Inclusive leadership can be seen as a shift in focus from affirmative action and equity towards equality, social justice, fairness and the leveraging of diversity effects in systems. Inclusive leadership involves particular skills and competencies for relational practice, collaboration, building inclusion for others, mutuality, creating inclusive work cultures, partnerships and consensus building and true engagement of all (Ferdman, 2010; Mor Barak, 2011).

In order to work toward inclusion, the realities of one’s place in systems of privilege and marginalization must be surfaced and managed. How can one connect intentions of full inclusion, authenticity and uniqueness with the received lessons of privilege and marginalization (Kendall, 2006; hooks,1981; Scott, 1990).

  This proposal offers a presentation comprised of two complementary research studies, both conducted in the Southeastern region of the United States. One introduces metaphors that capture the dynamics of privilege and marginalization in cross-race relationships, and the other explores specific acts and motifs of resistance to negative images in the workplace by Black female corporate executives.

These studies in combination will reveal data from participants currently in corporate and workplace relationships about ways the dynamics of privilege and marginalization can be interrogated, resisted, and overcome so that inclusion becomes a realistic possibility rather than simply an ideal. Both studies will acknowledge the context of societal racism as it interacts with internal organizational goals of inclusion, and what must change on micro, meso, and macro levels in order to resist that context.

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