

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Building Diversity in the University and the
Community----Fifth Annual National Conference
(2000)

People of Color in Predominantly White
Institutions

10-27-2000

“AWAY FROM BLAME TO PLAY THE GAME:
A METAPHOR AND STRATEGY FOR
‘SUCCESSFUL WORK RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN PEOPLE OF ALL COLORS’”

Norman M. Davis Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Business and Economics, Albertus Magnus College

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/pocpw15>



Part of the [Race, Ethnicity and post-Colonial Studies Commons](#)

Davis, Norman M. Ph.D., "“AWAY FROM BLAME TO PLAY THE GAME: A METAPHOR AND STRATEGY FOR
‘SUCCESSFUL WORK RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE OF ALL COLORS’” (2000). *Building Diversity in the University
and the Community----Fifth Annual National Conference (2000)*. Paper 37.
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/pocpw15/37>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the People of Color in Predominantly White Institutions at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Building Diversity in the University and the Community----Fifth Annual National Conference (2000) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

“AWAY FROM BLAME TO PLAY THE GAME: A METAPHOR AND STRATEGY FOR ‘SUCCESSFUL WORK RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE OF ALL COLORS’”

Norman M. Davis, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Business and Economics
Albertus Magnus College

"The presentation will assist universities and organizational work communities by offering strategies that can enable them to discuss the undiscussable and thereby make work progress gains never considered or reached before."

This proposal will introduce participants to the research and strategic work model developed by the presenter. The model aims to give both so-called minority and majority students a frame of reference from which to operate in the university and most importantly, the working community which may be predominantly white. The model proposes to enable students and employees to be more effective at "playing the game" or succeeding in work and work relationships. The model stresses a three level process that makes an analogy between the family and the organization. The presenter will disclose examples of work related undiscussable beliefs collected from both white and black working adult MBA students, and employees about their opposite race. These undiscussables while not necessarily true, can create tensions, reduce teamwork effectiveness, stifle creativity and on a collective basis slow progress and productivity in universities and organizations.

Undiscussable beliefs are those in the back of ones mind that go unexpressed yet they influence the holder of the belief while the other party does not understand the behavior that is exhibited and they too are consequently influenced. These beliefs confirm the existence of discovery zones (information that would be helpful if known and understood) in the minds of many students and employees and most significantly, they led the presenter to develop a model which all employees of any color may apply to increase their effectiveness with all other employees at work. The undiscussable beliefs revealed a connection between internalized oppression and people of color, thus demonstrating how inhibiting the undiscussables may be to people of all colors.

The presentation will assist universities and organizational work communities by offering strategies that can enable them to discuss the undiscussable and thereby make work progress gains never considered or reached before. Participants will also be asked to engage in a group exercise to create additional ideas and solutions for creating successful work environments in which people of all colors may be more effective in working with and leading each other to carry out individual, team or organizational goals.

Finally, The Iron Bullet Theory will be introduced and described as one of the greatest barriers to universities and organizations seeking to be successful in initiating a variety of diversity programs. The Iron Bullet Theory explains how people of all colors are separated and frustrated causing many talented students and employees to refrain from

discussing or working to achieve university and organizational diversity goals. Participants will be offered ideas on how to minimize the impact of the Iron Bullet Theory and solicited for their additional ideas on how to obliterate the impact of the Iron Bullet Theory.

Presenter:

Norm is a native of Rockford, Illinois and currently an assistant professor in the Business and Economics Department at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven Connecticut. Additionally he practices organizational and diversity consulting and has consulted or trained in many of the most challenged corporations in the United States ranging from Pfizer, AT&T and United Technologies, to Amtrak and the United States Postal Service. He has over 20 years of experience in management and human resources management with managing diversity, employee relations, managing change and team building as his specialty areas. Norm holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, a master's degree from the University of New Haven, and a Ph. D. in organizational behavior from The Union Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio.