

*How to be an
Inclusive
Writer*

VANESSA
CHARLES



Intro

- ❑ Effective communication techniques to cultivate an inclusive workplace
- ❑ Challenges facing inclusive-minded communications practitioners
- ❑ Inclusive writing strategies and tips
- ❑ Resources

About Me



U.S. Director
Regional
Communications &
Philanthropy

The Good Stuff:

- 25+ years comms practitioner
- At Takeda, provide counsel and drive strategy for several U.S. regional focus areas:
 - ✓ Health Equity
 - ✓ Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
 - ✓ CSR & Philanthropy

The Better Stuff:

- Dual national, originally from Trinidad & Tobago 🇹🇩🇺🇸
- Play well with others, but fiercely independent
- Tomboy/makeup junkie, bookworm/TV, Star Trek/Star Wars
- Travel enthusiast and global citizen
 - ✓ >20 countries on three continents

Independent
Tribune 

South Carolina
DAODAS
Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services


THE HOPI TRIBE


SANOVI
GENZYME

nationalgrid

**Boston
Scientific**
Advancing science for life™





*In order to empathize with
someone's experience,
you must be willing to
believe them as they see it
and not how you imagine
their experience to be.*

Brene Brown



Understanding Cultural Diversity

One Size Does Not Fit All



Many Challenges ...

**Different
cultural norms**

**Cultural
Sensitivity Often
Overlooked**

**Different
Communication
Styles**

**Bias
Prejudice
Stereotypes**

**Lost in
translation**

Different values

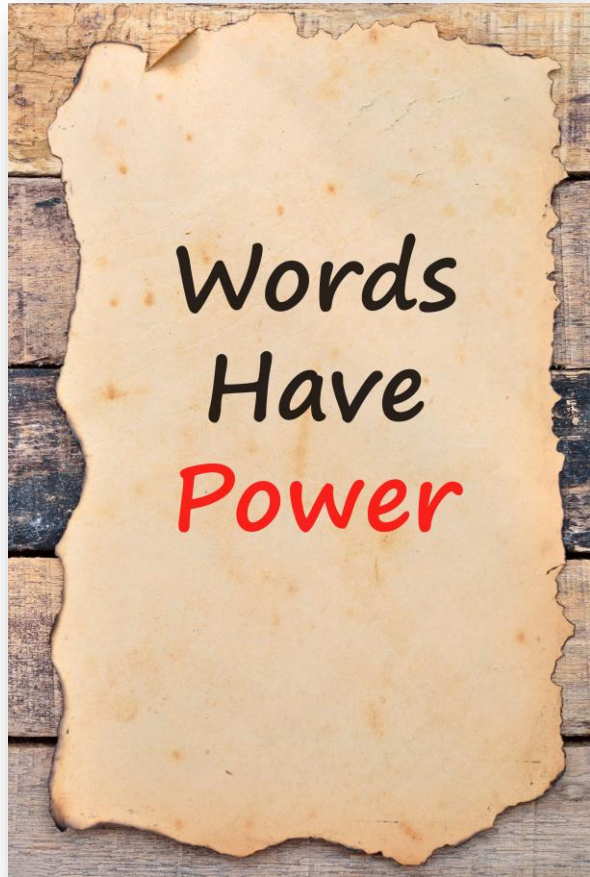


Considering Language

Excuse Me?!



The Thing About Language



- Avoid idioms and slang that might not be universally understood.
- Use plain language and avoid jargon.
- Strive for clarity and simplicity.

The Inclusive Writer's ACE

A

*Awareness
of Bias*

C

*Cultural
Agility*

E

*Empathetic
Listening*



Take Five



#1

*Tailor Your
Tone*

- Consider your employee audience demographic.
- Check the appropriate level of formality.
- Adapt your tone to match the cultural context.

#2

***Use Clear,
Concise, Gender-
Inclusive
Language***

- Use simple language to convey complex ideas.
- Use gender-neutral language.
- Be mindful of cultural sensitivities when using certain terms.



#3

Be brave!

- Courage is sometimes a solo journey. Get comfortable with it.
- Find the strength to be the voice of reason. Speak up.

#4

*Use Images &
Multi-lingual
Content*

- Incorporate visuals to enhance understanding.
- Provide translations or summaries in different languages if applicable.
- Be accessible (**web design**) – color contrast, alternate text size, closed-captioning, monitors at in-person events, etc.

#5

*Encourage
Feedback &
Adapt*

- Encourage open communication and feedback.
- Refer to employee communications/satisfaction surveys.
- Continuously adapt your communication based on feedback and outcomes.

Five Takeaways

1. Tailor your tone.
2. Use clear, concise, gender-inclusive language.
3. Be brave.
4. Use images and multi-lingual content.
5. Encourage feedback and adapt.



A Good Writer is an Inclusive Writer





Resources

- [Q&A: Why Inclusive Language Matters](#) *Duke Today* (2021)
- [Bias-free Language](#) American Psychological Association
- [Cross-cultural Communications Takes More Than Manners](#) *Harvard Business Review* (2012)
- [Taking the Lead for Inclusion](#) McKinsey & Co (2019)
- [How to Make Your Organization's Language More Inclusive](#) *Harvard Business Review* (2022)



Thank you



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