



Outcomes of small group discussions at The Women's Place bell hooks event May 2, 2011 Frank W. Hale Jr. Black Cultural Center

Introduction

On May 2, 2011, The Women's Place sponsored a talk by bell hooks followed by a set of small group discussions around questions that the participants posed. Each person selected discussions in which to participate. The person who posed each question brought back a summary to the whole group. We have gathered these summaries below. Each question is in a green or purple shaded box followed by the key insights and action steps that the host of the session noted. At the end of our time together we asked people what they would commit to doing in the next three months to move OSU forward. The final section of this summary lists the different actions people agreed to take over the next three months.



Summary

Framing Question: How can we use bell's words as a catalyst for change here at OSU?



What are effective ways to be adventurous, take risks, and take chances, with authenticity in OSU's corporate patriarchal power structure?

Moving into the future...

Key insights

1. Increase corporate culture = decreasing taking risks and using authentic voices
2. Personal and professional losses if we don't take adventurous approaches at work
3. Need feminist perspectives to advance OSU to best next transformations

What else needs to happen?

Action steps

1. Find and use trusted allies and mentors
2. Create talk space for truthful voice
3. Those with greater power model taking risks and speaking up/out when others can't
4. Make observations of fear culture and loss when possible

How do we nurture love in the OSU system to counterbalance power?

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| Moving into the future... | <p>Creating community</p> <p>Addressing the redistribution of resources</p> <p>More love = more productivity</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;">How do we show our love?</div> |
| What else needs to happen? | Empower ourselves to figure out what can we do in our community, not focus on “gravity” in leadership |

Where does courage come from and how do we keep it?

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| Moving into the future... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intention • Imagination • integrity |
| What else needs to happen? | |

Language of feminism across generations?

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| Moving into the future... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifting from identity to feminist politics • F word is “hot word” • Feminism = dissident • Rather than changing [our] work • Having a personal experience triggers radical thinking |
| What else needs to happen? | Behavior = point out sexist/racist/*ist activity |

How would we talk about the role of love for future female faculty members?



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| <p>Moving into the future...</p> | <p>Up armoring: shifting thought. Choosing when your armor goes up and down</p> <p>Forming community: urgency, purpose and positive intent will draw the right people</p> <p>Entering new communities for perspective; new experience</p> |
| <p>What else needs to happen?</p> | |

Is there a way to teach and learn the power of positive intent and suspending judging?

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| <p>Moving into the future...</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More collaboration • Personal communication • Suspending our judgment • Asking for help <p>2 day unfreezing retreat → office teams & students</p> |
| <p>What else needs to happen?</p> | <p>Mood elevator changes daily</p> |



What will I do in the next three months?

- Be empowered to recognize what I can do to bring more love into the system and not feel trapped by gravity
- Honor the relationships
- Continue to support the women on my team who express an interest in women's issues and encourage them to get involved
- Encourage and reach out to new staff members
- Call open lunch conversations on these questions
- I will remember to show I care; I will speak up when I see issues; I will hold a mirror up so individuals can see themselves
- Challenge sexist thoughts & behaviors; support girls and women individually
- In the next three months our department is working on a model to develop equality in pay for our predominately female staff. We've been ignored too long.
- Embrace and disseminate the term feminist; build community to promote courage
- Be a confident woman on my team and serve as an example of empathetic leader
- Be a more active participant in my community!
- Encourage community by providing resources and encouragement through mentorship
- As I continue to challenge myself I will challenge others to step out of their comfort zone and take/embrace risk
- Embrace the term feminist
- Build community to promote courage
- Share and receive expressions of love and appreciation with those I love and appreciate
- Be an advocate for women and for love on my office's culture committee (created as a follow-up to unfreezing retreats)
- Call attention to and celebrate the work of women, especially black women – stand in solidarity
- Speak to Gee about what he is doing and

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help organize a session involving women’s speeches and Art of Hosting discussion methodology at the Newark campus • Foster love by being a part of a caring community • Plan a campus get together (regional) • Next 3 months be open to listening to the highs and lows in my colleagues lives • Discuss with my colleagues; love, community, being bold | <p>will do for women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All OSU women can thrive • Implement/plan workshops & networking events for women at the Newark campus • Greater effort mentoring students and helping them build community • Promote courage by being a trusted and safe ally/mentor to those wishing to speak their fears and perspectives • Suspend judgment/criticism to create a healthier work environment |
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bell hooks quotes from walls:

“When we are more energized by the practice of blaming than we are by the efforts to create transformation, we not only cannot find relief from suffering, we are creating the conditions that help keep us stuck in the status quo.” – bell hooks

“Simply put, feminism is a movement to end sexism.” – bell hooks



“There are times when personal experience keeps us from reaching the mountain top and so we let it go because the weight of it is too heavy. And sometimes the mountain top is difficult to reach with all our resources, factual and confessional, so we are just there, collectively grasping, feeling the limitations of knowledge, longing together, yearning for a way to reach that highest point. Even this yearning is a way to know.” – bell hooks



“Casting blame is a crucial component of dominant culture.” – bell hooks

“Seeing clearly, that we live within a dominator culture of imperialist, white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, I’m compelled to locate where my responsibility lies.” – bell hooks

“Living simply makes loving simple.” – bell hooks

“Feminism is for everybody.” – bell hooks

“Honesty and openness is always the foundation of insightful dialogue.” – bell hooks