
Inclusive Mindset Journal Prompts



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1. **Recognizing our Unique Stories**
 2. **Shining a Light on Our Unconscious Bias**
 3. **Bringing Awareness To Microinequities and
Taking Action to Become Inclusive**



I. Recognizing our Unique Stories

I commonly hear people speak of diversity as being a particular type of person. But we are all diverse. Each of us has a unique story. Our experiences, perspectives and physical characteristics all contribute to the diversity that we have at this moment in our lives. And that diversity changes and evolves as we go through profound life events, like moving to a new place, starting a family, or losing a loved one. In [this video](#), I share one of my profound life experiences and how it shaped me

After watching that video, reflect on the following:

- What **experiences** have shaped who you are today?
- What **perspectives** were you raised with or do you hold now that impact who you are?
- What **physical characteristics** have influenced how you experience and engage with the world?

The uniqueness that each of us brings can't always be recognized at first meeting. Imagine the last time you met someone. What were the visible aspects of their identity, things that you picked up on right away? What were the invisible pieces that you couldn't discover until later?

Now think about how people perceive you when they meet you for the first time.

- What are your important observable characteristics? This can be things like your name, how you dress, your visible gender and ethnicity, or even where you went to college and where you've worked.
- What are your important invisible characteristics? This is anything someone couldn't know about you unless you told them-- your working style, your primary values in life, your experiences growing up, your hobbies and passions.

The diversity each of us brings informs our mindset and in turn our unique value to the roles we play at home and at work. Consider the following:

	How has your life experience affected...	How does this uniqueness provide value in your work?
YOUR SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTISE		
YOUR APPROACH TO CONFLICT		
YOUR PRIMARY MOTIVATION		
YOUR KEY VALUES		
YOUR GREATEST SKILLS		

II. Shining a Light on Our Unconscious Bias

Research shows, if you have a brain, you have a bias. While many of us may be aware that we are often able to make connections or establish preferences quickly (e.g., being “drawn” to someone) we may not be able to explain why we feel that connection. This graphic from [Shine](#) shows some common biases that inform our perceptions of others.



- Think about a few people you work with you have feelings about (either positive or negative). Fill out the chart below to shine a light on the type of bias that might be at play in your work relationships.

Colleague	Emotional Association	Where I consciously believe my association comes from	Unconscious Biases that could be at play

Further, no matter where we are in our careers, we are always assessing talent and being assessed by others. Oftentimes we are aware of explicit opportunities (being offered a job, nominated for an award) but we may not be aware of the implicit ways in which others are assessing us (deciding whether to give a detailed or cursory answer to our question, making time for mentorship conversations, recognizing our contributions when we are not in the room).

- How have others promoted your career through explicit and implicit recognition?
- Are you aware of actions you have either taken or chosen not to take in promoting the career of others?

While our experience with others plays a huge role in our decision to support them, we never know the whole picture.

- To what extent might some of the biases you wrote about in the table above have been at play in your decisions?

Once we recognize how unconscious bias acts on us, we are in a position to overcome it through awareness and reflection. When we truly take the time to know others and gather information to differentiate between fact and our assumptions, we are in a better position to address bias. Check out my post [here](#) to read more.

III. Bringing Awareness To Microinequities and Taking Action to Become Inclusive

Part of being inclusive is recognizing how our day-to-day behaviors send signals to others.

MIT Professor Mary Rowe described “microinequities” as “apparently small events which are often ephemeral and hard-to-prove, events which are covert, often unintentional, frequently unrecognised by the perpetrator, which occur wherever people are perceived to be different.” Microinequities can often have macro effects on whether people feel welcomed and valued.



Addressing microinequities requires understanding what they look like and how being in a rush or being under pressure can predispose us to enact them. When have you experienced, observed and/or committed some of these microinequities? (List credit: Lewis Silkin.)

1. Repeatedly mispronouncing a name or using incorrect pronouns
2. Interrupting / Completing a sentence for someone
3. Checking the time when someone is speaking / Checking emails during a meeting
4. Calling on people “like me” more than those who are different/ Making eye-contact with people “like me” while talking to a diverse group
5. Mentioning the achievements of some people at a meeting but not others whose achievements are equally relevant / Thanking some people but not others
6. Regularly telling stories of things that happened “before you joined” / Using acronyms that some people may not understand
7. Only reading half of a person's email and then asking them about the content later / Consistently ignoring someone's email or comments
8. Confusing people of the same ethnicity for one another
9. Taking an interest in some people's hobbies but not others
10. Expecting others to accommodate your working style or time zone

Reflect in your journal on the following prompts:

- What does it feel like to experience these things? How did you handle it?
- What did it feel like to observe these things happen to others? Did you say anything?
- How does it feel to realize that you have enacted some of these microinequities?

Crucial Conversations (summarized here) offers a great framework for addressing microinequities when we experience or observe them. Typically, we have a choice to change the focus of the conversation (distract), address the situation head-on (direct action), or address the situation after the fact (delay).

- When you see something that is not okay, how do you usually react?
- What are the pros and cons of your current strategy?
- Will you continue using this approach to microinequities?

Ready to learn more about proactive ways we can be more inclusive? Check out my case studies at humbleoakconsulting.com