by Jeanne Martinson provides the reader with a general understanding of diversity and how it can lead to conflict within the workplace. She suggested that by being aware we are better able to identify of our differences. She then suggested that through understanding we start to gain a better understanding of how different we are and why. We are different because of our gender, race, culture, when we were born, and our biological makeup (right brain vs. left brain). She then speaks to reconciliation; what we can do as individuals, leaders and organizations to embrace diversity and minimize conflict within the workplace. She provides specific strategies to embrace diversity. By embracing diversity we can minimize the conflict and move the organization forward. Diversity brings many different perspectives, opinions and new ideas.

I believe this book provides a general understanding of diversity. It also provides informative and interesting examples through out the book. Jeanne Martinson does provide strategies for individuals, leaders, and organizations to embrace and build on the diversity within the workplace. Given this, I would recommend "War and Peace in the Workplace" to a new learner who has limited knowledge about diversity but is interested in an easy to read general overview.

Martinson, J. (2005). War and Peace In The Workplace. Regina, SK: Martrain Corporation and Personal Development