



How Co-Mentoring Contributes to Inclusive Environments

by Wendy Willow Wark, Founder of Inclusion Strategies

One of the greatest barriers to inclusion in the workplace is the lack of direct communication with people who are different from us. Too often I hear people refer to 'them.' "Who is 'them'?" I ask. "Apparently, someone not like me," is the awkward response. It's human nature to classify those who are different as "them," but once we develop meaningful relationships with "them," we discover that they are real people with whom we have much in common.

Co-mentoring offers us a unique opportunity to develop those meaningful relationships between us and "them." Co-mentoring occurs when two people agree to mutually mentor each other. They engage in an even exchange of knowledge and information. Job titles, ages, seniority, economic class, and educational levels become irrelevant. Essentially, co-mentoring fosters a discovery of "them" which creates relationships that eliminate the barriers of diversity – that's inclusion.

I especially appreciate the prospect of people co-mentoring each other culturally. Cultural co-mentors use their new relationships to discover different cultures – what was it like to be born in a foreign country? What was it like to be born in the United States? I have several friends with whom I co-mentor. They immigrated to the United States and they ask me cultural questions all of the time. They know that they can safely ask me what they should wear or bring to a gathering or what certain ceremonies represent here. And I know that I can rely on them to learn more about their native countries, as well. Cultural co-mentoring is another wonderful way to break down the barriers between ourselves and "them."

We are a diverse and divided world, already. What we need now is an inclusive, integrated world. Inclusion is the evolution of diversity. When companies encourage co-mentoring, they foster this integration and inclusion – integration of people from diverse groups who soon discover that they work better together than they do apart. Inclusion results in engagement and retention, leadership development, succession planning, and innovation. And that is good for us and "them."

Mentoring Mojo

The purpose of a mentoring program is to create and foster a mentoring culture among your people. Don't sabotage your success by succumbing to the predictable pitfalls. Instead, focus on creating a program that is strategic, scalable and sustainable. Only then will you create successful mentoring and pave the way for a mentoring culture.

To learn more about our Mentoring Program strategies, contact us at The LifeMoxie Company for a **Complimentary Needs Assessment or Program Evaluation**. Let us share our mentoring mojo with you!

Contact us at 1.888.676.6943 or info@lifemoxie.com.