

# “Am I Going to Say and Do the Right Things...”

## **Develop a Vocabulary of Respect**

- ◆ “People First”
- ◆ When addressing the person, look at him/her directly.
- ◆ Even if the person is accompanied by an assistant or sign language interpreter, speak directly to the person.
- ◆ Don’t assume that the person needs assistance.
  - However, if you think they might, be sure to ask first: “May I be of assistance?”
  - Be prepared to take “No” for an answer.
  - If the person says “Yes”, then ask, “What way may I assist you?”
- ◆ Don’t tell the person that you admire his/her courage.
- ◆ If a person’s disability comes up naturally fine, but don’t pry.

## **People with Visual Impairments**

- ◆ Not all people with visual impairments live in a world of darkness.
- ◆ Use words instead of gestures.
- ◆ It’s always polite to offer directions or to escort if the person is unfamiliar with the area.
- ◆ To properly escort people with visual impairments, let them take your arm, rather than grabbing theirs.
- ◆ Give specific information, such as “We have three steps coming up.”

## **People with Hearing or Speech Impairments**

- ◆ Always position yourself so you’re facing both the person and the light source so that your face and lips may be seen.
- ◆ Don’t shout
- ◆ Maintain eye contact with the person with deafness.
- ◆ Never pretend you understand if you don’t.
- ◆ Don’t interrupt

## **People with Mobility Impairments**

- ◆ Shake the hand that’s extended to you.
- ◆ If shaking hands isn’t an option, touch the person on the shoulder or arm as a sign of greeting or acknowledgement.
- ◆ A wheelchair is part of someone’s personal space. Never lean or hang on it.
- ◆ When speaking with a person using a wheelchair, place yourself at eye level.

## **Assistance Dog Etiquette**

- ◆ Never touch hearing, guide or service dogs unless the person gives you permission.
- ◆ Don’t call the dog or try to get its attention.
- ◆ Never, ever feed or water a working dog.
- ◆ Treat puppies in training the same way you would a working dog.

*Source Unknown*

## DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF DIVERSITY

1. Discovery – The realization that I am different (e.g. an Asian American may work so hard to assimilate into the American culture they may not be aware of their heritage from an Asian perspective. An individual discovered that she was bicultural when she attended a seminar on diversity).
2. Anger – The feeling that others have more than you do. An individual is aware of inequities that exist and experiences the stereotypes that are affiliated with a particular group they belong to. In some cases, the person perpetuates the stereotypes without realizing it (e.g. all blacks are good athletes).
3. Withdrawal and self-doubt – A different person hears double messages when applying for work and doesn't know what to do (e.g. "We like you and think you are a nice person, however, we do not have any openings in our company."). It is difficult to distinguish whether or not there are any positions available. Individuals question themselves as well as the genuineness of the company in this stage.
4. Seclusion – During this stage the individual goes away somewhere; hides out and retreats to a safe place. People who have lost sight have been known to stay in their home for a year with the curtains pulled. Eventually, through the support of family and/or friends, they take the first step to re-enter the outside world.
5. Rebirth – People feel a sense of renewal, grounding and a belief in a new beginning. There will still be barriers but they are seen as opportunities instead of hurdles.
6. The need to belong – Aligning with people who are alike to gain support of being in the world with the perceived or real difference (e.g. minorities who aspire to be a manager).
7. The con artist – Technically, the person is ready for work but old tapes return. (e.g. "I'm not as good as they are." "I know I am qualified to do the job but am afraid to ask for help for fear of being viewed as incompetent." "I will tell everyone that things are okay, even if they aren't".)
8. Self-actualization – The individual who is self-actualized knows they can do the job. They understand that doubt or feelings of anger will occur from time to time. They have a general overall good feeling about themselves, the company they serve and the world in which they live.