



Gray Area Thinking® Takeaways/Action Items—What You Can Do

1. The next time you're about to group and label someone, stop and remember that you and the other person share the Four Commonalities and like you, they're also struggling to survive the Human Condition. "They" are human just like you.
2. Resist your fear of "Other" and engage with someone whom you'd ordinarily avoid or ignore. Action item: Ask someone who's not in your group to lunch or drinks or over for dinner. Engaging over food always facilitates familiarity!
3. Remember to provide every human with dignity, especially at their worst possible moments. Action item: Call out others who demean or make fun of someone else. Set an example by using the word, "dignity," in your conversations.
4. Ask if you're actually "seeing" another human for who they really are; if not, do what it takes to "see" them. Action item: Ask the person at the cash register or front desk how their day is going and whether they're having a good week. Engage with their response.
5. Have compassion for others regardless of how they're grouped and labeled by society. Action item: Consciously think of what it's like to live as that other person; consider what challenges they might have had and that you've avoided.
6. Have compassion for yourself. Ask, "Am I trying my best under circumstances as they presently exist?" If so, that's good enough. If not, do what it takes to answer that question, "Yes." Compassion for yourself lends to compassion for others.
7. Don't forget: You can never tell someone's story simply by looking at them. We're all surviving the Human Condition in hidden ways. Action item: If someone appears to be hurting, ask, "Would you like to talk?" or be radical and offer, "I care about you."
8. Ask: Am I (or we) engaging in GOP (Group of People) behavior to the exclusion or detriment of someone else? Action Item: Look around to see who you can invite to sit or stand with you. Or, simply go sit with them. Maybe both of you will find a payoff!
9. Consider where you and your workplace are re: The Three Levels of Human Inclusivity—Tolerance, Acceptance and Party Host. Action Item: Cultivate true mentorship and sponsorship! Make team members feel as if they "matter" by investing in them. In return, they will want to invest in you.
10. Remember ARC: Awareness of human suffering or vulnerability; Risk-taking to lessen or alleviate that suffering/vulnerability; and, acting with Compassion and kindness. Get past fear and exercise your empathetic heart!