

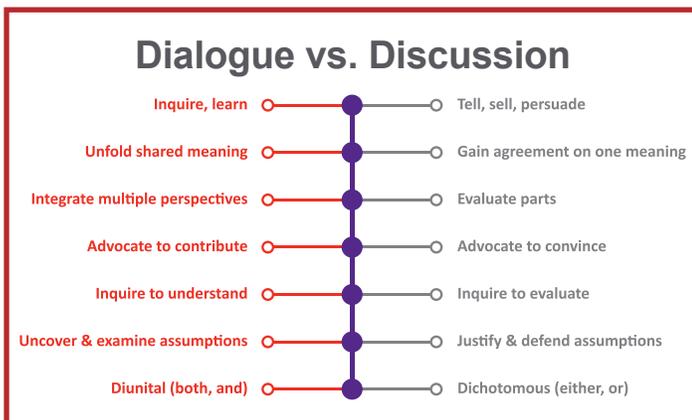
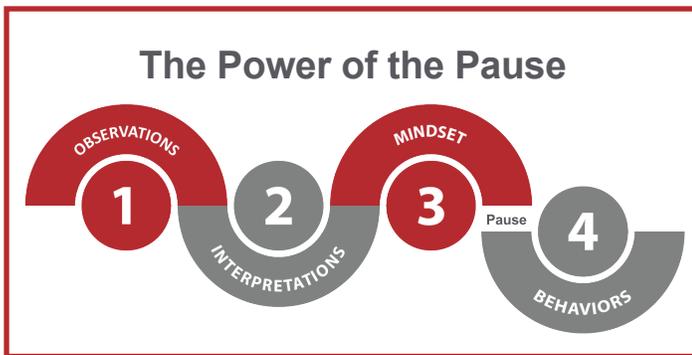
# IS COVID-19 STRESS TESTING DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION?

by Vincent R. Brown



*How relevant is diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) during this unprecedented time and challenge as a result of the COVID-19 virus? Is there a role for DEI? Is it more important or less important? There are many questions that every leader and particularly those who champion diversity, equity and inclusion and HR must ask themselves today as a result of COVID-19.*

Most recently, **there are eight questions** my colleagues and I are hearing more and more. In fact, there have been so many conversations and questions (perhaps because there is more time to reflect and pause) that we decided to **proactively reach out to HR and DEI leaders** and have dialogues around these questions; to hear their responses and see if we are learning any insights or trends that can be shared with others.



What I find most interesting is that the COVID-19 environment **has caused DEI leaders to do something** Dr. Janet Reid and I emphasized in our book, *The Phoenix Principles: Leveraging Inclusion to Transform Your Company* over two decades ago. **It was called Structured Renewal** and it was one of five core principles (Compelling Purpose; Strategic Measurable Actions; Solid Infrastructure and Best People).

In essence, **Structured Renewal was a process for a consistent, regular (annual or biannual) DEI checkup.** This process required an intentional *pause* to: 1. Ask critical questions regarding your DEI efforts; 2. Determine DEI relevance; 3. Identify DEI strengths and opportunities; 4. Make appropriate improved changes (quality improvements); and 5. Proactively report progress and insights to the entire organization. **Like every other function and organization in the world—COVID-19 is stress testing DEI.**

### The Phoenix Principles, by V. Randolph Brown & Janet Reid, Ph.D.

### The Phoenix Principles

The Phoenix Principles are represented by six icons: Compelling Purpose, Best People, Solid Infrastructure, Strategic Measurable Actions, and Structured Renewal.

### Structural Renewal

Are your diversity, equity and inclusion efforts continuously improved, relevant and modified to support the changing organizational realities of your customers, staff and stakeholders?

Below are the eight questions we are encouraging all Leaders to be part of -- a **DEI Structured Renewal Dialogue and Challenge**. For better or worse, most people currently do have more time to reflect. **Feel free to share these questions with others**, and if appropriate **let us know what you are thinking, feeling, hearing and doing...**

By the way, these questions are organized by the Herrmann Brain Dominance Model, which my team members are all certified practitioners.

### STRATEGIC

1. What are the DEI opportunities and challenges that your organization is facing as a result of the COVID-19?
2. What is the current compelling purpose or business case for DEI given this new reality? Has this changed?

### PEOPLE

3. What is the differential impact, if any, on your demographically and ethnically diverse employees as a result of COVID-19?
4. What behaviors, if any, positive or negative has your organization experienced recently that could be contributed to the "work from home" environment?

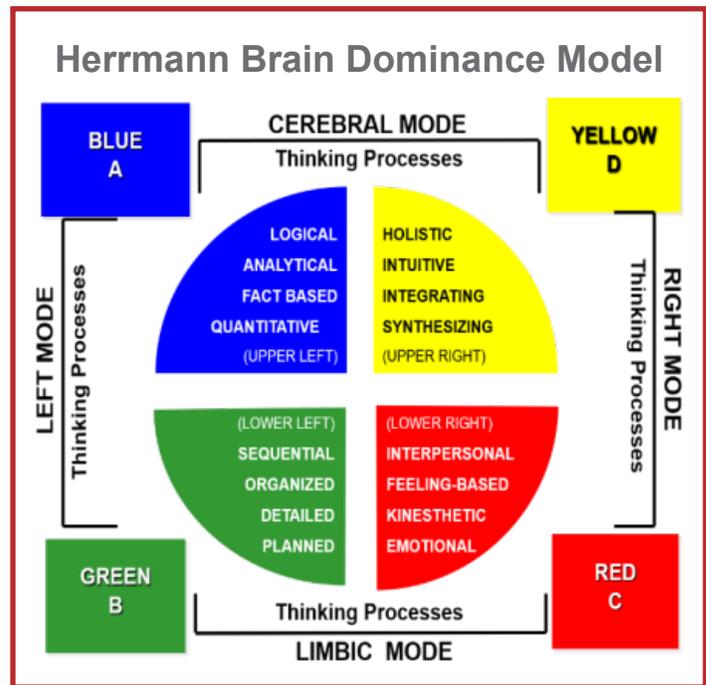
### MEASURABLE

5. What is the (new) role of DEI within the context of a COVID-19 environment? (Different/Same/Modified)
6. How will DEI measurements be tracked, monitored and assessed given this current environment?

### OPERATIONAL

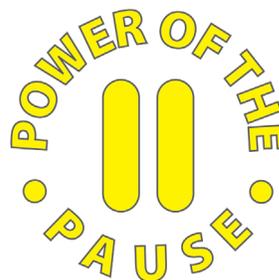
7. What (new) services, support, processes, trainings and other interventions is DEI now considering in order to be relevant, important and value added?

8. How are DEI efforts being communicated and how are they supporting other organizational functions and departments as result of COVID-19?



Life is about change and renewal. Just as the COVID-19 pandemic is causing us all to reflect, it is also allowing every one of us to appreciate each other much more.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if I/we can answer any questions. Take care of yourself, your family, your colleagues, your community and our world. Be well. E Pluribus Unum! Talk to you soon.



*This picture was taken before social distancing took effect.*