

Tuesday, March 27, 2018 at 8:31 AM Central Time

From: Kimberly A. Barrett

Sent: Tuesday, March 27, 2018 8:31 AM

To: STUDENT-L; STAFF-L; FACULTY-L

Subject: Cultivating a Call-in Culture

Welcome to Spring Term! We are living in a period of rapid and sustained change. Times like these hold tremendous promise for large scale progress. However change also breeds fear which can contribute to both anger and despair. And I believe these feelings of unease help make us receptive to calling people out. In addition, the anonymity of social media and the many prominent examples we see on a daily basis of people in the public eye carelessly shaming others help normalize this behavior. Consequently, we have what seems like a pervasive culture of public shaming with little regard for the long term consequences.

While there have been several recent examples in which our collective calling out has been effective in getting those in positions of power to care about important issues such as gun control or sexual harassment, this should not be the only approach we employ to voice concerns. Raising grievances publicly in a way that is meant to shame, alienate and silence an individual is usually counterproductive to effectively bringing about lasting positive change and providing redress for those who have been wronged.

In a community that is characterized by caring, as I have found Lawrence to be, calling out can be particularly traumatic for both the target of the public attack and the person doing the calling out. And these negative effects reach well beyond those directly involved. It takes a toll on the entire community by ramping up the overall level of anxiety on campus, alienating us from each other and distracting us from the tasks at hand. So in an environment like ours, calling people in is often the more effective approach to initiating positive change.

Calling-in is a process of raising concerns and grievances with compassion, humility and an invitation for everyone involved to become part of the solution. Two examples of how this approach has been implemented on a large scale are restorative justice programs and truth and reconciliation panels. These illustrate that even after the most heinous acts and necessary disruption, there comes a time to heal in which we must build something new together. I believe that time for us is now.

So the following are some strategies individuals can employ to resist the immediate allure of the call out for the long term advantages of calling people in:

(1) Practice Empathy

Although we are social animals hard wired to understand the feelings and perspective of others, developing this potential takes practice. Here's how:

- (a) Be curious about others
- (b) Engage in active listening, trying first to be sure that you understand what the other person is saying before helping them understand your perspective
- (c) Share yourself with others through selective self-disclosure, model openness
- (d) Have a conversation with a stranger or someone you see often on campus but would not normally talk to
- (e) Understand your biases and blind spots

(2) Act with Compassion

Compassion has two parts, deep sympathy for the suffering of others which begins with our ability to understand their experience (empathy) and a desire to alleviate their suffering:

- (a) Spend some time in another person's circumstance
- (b) Learn about other cultures globally and various groups within the U.S.
- (c) Develop a repertoire of active bystander and peaceful protest strategies
- (d) Engage in all the activities under "Practicing Empathy"
- (e) Smile, if nothing else it makes you feel better and invites others to smile as well

(3) Invite Everyone to be Part of the Solution

I am a huge science fiction fan. This strategy brings to mind a Vulcan greeting from the original Star Trek television series, "I am glad to see we are different! May we together become greater than the sum of both of us." Here are some ways we take this approach on an individual basis:

- (a) Treat others as if you believe everyone has value
- (b) Focus on making the aggrieved individual(s) whole and changing behavior, not on creating a "got you" moment for the wrongdoer
- (c) Learn about the rationale behind the positions you oppose from the perspective of a true believer
- (d) Be open to changing your mind
- (e) Show humility when confronting others, understanding that we are all still in the process of becoming, none of us is infallible and that in many cases it is just the luck of the birth lottery that keeps us from being the person with whom we so vehemently disagree.

I look forward to seeing how you cultivate our call-in culture. Best wishes for a successful and fulfilling term!



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