

Five Good Ideas®

to create a sense of community and belonging at your workplace

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Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion
Toronto Metropolitan University

Friday, March 31, 2023 - 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

How do we create a more inclusive community at our workplaces? We have all done the trainings and listened to the TED Talks, and every second line of an organization's website mentions "EDI." Equity, diversity, and inclusion may have become buzzwords in business, NGO, and government sectors, in reality, organizations - including those in the legal sector - have fallen short of reflecting and representing the broader population within which they work. We see that more women and racialized, Black, and Indigenous people are represented in companies, but they still face barriers to advancement and feeling a sense of belonging. In this Five Good Ideas session, Dr. Tanya (Toni) De Mello, VP Equity and Community Inclusion at Toronto Metropolitan University, will explore the ways in which feeling like you belong, knowing that you will be included, and seeing your work community as "your" community matters. She will provide some advice on how you can achieve this sense of community and belonging at your organization and shed some light on what we may be doing to hinder it.



With a background comprising finance, management consulting, and law, **Tanya** (who we call "Toni") **De Mello** has spent much of her career focusing on, and researching, equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). She is a human rights lawyer and a certified coach and mediator. She has taught at University of Toronto, Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU), and several Colleges. She worked at TMU as the Director of Human Rights and then Lincoln Alexander School of Law, which is Canada's newest law school the in 2019. She is currently the Vice President, Equity and Community Inclusion. She has worked with over 100 organizations in training, consulting, and supporting them in the EDI journey.

In addition to founding two NGOs, Toni has served in the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the World Food Programme in Geneva (Switzerland), Senegal (West Africa), and Columbia (South America). Toni holds a dual Bachelor of Economics and Political Science from the University of Waterloo; a double Master in Public Policy and Urban and Regional Planning from Princeton University; and a dual law degree from McGill University and a Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy from the University



of Toronto. She also completed her doctors at the University of Toronto, where she was looking at bias in hiring in Canada.

Five Good Ideas

1. I love them! They are just like me!: We hire people that are just like us. We need to be intentional about who we hire, who we mentor, who is in our book club, who comes into our house. Awareness is key.
2. Sense of belonging matters: We have to measure the quantitative and the qualitative.
3. We need to learn about the community and then remember that the community member is nuanced.
4. We need systemic change through representation. The case for exposure: You have either lived it or loved it.
5. This work is messy: Do the work iteratively and be gentler with each other and with ourselves.

Resources

- ["The Danger of a Single Story,"](#) Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie Ted Talk
- ["Detour Spotting,"](#) Cultural Bridges to Justice
- ["White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,"](#) Peggy MacIntosh
- ["We're all hiding something,"](#) Ash Beckham
- ["You end up doing the document rather than doing the doing: Diversity, race equality and the politics of documentation,"](#) Sara Ahmed
- ["Study Suggests Bias Against 'Black' Names On Resumes,"](#) Bill Leonard in HR Magazine



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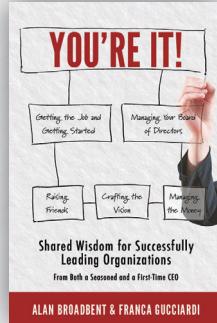
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