

Avoiding Cultural Colonization at Work.



CivicActions

Introduction

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6. And at the epicenter of a proportional motherload of identity crises.

WHO AM I?



WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

Many trainings about cultural sensitivity are about how to change the system you are in.

This training takes a different approach.

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

This training is about how to empower yourself in work situations that seem to challenge your humanity and your sense of self.

Tips and Tricks:

AVOIDING CULTURAL COLONIZATION AT WORK

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AVOIDING CULTURAL COLONIZATION AT WORK

(especially for n00bs)

CONDENSED ELEVATOR VERSION OF EVERYTHING

1. Learning how to make it through your work life without losing the special thing that makes you who you are can be difficult.

I have known the inexorable sadness of pencils,
Neat in their boxes, dolor of pad and paper weight,
All the misery of manilla folders and mucilage,
Desolation in immaculate public places,
Lonely reception room, lavatory, switchboard,
The unalterable pathos of basin and pitcher,
Ritual of multigraph, paper-clip, comma,
Endless duplication of lives and objects.
And I have seen dust from the walls of institutions,
Finer than flour, alive, more dangerous than silica,
Sift, almost invisible, through long afternoons of tedium,
Dropping a fine film on nails and delicate eyebrows,
Glazing the pale hair, the duplicate grey standard faces.

Theodore Roethke

CONDENSED ELEVATOR VERSION OF EVERYTHING

1. Learning how to make it through your work life without losing the special thing that makes you who you are can be difficult.
2. Learning how to make it through your work life without killing the special things about others is even more difficult.

CONDENSED ELEVATOR VERSION OF EVERYTHING

When you first come into new job or project you are:

1. psyched to have been hired
2. a little insecure (although you might not admit it)
3. wanting to really do a great job.

CONDENSED ELEVATOR VERSION OF EVERYTHING

But remember, you are entering a space in which they were busy enough to have wanted to hire you.



CONDENSED ELEVATOR VERSION OF EVERYTHING

It's not just that they are lonely and decided to start some interviews.

(YOU CRAY CRAY)

CONDENSED ELEVATOR VERSION OF EVERYTHING

This could mean anything from:

CONDENSED ELEVATOR VERSION OF EVERYTHING

This could mean anything from: **coworkers annoying each other**



CONDENSED ELEVATOR VERSION OF EVERYTHING

This could mean anything from: **interdepartmental factions**



CONDENSED ELEVATOR VERSION OF EVERYTHING

This could mean anything from: **passive-aggressive stapler wars**



CONDENSED ELEVATOR VERSION OF EVERYTHING

This could mean anything from: **strange dolls in the staff freezer**



CONDENSED ELEVATOR VERSION OF EVERYTHING

This could mean anything from: **strange dolls in the staff freezer**



*based on a true story
starring my own mother.

Tip 1:

TIP / TRICK 1

Whenever you enter the cohort of what is predominantly a new group of individuals, **except in very weird and experimental circumstances**, assume that you are interacting with Aliens because you probably are.



TIP / TRICK 1

Institute for American Indian Arts (IAIA)

TIP / TRICK 1

IAIA - the initial equation



The Institute for American Indian Arts is a line-item on the president's budget.

They are an Arts university for people who are American Indian by birth.

IAIA - the initial equation



I was a geek hired to facilitate/develop a matriculation system, and to migrate from the legacy system to the new one.

I was excited to serve the Native population as best as I could.

What could possibly go wrong?

TIP / TRICK 1

IAIA - the initial equation



Them: “Hey Ana, we’re having a lunch today and would love for you to come.”

Me: “Thanks, but I’m Vegan, and brought my own...maybe another time?”

TIP / TRICK 1

IAIA - the initial equation



Me: “Hey guys, I’m having a training today for the new student database. Can’t wait to see you.”

Them:



TIP / TRICK 1

IAIA - the initial equation



TIP / TRICK 1

IAIA - saved by Duran Duran



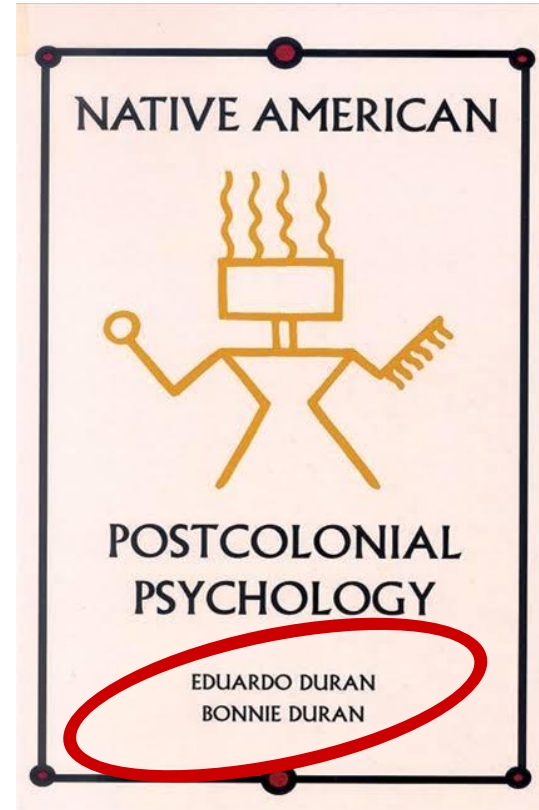
TIP / TRICK 1

IAIA - saved by Duran Duran



TIP / TRICK 1

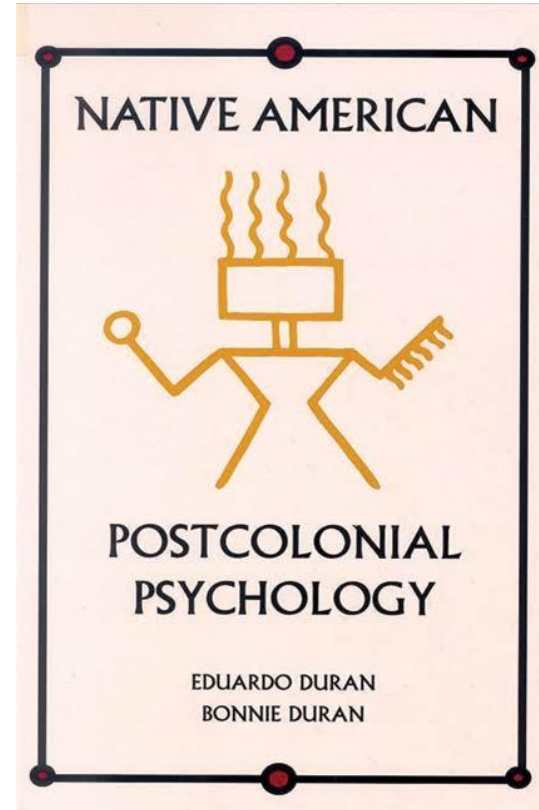
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TIP / TRICK 1

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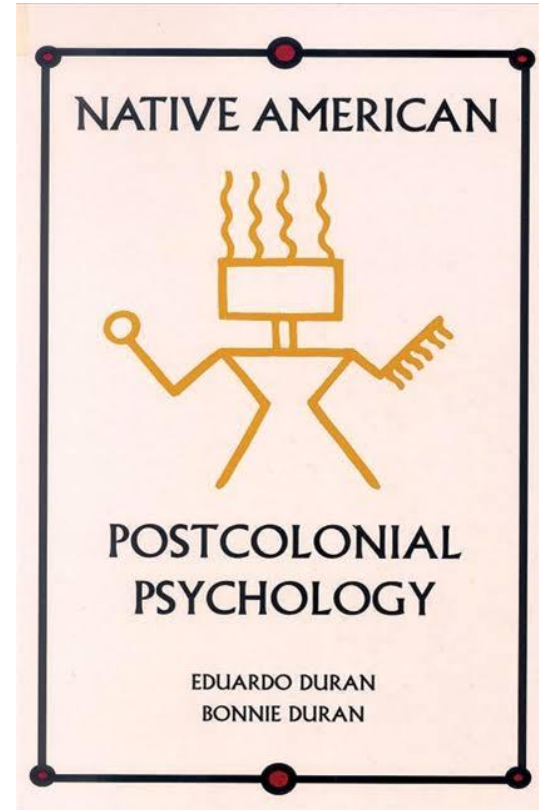
1. Came to understand that the folks I was collaborating with were sabotaging my project and why.



TIP / TRICK 1

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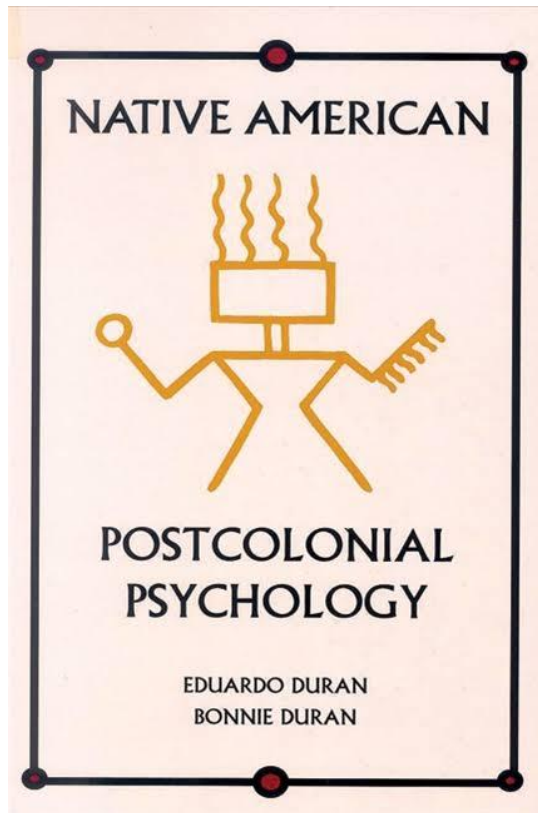
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2. Came to understand that this was okay.



TIP / TRICK 1

IAIA - saved by Duran Duran

1. Came to understand that the folks I was collaborating with were sabotaging my project and why.
2. Came to understand that this was okay.
3. Decided to start coming to the group lunches and had a blast.



TIP / TRICK 1

IAIA - Moral of the Story

1. Understanding how your status quo is painful to people is not easy but it can help you become a better person.

IAIA - Moral of the Story

1. Understanding how your status quo is painful to people is not easy but it can help you become a better person.
2. Even at the expense of efficiency.

Tip 2:

TIP / TRICK 2

If it seems like you have the solution to fix what is going on, it's probably because you have not seen the real barrier.



TIP / TRICK 2

New Job

1. I thought they hired me for my many years of expertise...



TIP / TRICK 2

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2. My job was to steer the development team through upcoming changes as the Techlead.



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TIP / TRICK 2

New Job

1. I thought they hired me for my many years of expertise...
2. My job was to steer the development team through upcoming changes as the techlead.
3. Everything was going smoothly.
4. And then things got **HEAVY**.



Corporate Takeover

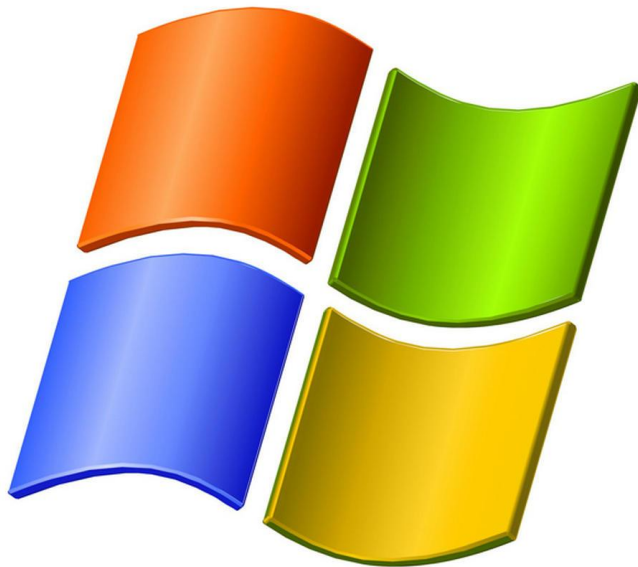
*First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Socialist.*

*Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not
speak out—
Because I was not a Trade Unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.*

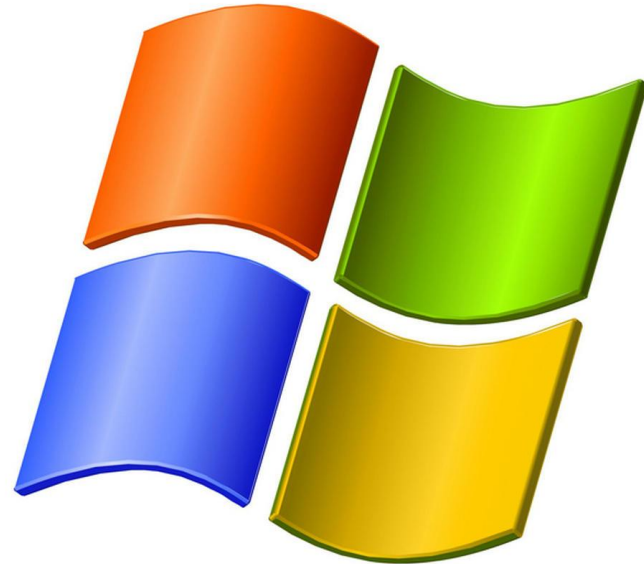
*Then they came for me—and there was no one left to
speak for me.*

Martin Niemöller



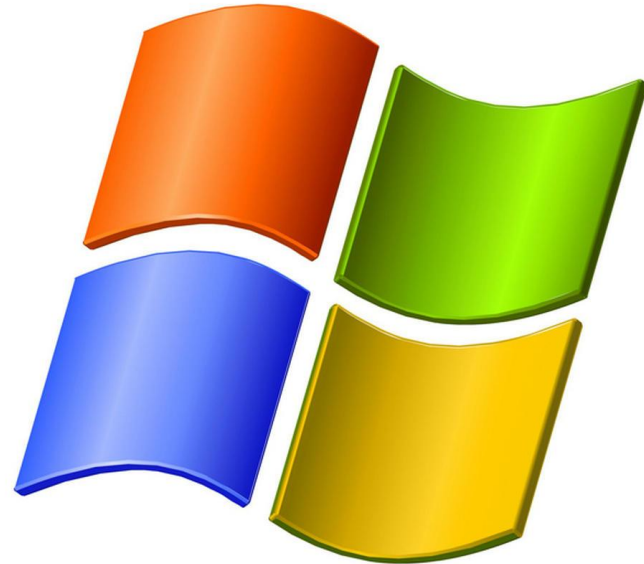
Corporate Takeover

1. First they came to our events...



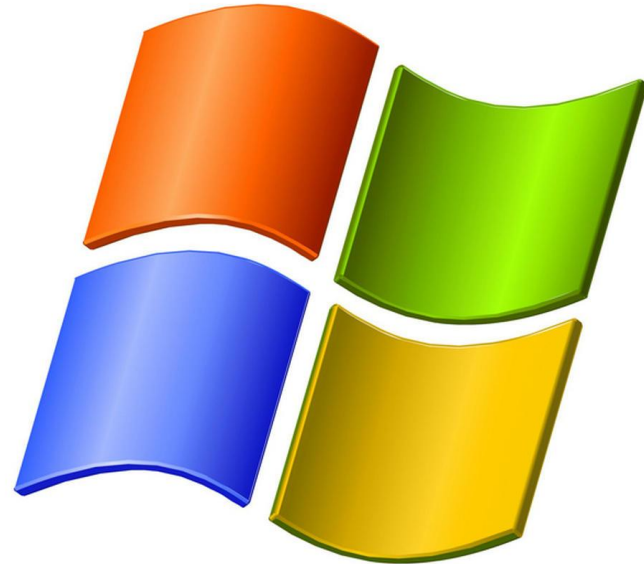
Corporate Takeover

1. First they came to our events...
2. And then they sent us free paraphernalia and software.



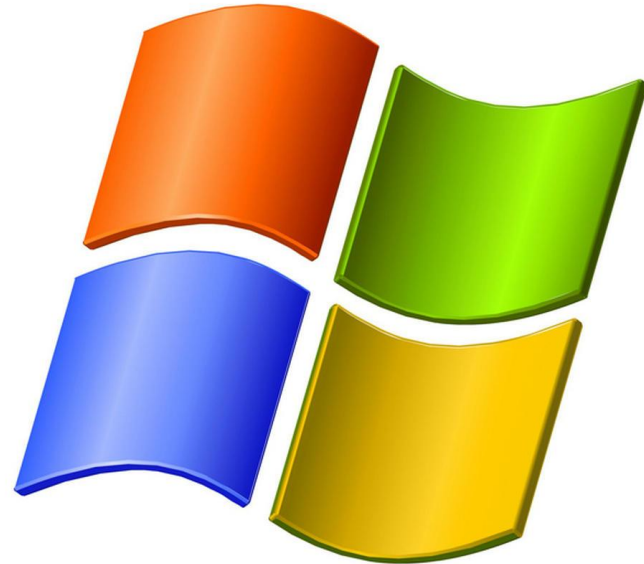
Corporate Takeover

1. First they came to our events...
2. And then they sent us free paraphernalia and software.
3. And then they came to replace our operating systems...



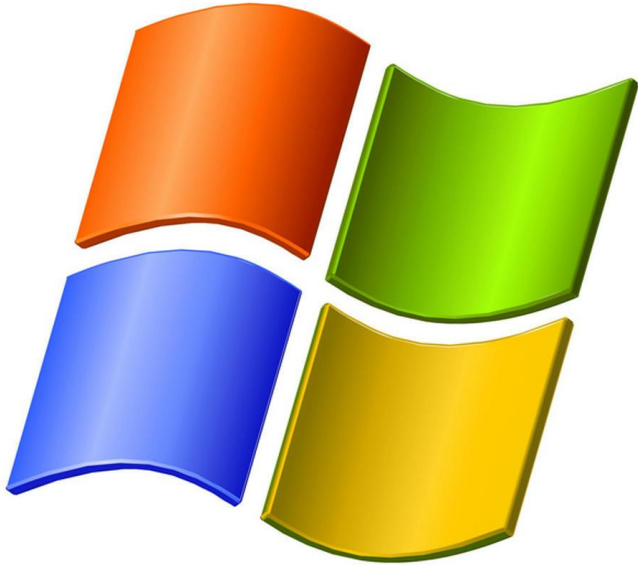
Corporate Takeover

1. First they came to our events...
2. And then they sent us free paraphernalia and software.
3. And then they came to replace our operating systems...
4. At which point my supervisor made the determination that as the staunch linux advocate of the group, I would be the Secret Weapon...



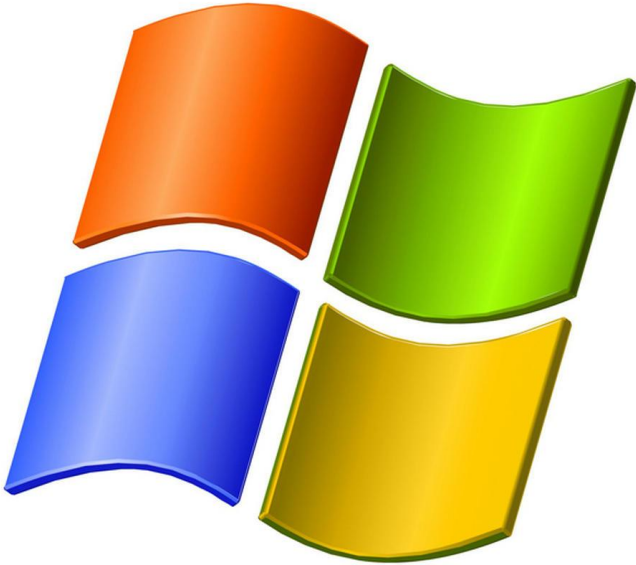
TIP / TRICK 2

We came. We saw...



TIP / TRICK 2

After a while, we decided to go get some food.



TSG - Moral of the Story

1. Taking responsibility for your values and your personal limits will help you understand whether there is common ground.

TSG - Moral of the Story

1. Taking responsibility for your values and your personal limits will help you understand whether there is common ground.
2. And will help you avoid negativity.

TSG - Moral of the Story

1. Taking responsibility for your values and your personal limits will help you understand whether there is common ground.
2. And will help you avoid negativity.
3. And secure good JuJu either way.

Tip 3:

TIP / TRICK 3

If it seems like things that should be simple to do are impossible to do, it's probably because you are misunderstanding the real issue.



TIP / TRICK 3



TIP / TRICK 3

Palenque - Car breaks down.

1. 13,000 people, 24 car parts stores.



TIP / TRICK 3

Palenque - Car breaks down.

1. 13,000 people, 24 car parts stores.
2. I take the part number around.



TIP / TRICK 3

Palenque - Car breaks down.

1. 13,000 people, 24 car parts stores.
2. I take the part number around.
3. No one has it.



TIP / TRICK 3

Then I order it and it gets lost in the mail TWICE.



TIP / TRICK 3

I finally remove part and go show it to people.



TIP / TRICK 3

I finally remove part and go show it to people.

The first store I go to...

“El switch de ignicion, para un Chevy Blazer? Si, lo tenemos!”



TIP / TRICK 3

I finally remove part and go show it to people.

The first store I go to...

“El switch de ignicion, para un Chevy Blazer? Si, lo tenemos!”

GOOAAALLLLLLLL!!!!!!!



TIP / TRICK 3

Testing Framework - the same question twice.

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1. When a group asks the same questions twice it is not a sign of failure.

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Testing Framework - the same question twice.

1. When a group asks the same questions twice it is not a sign of failure.
2. In group processes, the same question will often be revisited as the group cyclically works through a problem together.
3. In these circumstances, **it's not about solving the issue fast**, but about what needs to happen to move forward or to retain forward movement.

TIP / TRICK 3

Testing Framework - the same question twice.

How was I misunderstanding the needs of this process today?

TIP / TRICK 3

Farmer's Market - the Scotsman and the Farmers.

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2. As the newly hired director of the market, I notice that none of the policies are being followed that the President and the Board have set.

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Farmer's Market - the Scotsman and the Farmers.

1. The new President of a largely hispanic Farmer's Market is a retired surgeon from Scotland.
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3. I decide to go to a meeting.

Farmer's Market - the Scotsman and the Farmers.

1. The new President of a largely hispanic Farmer's Market is a retired surgeon from Scotland.
2. As the newly hired director of the market, I notice that none of the policies are being followed that the President and the Board have set.
3. I decide to go to a meeting.
4. By the end of the meeting I had 40 farmers surrounding me, listening to my translation of the President's words. translating into English what Philip was already saying in English.

TIP / TRICK 3

Farmer's Market - the Scotsman and the Farmers.

**What is the real reason for lack of compliance?
How would this apply to software development?**

Morals of the Stories

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TIP / TRICK 3

Morals of the Stories

1. Sometimes you have to re-frame the question.
2. Sometimes the real issue is that the group has to come to consensus which takes time.
3. Sometimes you just really do need a translator.

Tip 4:

TIP / TRICK 4

If the culture/group is behaving a certain way that seems off to you, it's probably because you do not understand what is going on.

TIP / TRICK 4

How many of you remember being in your first class in a new school, and the teacher asks a question, and you're like, 'why is no one saying anything?'...

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TIP / TRICK 4

The Lesbian Party

TIP / TRICK 4

The Lesbian Party

1. New group of friends.

TIP / TRICK 4

The Lesbian Party

1. New group of friends.
2. LOTS of common ground.

TIP / TRICK 4

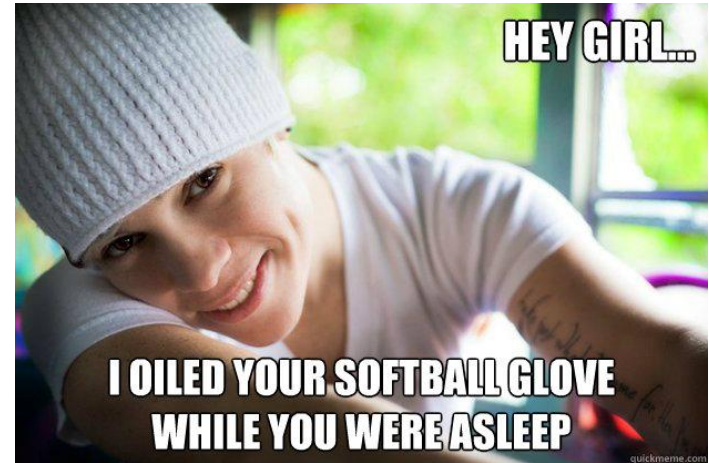
The Lesbian Party

1. New group of friends.
2. LOTS of common ground.
3. Hanging out on the lake.

TIP / TRICK 4

The Lesbian Party

1. New group of friends.
2. LOTS of common ground.
3. Hanging out on the lake.
4. I break out with the jokes about lesbians and softball.



TIP / TRICK 4

Insulting Softball at the Lesbian Party

1. Are you serious?

TIP / TRICK 4

Insulting Softball at the Lesbian Party

1. Are you serious?
2. Are you seriously dumb?

TIP / TRICK 4

Insulting Softball at the Lesbian Party

1. Are you serious?
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3. Oh my GOD, you are serious.

TIP / TRICK 4

Insulting Softball at the Lesbian Party

1. Are you serious?
2. Are you seriously dumb?
3. Oh my GOD, you are serious.

There is no image I could possibly show here that would adequately describe how dumb that was.

TIP / TRICK 4

Morals of the Stories

1. If you are new, your primary job is to listen.

TIP / TRICK 4

Morals of the Stories

1. If you are new, your primary job is to listen.
2. Avoid making fun of the sport of softball around lesbians.

TIP / TRICK 4

Morals of the Stories

1. If you are new, your primary job is to listen.
2. Avoid making fun of the sport of softball around lesbians: IE: even if you are part of a group, you can still be an outsider.

Tip 5:

TIP / TRICK 5

If you think everyone else is screwed up, it's probably because you do not feel safe showing up.

TIP / TRICK 5

First day of New Job - random guys from Wisconsin

1. First day of work - San Francisco

TIP / TRICK 5

First day of New Job

1. First day of work - San Francisco
2. Dressed in pin stripes, tie, etc...



TIP / TRICK 5

First day of New Job

1. First day of work - San Francisco
2. Dressed in pin stripes, tie, etc...
3. But no time for breakfast.



TIP / TRICK 5

First day of New Job

1. First day of work - San Francisco
2. Dressed in pin stripes, tie, etc...
3. But no time for breakfast.
4. Asked a couple guys where a bagel shop was...

TIP / TRICK 5

First day of New Job

1. First day of work - San Francisco
2. Dressed in pin stripes, tie, etc...
3. But no time for breakfast.
4. Asked a couple guys where a bagel shop was...
5. And they handed me a couple bucks...



TIP / TRICK 5

(speechless)

TIP / TRICK 5

I take the money.

TIP / TRICK 5

Kenosha, Wisconsin.

TIP / TRICK 5

Then I get to work...

1. There were lots of normal people.



TIP / TRICK 5

Then I get to work...

1. Lots of normal people.
2. plus a guy who dresses up in Victorian clothing.



TIP / TRICK 5

Then I get to work...

1. Lots of normal people.
2. plus a guy who dresses up in Victorian clothing.
3. a section of all black wearers.



TIP / TRICK 5

Then I get to work...

1. Lots of normal people.
2. plus a guy who dresses up in Victorian clothing.
3. a section of all black wearers.
4. and a guy with horns implanted in head.



(not the real guy)

TIP / TRICK 5

I said...

“Everything is going to be just fine.”

Moral of the story:

1. If you want to have good experiences, you need to prioritise working with people who share your values.

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2. Within any system there are micro-environments and micro-cultures that we each have more control over.

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1. If you want to have good experiences, you need to prioritise working with people who share your values.
2. Within any system there are micro-environments and micro-cultures that we each have more control over.
3. When you are yourself, others feel safe being themselves.

Tip 6:

TIP / TRICK 6

A happy workplace is one in which people feel like they can show up.

TIP / TRICK 6

A happy workplace is one in which people feel like they can show up.

What can that mean?

TIP / TRICK 6

A happy workplace is one in which people feel like they can show up.

What can that mean?



TIP / TRICK 6

1. Let your freak flag fly, but don't wave it in people's faces.

TIP / TRICK 6

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2. Weekly informal un-work meetings help people get to know one another and help build compassion and group empathy.

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3. Trust is an exchange.
4. Apologizing is good. Skillful apologies are healing.
5. Forgiveness and compassion are good.
6. Failure is inevitable. Fast failure is Godly.
7. Balance scores help us see macroscopic organizational shifts without personalizing them.

Questions?

Thank you.