

READING GUIDE

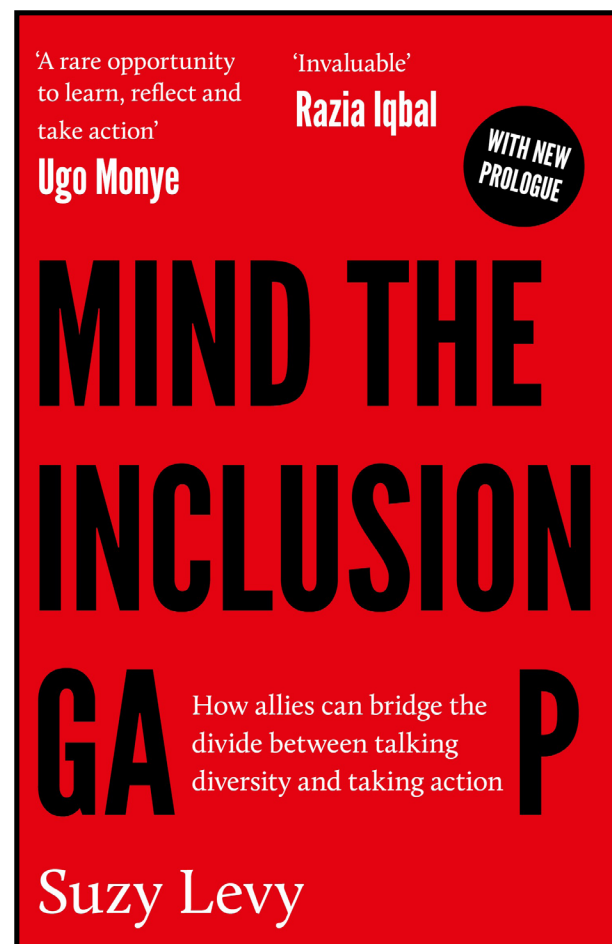
HOW ALLIES CAN BRIDGE THE DIVIDE BETWEEN TALKING DIVERSITY AND TAKING ACTION

Welcome to the reading guide for *Mind the Inclusion Gap; How allies can bridge the divide between talking diversity and taking action*. This guide is a resource for individuals and groups who want go deeper as they consider the topics and issues that surround inclusion and diversity today.

The drive to reflect the rich diversity of our world in our organisations isn't inherently political – it's smart business. Yet, from the US to Europe and beyond, diversity and inclusion efforts are increasingly being caught in the crossfire of a culture war. As the backlash against 'DEI' grows, the very principles of fairness and dignity are being reframed as divisive.

So how did we get here? And what can each of us do about it?

While most of us are curious about diversity, and some would call ourselves allies, very few are skilled in inclusion. Instead, we double down on being nice and hope that will be enough. But this optimistic attitude may harm as much as help. The more we lean on our niceness, the more we tend to bypass the uncomfortable to avoid discord and the more likely we are to take an idle role.



But there is no such thing as a passive ally. This book is for anyone who wants to dive into the complex task of supporting equality as the threat to an inclusive future becomes ever more urgent. Inside are tools to build confidence and capability, as well as practical guidance to help navigate complexity, challenge complacency and take meaningful action.

The first five chapters of *Mind the Inclusion Gap* are intended to help you understand why change isn't happening faster or in a more universal manner.

It looks deeply at the messy, the divisive and the challenging parts of inclusion and diversity that we often skip over, including the growing pushback. These first five chapters lay important groundwork for anyone wanting to create meaningful and lasting change and are ever more important as anti-DEI rhetoric and sentiment grows. The second half of the book is aimed at building a skillful understanding of what inclusion is, and what it isn't.

***'Some of you may race through this book at breakneck speed. Others may need more time to take it all in. I encourage you to sit with the stories and concepts. Soak them in. Then take them off the page and test them in the real world. Talk to friends, colleagues and neighbours. But don't stop there. If you have the ambition and the appetite – and I hope you will – I encourage you to set an intention for the role you want to play and then go and be active in shaping a future which you want to be part of.'* (page 20)**



About the Author

Suzy Levy is a specialist in inclusion and diversity who is widely recognised for her pragmatic and thoughtful approach to often emotive and messy situations. She works with senior leaders across public, private, education and third sectors to solve some of the most complex social issues of our time. In addition to her client work, Suzy is Chair of the Women's Sport Trust, Chair of Wimbledon Beach Volleyball Club, and was a non-executive director in the UK government for 7 years.

In 2025, Suzy was recognised in the King's New Years Honours List, receiving an MBE for services to inclusion and diversity in sport.

Mind the Inclusion Gap, her first book, is the result of decades of learning about inclusion and showcases her personal mission to create a more equitable and fairer society by helping others gain the confidence and knowledge they need to take impactful action.

PROLOGUE

The prologue explores the rising pushback and intentional politicisation of inclusion and diversity in the US and around the world. Both right-leaning (anti-woke, anti-DEI) and left-leaning (accusations of ignorance or malice toward minority groups) politicians are using diversity to achieve political points-scoring. But while this partisan approach fuels 'culture-war' mentality, it does little to create deeper understanding or positive change.

In a moment fuelled by extremes, it's important to consider that diversity, and the social stability that occurs when growth and prosperity are shared, benefits us all.

As we seek to understand growing divisions and to diffuse the building pushback, there are a number of shifts required including:

- Creating spaces where nuance is prioritised over noise and where debate on important questions on diversity can move forward instead of being shut down
- Reducing the over-focus on minority groups and consciously bringing the majority on the journey
- Better and more thorough change planning that considers the depth of beliefs and behaviours we face
- Including men in diversity initiatives, both as allies and as a group with unique needs
- Admitting mistakes when diversity initiatives don't go as planned or have unintended consequences
- Prioritising pragmatism over ideology
- Where possible, aiming for a win-win, and avoiding a zero-sum approach that suggests for one group to rise, the other must fail

***'If the last few years have taught us anything, it's that progress isn't linear, and it isn't guaranteed. We live in troubled times, and the world faces significant problems. But those problems are solvable, and a brighter, more inclusive future is possible if we choose to work together to make it happen.'* (Prologue)**

PROLOGUE

Key Questions



- Levy suggests that closing down the debate on fundamental questions is part of the reason we are where we are today. Do you agree? If so, which important questions do you think remain unanswered?
- How do we craft moments and places where those questions can be addressed even if we may not agree immediately on the answers to them?
- Levy also proposes that inclusion and diversity are not inherently political, but that we are being divided by diversity by both ends of the political spectrum. What do you think can be done to move the debate to a place where extreme views are less dominant?
- When you think about balancing pragmatism and ideology, what areas and/or approaches to inclusion and diversity do you think need to be adjusted?

Key Words

- Extreme
- Political
- Anti-DEI
- Nuance
- Scarcity mindset
- Zero-sum game
- Pragmatism
- Ideology
- Dignity
- Collective action



FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTION

The introduction for Mind the Inclusion Gap focuses on answering three fundamental questions:

- Are we there yet?
- Why is equality taking so long?
- What can I do?

The facts outlined throughout the introduction show a very clear truth; although we have made great strides towards equality, progress is painfully slow, and we are nowhere near achieving equality. Despite diversity being a front and centre topic for the last decade, very little has shifted. The lack of change is in part because we underestimated what it would take to shift societal attitudes and social norms. It's also in part because equality has never been done before, which means we are making this up as we go along and inevitably making mistakes along the way. One of the most fundamental mistakes we make is to conflate being a nice person with being inclusive. Inclusion requires knowledge, empathy and action.

Inclusion is achievable. But to do so, we need more people with strong skills taking part in shaping a future that does more than simply replicate the status quo. From activist to racist and everything in between, we are all playing a role in either promoting inclusion or perpetuating inequality. Most people I meet want to help. They want to be part of positive change, but whether their hesitation is due to being time poor, not knowing what action to take, or because they fear the cost of getting it wrong, they sit in largely passive roles. (page 15)

FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTION

Key Questions

- In the Foreword, Ugo Monye suggests that intention without impact is fruitless. Do you agree with his assertion? Have you ever had a moment where the outcomes from your actions did not match your original intentions? What did you do to course correct?
- The introduction is full of data. Which fact were you most struck by, and why?
- Are there important data points that you felt were missing in the introduction? If so, what? And why do you feel they are important to the discussion?
- Look at the sources for the data provided. What makes them credible?
- Do you agree with Levy's suggestion of how far we have come, and how far we have yet to go?
- *Mind the Inclusion Gap* looks across race, gender, sex and sexual orientation to find the interconnected elements that exist between these diverse groups. Why is it so important that we understand the connected nature of the problems being faced by those in the minority?
- Why is simply relying on being 'nice' a limiting approach?
- Have you ever relied too deeply on being a nice person? What happened as a result?

Key Words

- Contradiction
- Fairness
- Brexit
- Protectionism
- Echo-chambers
- Visibility
- Opportunity
- Interconnected
- Action



CHAPTER 1

THE SHADOW OF OUR PAST

From International Women's Day to weeks or months that focus on Black History, Asian History or LGBTQ+ History, stories of our past are often front and centre to diversity initiatives. That deep focus on history often leads to frustration. Some worry that if we wallow in our past, we never move on. Others worry that history affords a scapegoat allowing individuals something to blame when things don't go their way.



Unfortunately, history doesn't simply end when the clock moves forward. It plays a key role in shaping belief systems and forming part of our social compass. Chapter 1 looks at a handful of key historical moments for race and sexual orientation, exploring their recency, depth and impact.

***'Exploring our history isn't about wallowing in shame. We cannot ever own the attitudes and actions of our ancestors. But if we fail to see the legacy of tragic, discriminatory and inhumane events, we allow their influence to continue. Those events, and the intergenerational wealth and privileges which many of us enjoy, are not simply contained within the period of time in which they occurred. We don't need to feel bad about our past, but we do need to stand up, take notice, speak out and work together to ensure our history does not limit the possibilities of our future.'* (page 44)**



Key Questions

- Chapter 1 focuses on the recency and depth of impact of key historical events. Before reading the book, did you think it was important to bring history into conversations about inclusion today?
- What aspects of the history explored in this chapter resonated with you? What are you curious about and want to explore further?
- How can we recognise the reality of our past, but not wallow in the negative and unhelpful emotions around it (for example, shame or guilt)?
- Levy talks about the one step forward, two steps back nature of progress. Where do you feel our society is making progress? And where are we regressing?
- Have you seen examples of history showing up in the workplace/the classroom? What effect(s) does it have?
- Having statues and commemorations for slave traders like Edward Colston, and teams named after aspects of Native American tribal culture (or tropes about it) raise an important challenge. Should we prioritise historical truth and tradition when that truth creates additional trauma?

Key Words



- Indigenous
- Indian Removal Act
- First Nations, Sixties Scoop
- Windrush
- Racial segregation
- Redlining
- Legalised racism
- Police
- Sexual Offences Act
- Military ban
- Section 28
- Sport
- Same-sex marriage
- Legal restrictions
- Social attitudes

CHAPTER 2

THE STRENGTH OF SOCIAL NORMS

Gender norms govern our social existence in such a fundamental way that to challenge these norms is to challenge the very fabric of society. Unfortunately, those conditioned behaviours have direct consequences to the life path of boys and girls, men and women. Just as gendered norms affect what and who we value, racial norms sustain white primacy and heterosexual norms mean anything outside of heteronormative behaviour is seen 'abnormal'.

The pervasive nature of those norms is a key reason why exploring diversity can feel threatening. The sheer existence of transgender individuals, for example, can feel like we are unravelling the fabric of society itself. Because men often wield both power and status, masculine norms often get sidelined in diversity settings, and the needs of men are often overlooked. Global male suicide rates are more than twice those of female suicide rates, and global rates for drug abuse, alcohol, gambling, sex and porn addictions are significantly higher for men than they are for women. The narrow definition of masculinity has severe consequences for men, as well as for society more broadly which is why expanding our diversity programmes to encompass the unique needs of men, taking a more sophisticated approach to dismantling unhelpful cultural norms is an important step in creating lasting change.

'When our dominant culture allows very little room for men to define themselves and women have had to fight tooth and nail for centuries to create some semblance of equality, it's no wonder that transgender individuals come under such intense scrutiny. If men who display traditional 'feminine' traits challenge the very idea of masculinity, trans individuals blow the doors off the construct entirely. To transition your gender, or have a gender identity which is anything but fixed, challenges the very foundations of our social existence. It flies in the face of the masculine hierarchy upon which our society is built. Sex and gender are different. And neither are as fixed or binary as we have been taught to believe.' (page 77)

CHAPTER 2



Key Questions

- Which gender specific norms do you feel have a negative effect on our society today? Why? And which ones bring a positive impact? Why?
- Children are typically gender-conditioned starting at a very young age (for example, blue is for boys, pink is for girls). Have you done anything to intentionally break away from gender norms? What did you do and what was the reaction?
- Just as we have deeply coded gender norms, we have equally as impactful racial and cultural norms. What are some of the racial and cultural norms you have observed in your own community?
- Do you agree with Levy's proposal that men have unique needs which should be considered in the diversity agenda? Why/why not?
- What are some of the social norms you've observed in our organisation/university/school? Do they help or hinder us?
- In the chapter interviews, there are a number of transgender voices, including Heath before his transition to becoming Sarah, Jake talking about excruciating nature of his dysphoria and Ayla's words about the alignment of sense of self and how others see you. Did you learn anything new as you read their stories?

Key Words

- Masculinity
- Femininity
- Rigid
- Social norms
- Tradition
- Sex
- Intersex / Disorders of Sexual Development
- Gender identity
- Gender dysphoria
- Mismatch
- Transition
- De-transition



CHAPTER 3

WHAT HAPPENS OUT THERE, MATTERS IN HERE – THE WORLD AND THE WORKPLACE ARE INEXTRICABLY LINKED

Inclusion and diversity outcomes are limited by the extremely narrow approach we take to inclusion and diversity. Workplace programmes and interventions tend to be clinical and compartmentalised almost totally ignore life outside of work.

As human beings we live in one world. We have one set of cumulative experiences. Racism at the football match on a Friday night affects how we behave in a meeting on Tuesday. The constant adjustments women make in order to avoid sexual harassment and sexual assault affect how we show up in work settings, and especially settings where women are in the minority.

What shapes us is the totality of our interactions, not just those which happen during working hours because the world we live in and the world we work in are the same world. They are inseparable and they are irrevocably linked. It's time to change the scope of our inclusion initiatives to see the whole picture – because we cannot change what happens in here if we are not willing to look at what happens out there.

***'Getting to the uncomfortable truths about how the world we have created drives suicide, self-harm, self-hatred, violence and aggression is not to be taken on lightly. Sexual violence and harassment are unpalatable. Domestic chores are just plain boring. Like it or not, the Western social hierarchy of inequality. These are heavy subjects with serious implications, but if we continue to ignore them and continue to shape workplace diversity programmes which fit into neat boxes, it is unlikely we will ever succeed in our aims.'* (page 116)**

CHAPTER 3

Key Questions



- Do you think it's important that workplace diversity programmes look at the full experience, including the extremely negative experiences that occur outside the workplace? Why/Why not?
- Leaning into the 'out there' means we have to lean into some pretty traumatic things – how do we balance truth with trauma and make sure talking about issues like racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and other 'isms doesn't do more harm?
- Levy talks about our avoidance of both the traumatic (for example, domestic abuse) and the boring (like laundry and domestic chores). How does the imbalance of domestic life duties affect colleagues/peers in the workplace/the classroom?
- Do we have different norms and expectations by gender in terms of workplace duties (for example, who does the caring and nurturing at work)? If so, how can we counteract the impact of those gendered norms to spread the load more evenly?
- Same-sex couples aren't as tightly bound by traditional domestic roles. Why might heterosexual couples benefit from understanding how domestic duties are decided up in same-sex relationships?
- Our avoidance of discomfort is one of the reasons why many people avoid tough inclusion and diversity conversations. Why is it important we lean into our discomfort, and then work together to get to the other side?

Key Words



- Sexual harassment
- Men's violence to women and girls
- Sexual assault
- Domestic abuse
- Laundry
- Domestic chores
- Parenting
- #MeToo, #MeTooIncest
- Online hate
- Hate crimes
- Racism
- Emotional baggage

CHAPTER 4

OUR DIVERSITY MESS

Exploring diversity is messy. It's messy for many reasons. It requires us to see inequality and to care when lack of fairness is happening to someone other than ourselves. It's messy because it requires us to interrogate some of our deepest beliefs and most common behaviours. It's also messy because it stirs up emotion and forces us to choose whether or not to change when sometimes we might be part of the problem.

It doesn't help that these difficult moments of social change are happening in a time when everything you say and do can be recorded. What you say or do can now be by millions of people around the world and 'innocent until proven guilty' is irrelevant if an accusation becomes a near instantaneous 'truth' via forwards, retweets, and shares. Fuelled by access to technology, and the transparency it creates, social media led moments have created unparalleled visibility for inequality. Technology is playing a key role in how we shape the society of the future. We should be cautious about just how far that role extends, but should not be apologetic if, along with the rise in visibility comes a rise in accountability and expectations.

As visibility to diversity efforts grow, fear of reverse discrimination grows alongside it – despite the facts suggesting otherwise. Meanwhile, many worry that we are becoming too 'politically correct' and that 'cancel culture' is killing free speech. We need the ability to laugh, but at whose expense? Freedom of speech does not mean freedom from consequences just as visibility does not equate to empathy. In recent years, transgender individuals have been thrust into the spotlight. But greater awareness has also meant greater danger as violence against the trans community has also grown.

***'One of the keys to success in messy diversity conversations is to focus on mutually beneficial outcomes. Most of us can agree on what good looks like. We want to live in a world that is fair. We want to live in a world where hatred and violence are not present. That is a wonderful starting point. When we lose sight of a common goal, there is a higher probability that when we disagree, we simply stop listening. Debates are not debates when they become a contest to see who can shout the loudest about their point of view.'* (Page 152)**

CHAPTER 4



Key Questions

- How do we separate fact from fiction when it comes to fears of discrimination / reverse discrimination?
- How do lean into the very real fears that some people have without curtailing our ambitions for equality?
- Do you feel like some cultures and societies have taken political correctness too far? How do we create accountability (and change) without swinging the pendulum so far that the consequence is not proportional to the mistake?
- How might the rise of AI exacerbate the role technology is playing in how society is shaped? Why is this relevant to inclusion and diversity?
- How can individuals in minority groups lean toward the 'benefit of the doubt' that Phillipa talks about? Why can that sometimes be hard to do?
- We need the ability to laugh. How can we ensure the jokes we tell and the laughter we create are additive, rather than depletive?
- Have you seen any pushback against diversity in our organisation/ university/school or the rising fear of reverse discrimination?
- How much do we feel like we need to atone for past bad behaviour or ignorance regarding diversity?
- In the interview with Ally, she proposes that the current rifts (around inclusion and diversity) have a lot to do with our relationship with change.
- How do we address the fact that change is unsettling, and even more so when the changes we are embarking are pulling at threads which are fundamental to the fabric of our society?
- Levy suggests that inclusion 'takes two.' What does she mean by this? How do we create a culture in our organisation/university/school where individuals work together, knowing we will inevitably make mistakes.

Key Words

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility • Technology • Reverse discrimination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, #TimesUp, #LovesLove • Cancel culture • Political correctness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of speech • Banter • Proportionality • Diversity targets • Benefit of the doubt |
|--|--|---|

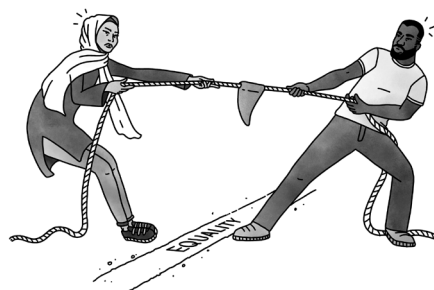


CHAPTER 5

WHEN BELIEF SYSTEMS COMPETE

The conversation about diversity often leans toward how we can help minority groups and their allies (those in the majority) work together to create change.

But there are clear divides and conflicts between and within diverse communities that cannot be ignored:



- Religious attitudes, toward homosexuality, women's rights and trans rights range from acceptance to persecution and even execution. What happens when one diverse group wants to limit the life possibilities of another?
- How do we address power structures within minority groups that challenge inclusion? For example, when the dominance of gay men can mean that lesbians and bisexual individuals are less visible or even erased.
- Racism has its own unique forms within ethnic minority communities and colourism or shadeism, the unspoken hierarchy that places lighter, whiter-skinned individuals in higher social standing than their darker-skinned counterparts, is a significant challenge.
- There are groups of cis women who fear allowing trans women into certain spaces – and while the facts don't suggest that trans women pose any sort of threat, the fear those individuals have is real.

We don't often talk about these competing belief systems or the challenge they present. As a result, we often lump people together and assume they hold the same values. We oversimplify, and unfortunately, simple solutions are unlikely to work especially when they don't take into account the complex nature of human emotions, or the wide range of personal motivations. But if we wallow in the complexity we risk getting lost in a never-ending sea of disagreement. So how do we lean into these divergences and still find a positive path forward?

***'These competing belief systems make us feel that, in order for someone to win, someone has to lose, but that doesn't have to be the case. When we root out misogyny and violence against women, men win too. When we break open what it means to be successful and help men find aspects of life that give them joy, passion and make them feel alive outside of work, we free men from a race to the top of the leadership pile. That freedom creates more space for women.'* (page 168)**

CHAPTER 5

Key Questions

- In Chapter 5, we focus on the infighting, disagreement and fight for 'airtime' which is happening between diverse groups. Why is it important we are honest about the fact that not everyone is on the same team, fighting for the same goal?
- Do you agree with Levy's proposal that the fighting between groups is around the fringes of the diversity agenda? Why? Why not?
- What can we do to minimise the friction between different diverse groups and get to a place of 'win-win'?
- What can we do to incentivise diverse employee groups to work together as allies?
- Have you witnessed or experienced situations where differing belief systems or identities were in competition? How did you/we handle it? And what could we do differently in the future?
- Do you think we have an environment where awkward DEI questions can be asked for growth and improvement?
- In Jake's interview, he talks about how supporting children who are gender questioning is really about saying 'I love you'. With the media frenzy surrounding trans-affirming health care for children, how do we make sure we don't lose sight of this?

Key Words

- Colourism, Shadeism
- Model minority
- Bi-erasure
- Black Pride
- Transition
- Bathroom segregation
- Self-ID
- Gender identity youth support
- Win-win

CHAPTER 6

LESSONS IN INCLUSION

Skills in inclusion are sorely needed. But such skills are rarely invested in, which means we often stumble upon inclusion by accident, rather than by design. In Chapter 6, Levy outlines eight key lessons that shaped her own journey and formed part of an inclusive skillset. Those lessons include:

- 1. Inclusion is not the same thing as being 'nice'** – nice allows us to take a passive role, it lacks action and skilfulness, and sometimes it stops us from doing the right thing.
- 2. The 'I Don't See...' Gap:** Our tendency to want to treat people 'equally' means we don't see them, or the challenges they may be facing. Usually, individuals who say this mean well, but their approach is both naïve and unhelpful.
- 3. Out is not one moment:** Coming out is a process of decision-making with every new person, new team, new environment. We all have a role to play in creating an environment where people feel safe to be themselves and to make coming 'out' easier.
- 4. We are all editing, some more than others:** As humans, we are incredible about reading the environment we are in and knowing what gets valued, and what doesn't. Until we know that showing up in an authentic way will be a benefit to us, we hold adapt. Editing, covering, code-shifting or masking, it all has a consequence.
- 5. People perform better when they can be authentic:** Being accepted for who you are creates

an environment where people are more likely to do better work and have more fun. The more authentic they are, the higher the likelihood of strong, trusted relationships.

- 6. Redefining Merit:** Merit is assumed to be a universal equaliser. But merit is simply what we value which is why it's so important that our definition of merit doesn't uphold dominant norms and overlook deserving individuals.
- 7. Privilege and Fairness:** Privilege feels like an accusation and evokes all sorts of negative emotions. But privilege is simply the absence of impediment and it's not universal. You can be privileged in one sense and lack it in another.
- 8. Awareness, Compassion and Action:** Inclusion is an act of doing, not an end state. It requires knowledge and awareness of how others are experiencing the world differently than you. It requires a decision to care about what you learned. And lastly, it requires taking.

'Half of lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals still don't reveal their sexual orientation at work in the US. Despite an openness through school and university years, 62% of UK graduates go back into the closet when they enter the job market.' (page 37)

CHAPTER 6



Key Questions

- Which lesson resonated the most to you? Why?
- Have you had any 'ah-ha' moments on your own inclusion journey? What were they and why did they matter?
- Depending on how comfortable you are with conflict, how do you think that has helped or hindered your approach to inclusion?
- Why does the 'I don't see' strategy create a gap between intention and execution?
- What does Levy mean by 'Out is not one moment in time' and what can we do to create an environment where people are more likely to be themselves around us?
- Levy suggests 'merit' is skewed by what an organisation and an individual value most. How can we redefine what our organisation/university/school means by merit to ensure inclusivity?
- How does privilege manifest in the workplace? What strategies can be implemented to reduce the emotion around the 'accusation' of privilege and instead help our colleagues/peers leverage the power of privilege to fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment for all employees?
- Behind each lesson is a mistake the author made. Why is it important we go into the inclusion and diversity space knowing we will make a mistake and owning it when we do?

Key Words

- Coming out
- Editing, Covering, Code-Switching, Masking
- Authenticity
- 'I don't see'
- Intention and execution gap
- Merit
- Privilege
- Fairness
- Awareness
- Empathy
- Action



CHAPTER 7

THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS – EXPLORING AUTHENTICITY, AFFINITY AND BIAS

Relationships are one of the strongest currencies in both life and work. Who you know, and moreover, how they feel about you, matters. But unfortunately, our relationships do not often develop at the same strength and same affinity when those relationships cross diversity boundaries. Despite the vast diversity in our world, we are most likely to break bread with individuals who sit in our same socio-economic bracket, are of the same ethnicity group, and with the same sexual orientation.

The less we know about a group or an individual, the more susceptible we are to inputs and biases from other sources.

That lack of affinity is one of the key reasons that systemic 'isms are so pervasive. Because systemic discrimination does not live in the presence of negativity, it lives in the absence of positivity which means the path removing systemic 'isms will require building more high affinity, high trust relationships – at our dinner table and in the workplace.

'With affinity comes warmth, affection and fondness. That positivity spills out into how we feel about and how we embrace those around us. When we don't share the same background, act in the same way or like the same things, affinity isn't always easy to find. It's also something which you cannot easily fake, or pretend you feel. When we don't feel affinity for a person or a group, we have to be honest about those feelings and how that we have more work to do in order to create a culture of fairness and to ensure our biases don't lend themselves to lesser outcomes for those groups or individuals.' (Page 237)

Key Words

- Relationships
- Affinity
- Systemic racism, systemic 'isms
- Second chances
- Bias
- High-intimacy, high-affinity
- Minimising contact
- Dinner table
- Stereotype
- Name bias
- Bias aversion tools



CHAPTER 7

Key Questions



- In Chapter 7, the focus is on high affinity, highly intimate and authentic relationships. Levy suggests that systemic 'isms are found not in the presence of negativity, but in the absence of positivity. How might this definition be important as we look to remove systemic bias across our organisation/university/school?
- What can we do to flip that frequent absence of positivity like in the case of Sian to create a presence of positivity for individuals in minority groups?
- How important do you think relationships are to changing the future and removing system 'isms and inequality?
- 'Minimising contact' describes the propensity for those who sit at our dinner table (our most trusted space) to be a lot like us in socio-economic, racial and other terms. Is there more you can do to have a more diverse group of people around your dinner table?
- That forums help you to connect with colleagues/peers with whom you might otherwise not share much in common? What can be done to nurture more of these interactions across our organisation/university/school?
- Levy talks about 'fear of being seen to be biased changing people's behaviour'. How can we build greater trust building and vulnerability.
- We all make mistakes. Yet research has found a "punishment gap" where women and other minorities are subject to stronger consequences when they make mistakes. Have you seen this in our workplace/place of study? If so, what can we do to ensure a fairer standard is applied to all?
- Researchers also found that the presence and communication of diversity initiatives can ironically lead to assumptions that discrimination doesn't exist or diversity issues are 'fixed'. What should we do to avoid complacency or assumptions in our organisation/university/school?

***'In the US, 68% of white people have never had a Black person at their dinner table.'* (page 212)**

CHAPTER 8

CHOOSING YOUR ROLE

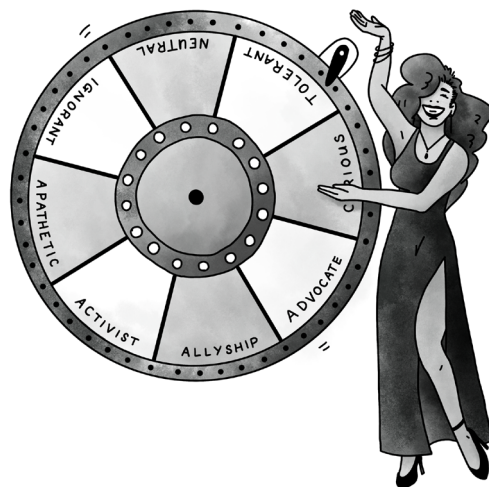
When it comes to inclusion, people take a variety of roles. There are those who are blatantly racist, homophobic, sexist, ableist, ageist, and so on. Individuals in these roles actively work to block progress, create harm and withhold equality. At the other end of the spectrum are the activists who campaign to drive change and are purposeful in their intention and take an active role in agitation. They are unafraid to challenge inequality in a forceful way.

The truth is that most of us sit in the middle. We sit in the roles that are not in bold, and in those roles, we are doing very little to influence the outcome. We sit in the warm and fuzzy bubble of naivety and neutrality. Being in the middle gives an illusion of impartiality, but impartial we are not. In our silence and inaction, we empower those who would reduce, belittle or harm.

Inclusion is not a spectator sport. Even in our unwillingness to stand up to either unconscious bias or conscious bullying, we are unwittingly amplifying the racist, the homophobe, the misogynist or the sexist.

↑ **Activist**
Ally or Advocate
Curious
Tolerant
Neutral
Ignorant
Apathetic
Anti or Negative
 ↓ **Racist, Homophobic, Sexist**

'Allyship is not down to luck or fate. It's not a spin of the wheel or a roll of the dice. It requires conscious consideration, follow-through, and action.'
 (page 235)



CHAPTER 8



Key Questions

- The roles outlined in Chapter 8 are meant to help you create an honest account of your aspiration, and to consider whether (or not) your activity matches those aspirations. Is there a gap in terms of the role you aspire to take and the role you actually play today when it comes to inclusion? What can you do to close that gap?
- When you think of different diverse groups, are you playing the same role for every group? For which group are you the lowest on the spectrum? Why is that and what could you do about closing that gap if you chose to?
- When Michelle called Suzy out for her use of the term 'non-white', why might it have been exposing for her to do so?
- Have you ever been called out? How did it feel? How did you recover? How do you think the person who called you out felt?
- What does psychologist John Amaechi mean when he says we need to 'embrace the wince'? What does embracing the wince look like?
- Is our organisation/university/school guilty of over-emphasising diversity groups, and under-emphasising the role of the ally? What would need to change in order to address that imbalance? How might we approach employee resource groups differently to create more clear engagement of allies?



Key Words

- Spectrum
- Roles
- Aspirations
- Ally
- Active
- Passive
- Neutrality
- Legacy
- Language
- Lazy
- Embrace the wince

CHAPTER 9

ALLYSHIP IN ACTION

Allyship isn't about you. It is about the power you wield to change things for others. Don't let your fear of saying the wrong thing stop you from taking action to create that change. Because there is no such thing as a passive ally.

Allyship also isn't fixed or binary. It's multidimensional and it takes two people. Whether you're the giver or the receiver, you play a role in inclusion.

Chapter 9 explores universal principles of allyship, as well as proposed actions for allies to consider for different groups including for women, for men, for transgender and gender non-confirming individuals, for ethnic minorities, for gay, lesbian and queer individuals.

'Many of you reading this book may aspire to be an ally. Claiming to be one is easy, but the simple truth of the matter is that there is no such thing as a passive ally. You are not an ally if you're not taking action.'

If we are able to move the dial on inclusion, and on better, more equitable outcomes for diverse groups, more allies need to show up in meaningful ways.

Which leads us to what is perhaps the most critical question of this book: which actions can I take to create meaningful and inclusive outcomes?' (Page 276)

Key Words

- Ally
- Race card Performative allyship
- Psychological safety
- #heforshe and #sheforhe
- Equal laundry
- Trans voices
- Pride
- Geographic disparity
- Anti-racist
- Appropriation



CHAPTER 9



Key Questions

- Why do you think Levy states that she was loathe to create a checklist for allyship? Bearing that in mind, why do you think it's important we codify the ask we have of allies, rather than asking them to guess what good looks like?
- When you look at the list, what do you feel is missing? Is there anything on the list you don't agree with or that you would frame differently?
- Levy suggests that being better educated is one of the core principles of allyship. What's the most informative thing you have read / watched / listened to recently and what did you learn from it?
- What steps can we take to challenge and change traditional leadership norms that may be limiting diversity and inclusion?
- How can we ensure that our actions as allies are focused on creating positive change for others rather than seeking personal validation?
- What role does self-reflection play in becoming a more effective ally?

CHAPTER 9

HOPE, HEROES AND THE BONUS OF BRAVERY

Each of us has the power to shape our future, but we must find our own path to inclusion and embrace our own kind of action. Just as activism ranges from flag waving and street marching to quiet challenges in private spaces, allyship spans an entire spectrum of activity. There are literally hundreds of thousands of actions that will make a difference – what is important is that you choose a role and choose a set of actions which are right for you. What you do and how you use your power depends on your context.

Creating a fairer, more inclusive, more decent world will require work. And it will have some level of risk. But it isn't just risky, it's also rewarding. It's rewarding because becoming an ally requires an interrogation of your beliefs and what you stand for. It's deeply affirming and deeply connecting. Because allyship is a shared experience between two people and the relationships we forge through the process are perhaps the greatest business case of all.

'Whether we are talking about hunger, climate change-related disasters, the trauma of the war, the growing number of refugees, inequality or the political divides over human rights—it's easy to feel unimportant or insignificant in the face of such widespread challenges.

Instead of despair, I urge you to choose hope, and then to combine it with action. We may not have the power to stop war, but we are not powerless. Nor are we alone. A single action, no matter how bold, won't change the collective nature of racism, homophobia, transphobia or sexism. But everyday actions are not insignificant. They matter. They matter because life isn't lived at the collective level. It's lived at the individual level, where everyday actions (including the imperfect ones) make the difference between inclusion or exclusion, joy or pain, opportunity or disadvantage. They also matter because little things become big things and the combined power of individual action is awe-inspiring.' (page 312).

CHAPTER 9



Key Questions

- In the final chapter of Mind the Inclusion Gap, Levy suggests there is a lot of joy, connectedness and wonder that comes in embracing allyship and building a more inclusive culture. Do you agree? What have been some of the rewarding or joyful moments on your own inclusion journey?
- How can you identify and leverage your own unique spheres of influence to drive meaningful change within your community? Within our organisation/university/school?
- Can you share an example of a small, yet impactful action taken by someone in our workplace/place of study that led to positive change?
- Can you share an example of a time when someone you know demonstrated bravery by acting as an ally and how did it lead to positive change?
- How can we identify opportunities to act as allies in daily interactions. For example, during meetings, with new hires, or in customer interactions? Or in seminars, with new students, in student societies or interest groups?

Key Words

-
- Power
- Influence
- Context
- Hope
- Bravery
- Business case
- Giving
- Human connection
- Future



GLOSSARY & OTHER GENERAL QUESTIONS

There is also a helpful Glossary included in Mind the Inclusion Gap.

- Why is language so important?
- There is a common assertion that diversity language is evolving quickly. Is it? Or is it barely evolving?
- How can you get more comfortable with new words and phrases as they emerge?
- What was not included in the book that feel is important? Where would you recommend others read/listen/learn about it?
- The book also creates spaces for many voices and a chance to roll around in the lives experience of others. Did any of the stories challenge a view you held before reading the book? Which ones and why?
- Where might you be able to continue to listen to the stories of 'others'?