

The following material has recently been used to great success with management and leadership teams. If you'd like to learn more, please review our Programs and contact us at www.leadershiptransformationgroup.com



Excerpt from
The 5 Rules of Engagement:
Getting to the Table, Staying There... and
Knowing Why You Wanted to Be There in the First Place

By Steve Burghardt

We at Leadership Transformation Group, as a minority-based consulting firm with long experience in cultural competency trainings, diversity initiatives, and leadership projects, realized that resolving the age-old tensions of race, power, and privilege would require an entirely new approach to “cultural competency” and “leadership” if different groups’ expectations were to be met and the underlying tensions between them transcended. The lens of “cultural competency” had to be widened to encompass the complete human being. Likewise, addressing “leadership” issues that are designed to send people into the board room would have to openly address the dynamics of race, power, and privilege as well. In short, instead of avoiding dilemmas that showed up years later with anger and recrimination, we decided to use them to put them to rest once and for all.

What follows is a powerful model to transform both you and your workplace so that the social dynamics at play are transformed into strengths to embrace rather than tensions to avoid.

Finding the Five C’s

Each of us is on a profound quest: *the search to better and more fully engage in the world around us* - at work, with our office mates, with the significant friends and family in our lives; to engage with and enjoy the diversity of the globalized world in which we now live; to accept and embrace the changes—social and personal—that weave throughout our lives.

The 5 Rules of Engagement



The following questions can help lead us to this engagement:

- ❖ *Why do I bother any more?* People are seeking to find **Clarity of purpose** that may have been lost along the way.
- ❖ *Can I truly enjoy my work and not the people around me? Why can I find solutions to work problems and not home problems?* People are seeking to **Connect to authentic relationships** that seem to be too threatening or too difficult to negotiate, whether at work or in one's private life.
- ❖ *Am I being kept down by 'them'...or me? If others gain power, do I lose my own?* People are seeking to **Co-Create identity based on both powerful social history and personal beliefs** that in the present may be restricting them from engaging fully in the diverse world around them.
- ❖ *Why am I afraid?* People are seeking to be **Coached on the multiple ways to look at and understand the world** that their present mind set cannot absorb.
- ❖ *Why can 95% of the day go right and at night I end up dwelling on the 5% that went wrong?* People are seeking how to **Commit to their well-being** so that they remain in balance internally, as they externally connect, construct, and coach themselves and others to remain alive to the clarity of purpose that gives sacred meaning to their lives.

The Five Rules of Engagement are:

(Rule One): Commit to your well-being, spiritually, physically, and mentally, so that you can:

(Rule Two): Connect to authentic relationships, by speaking the truth and being open to all who cross your path, even when either temperament and disposition lead you to be inclined otherwise or the nature of your business and/or degree of authority limit your personal involvement with others, so that you more powerfully:

(Rule Three): Co-Create a social and personal identity that acknowledges the realities of racial, ethnic, and gender oppression of the past without being constricted by them in the present, either through anger that misreads present-day possibilities or from guilt that distorts the intentions of your relationships with others, thus freeing you to:

The 5 Rules of Engagement



(Rule Four): Coach and be coached with others whom you trust to see that “what is” is necessarily open to multiple interpretations so that you embrace all forms of diversity, whether people, ideas, or proposed solutions to the problems of the day, which helps you:

(Rule Five): Find Clarity of purpose in the meaning of your work, which grounds you, the people with whom you work, and the work itself in value that transcends both its monetary reward and social status, thus keeping you present to the enormous value in maintaining your own well-being...

The Rules of Engagement can be simple to practice, as long as you:

Recognize that no Rule stands alone. The good news is that any time you practice one Rule, you’re helping yourself practice them all. The bad news is that over time you have to practice each and every one. Like the best woven fabric, no one thread is more or less important than the other. A weave can keep its resilience only if all its strands remain entwined. These Rules provide for a woven practice, not an a la carte list.

Admit that the Engagement you seek is for a full life, not an effortless one. Many books and seminars seem to offer the false promise that through their special practices your life is guaranteed to get easier. These Rules offer no such guarantee. After all, racism isn’t going away later this year; world markets will keep growing more competitive; children will still be at risk; and inevitably you are going to work alongside some very difficult people...one of whom, at times, will be *you*. Practiced over time, these Five Rules only guarantee that you will more fully and completely respond as you wish to whatever life presents at your doorstep. Sometimes that response will be easy. Sometimes it will be hard. What matters is that you have the capacity to make each and every response fully your own.

Practice on your own, especially with others. These Rules require you to engage in relationships, not avoid them. The Rules of Engagement of course can be practiced by yourself, especially as you clarify your purpose and keep your commitment to your well-being. Unlike other forms of spiritual practice, which often expect that your practice will mature in isolation from others, our Rules are designed for your use with colleagues, friends, and family, whether at work or in other parts of your life. You cannot expect to connect to authentic relationship, be coached, or struggle to construct a powerful social identity all by yourself. While only you can personally commit to this work, you need to seek out others who are willing to do so as well.