

A Brief Conversation on Race

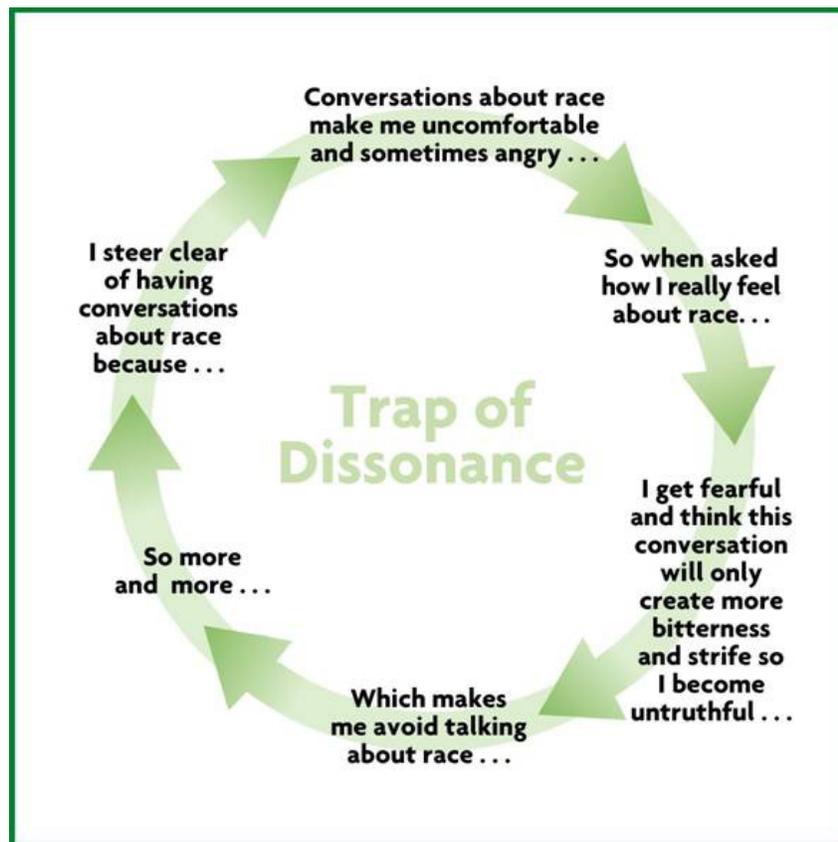
Aristotle said, "How ought we live our lives together?"

The issue of race in this country has been pushed to the bottom of the pile for years. Having open and honest conversations on race may help us move beyond the traditional notions of what we believe is wrong with each other. That said, I am certain that as long as we do not openly and candidly have conversations on race, we will remain prisoners to this problem and we will continue to fail to effectively deal with this issue realistically.

It is not in noticing a person's race that is the problem; the problem comes when we judge that person's worth and abilities based solely on their *external packaging* (race). That is where we get in trouble.

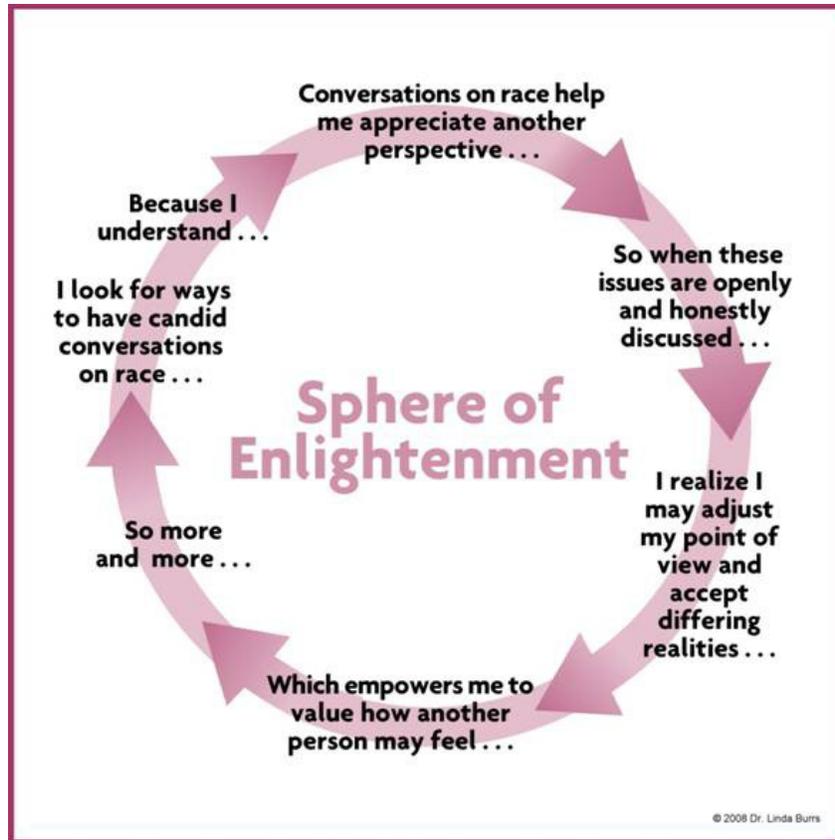
We fear what we do not know or understand. If we cannot or will not or choose not to take the time to have these difficult but necessary conversations we will continue to live in fear about each other.

Here is why I believe we do not talk about race:



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Here is what I believe happens when we engage each other in this important conversation:



It can be extremely difficult to make the hard choice to be vulnerable, open to another perspective and admit to the possibility there is another world view that is different from mine. This does not make it wrong. It makes it different. Listening does not mean agreement nor does it necessarily mean I will change . . . it simply means I am open to hearing another perspective without judging it or needing to make it right or wrong. As a result of listening, I may realize I need to adjust my point of view and move on up to a higher ground, but isn't that the goal of knowledge? To increase one's awareness of ways to improve.

For me, it is really important that I help people understand that unless and ***until we intentionally create cultures of inclusion, then by default we are creating cultures of exclusion.*** Leaving some out just because of how they look, may also mean losing opportunity to fix or solve problems or develop new and creative products that might make a difference for the world.

How ought we live our lives together? Inclusively . . . and that will take having those challenging conversations about race.

About Dr. Linda J. Burrs

Dr. Burrs is the CEO and Principal Consultant of the *Step Up to Success!* consulting firm that focuses on leadership and inclusion strategies. For more than 25 years, Dr. Burrs has brought her rich dynamic approach to the corporate and professional training arena. The breadth of her experience crosses all walks of social and organizational life including law firms, technology organizations, educators, business professionals, leadership groups and non-profit groups.

Dr. Burrs served as Interim Program Director for the Emerging Leader Program at the University of Dayton's Center for Leadership and Executive Development. In that role, she designed curriculum and developed programs for the

Emerging Leader program. She remains an active presenter for the center's Management Development Training series. Recently she began serving as a Catalyst for SOCHE's Creative Initiatives for the Dayton region and is on the board of the Dunbar Institute as Program Chair for Diversity Programming. As Faculty, Linda facilitates learning in courses such as: Organizational Behavior, Management, Transformational Leadership, Cultural Diversity, Mediation and Conflict Resolution and Human Resources Management.

Dr. Burrs is the author of the book: The Fruits of Inclusion™: A Smart Business Guide to Creating a Sustainable Diversity and Inclusion Program. The book is available on www.barnesandnoble.com and www.amazon.com and www.DrBurrs.com. She is also the designer of the Second Generation Diversity Training™ program series. For more detailed information on available programs, please visit: www.DrBurrs.com. Dr. Burrs is a sought after public speaker and presenter for her deep expertise and engaging programs. You may contact her at: Linda@DrBurrs.com or 937-866-7511.