

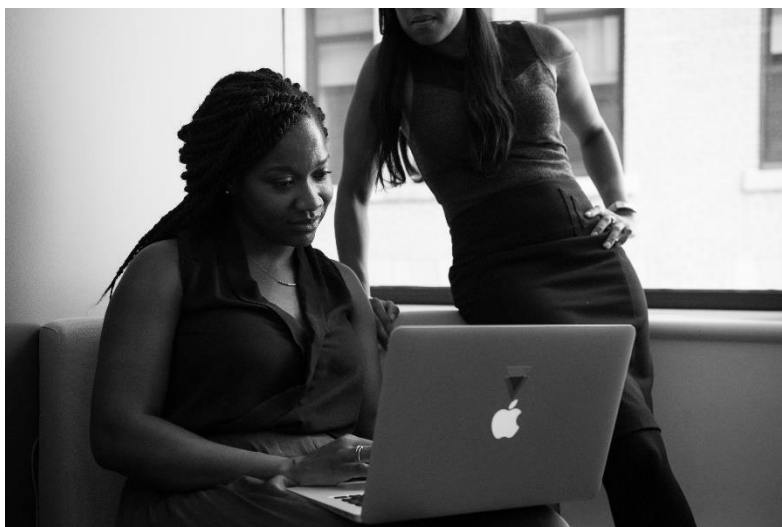
# W

## In Service to a Nation

"If I love you, I have to make you conscious of the things you do not see." —James Baldwin

Culture crisis. I overheard that term the other day, standing in a check outline. It was spoken by a young woman who could not have been more than twenty-five years old. She and her friend were talking about all the changes going on and how much we are losing because of the pandemic and how the protest is shaping our consciousness. They thought it was a good thing. A culture shift as one said, when they both looked at me. I responded I thought a good shake up in the things that ail us, is always a good thing.

I thought about the conversation and term again following the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. It made me think about all the powerful women who have over the years come to the aid of this country for good. It made me think of all the women who stepped in, leaned in, and spoke with a voice of authority and courage for the marginalized, disenfranchised, and left behind.



So today I thought I would speak their names, those passed on and those still carrying a torch to light the way. Those who have helped us, as James Baldwin once said, "If I love you, I have to make you conscious of the things you do not see."

Because of them, we can: Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Angela Davis, Barbara Jordan, Shirley Chisholm, Amelia Boynton Robinson, Nellie Bly, Emma Gonzalez, Mahalia Jackson, Malala Yousafzai, Michelle Obama, Gloria Steinem, Patsy Takemoto Mink, Katherine Johnson, Nancy Pelosi, Rosa Parks, Lilly Ledbetter, Misty Copeland, Mary McLeod Bethune, María Elena Salinas, Constance Baker Motley, Anna Julia Cooper, Sonia Sotomayor, Indira Gandhi, Helen Keller, Margaret Thatcher.

These are only a few. This list could go on and on, there are so many more. From politics, to entertainment and business these women showed us all what is possible, all while battling discrimination and adversity. Today, I am speaking their names. Today, I am calling out their commitment to inclusion, diversity, and equity. Today I am honoring their memory and their mark on the world.

Anna Julia Cooper and Patsy Takemoto Mink said it best, "The cause of freedom is not the cause of a race or a sect, a party or a class—it is the cause of humankind, the very birthright of humanity." – Anna Julia Cooper. "What you endure is who you are," - Patsy Takemoto Mink

Let us not endure racism, sexism, classism, or any ism. Many of the women on this list are known luminaries and many others are not. Yet, they have changed the course of history for our children and grandchildren.

Yes, we are in the middle of a culture crisis. We need new ways, new norms, new battle strategies, new voices to navigate this crisis. As we navigate this new normal course of human history, there will be more names added to the growing list of women who will give their life, their all, in service to others.



Will your name be on the list? Read how you can begin to have conversations about race with our Framing Equity Conversations below.

“And that’s a brilliant glimpse of insight!”

## WEBB Advisory Group

### Framing Equity Conversations in the Workplace

As many of us across the country begin to bring an equity lens to our workplace, how do we also build our understanding of ways to frame conversations to build buy-in and support from our teams?

But how do you frame these conversations? Starting these conversations can cause anger, and passive-aggressive behaviors. We all have different points of view, making it sometimes harder for us to even begin to have these conversations. The key is to take time to understand the underlying reasons for behaviors, while also helping employees see how it affects others to have courageous conversations.

So where do we begin? Let us start with the Word Equity:

**E** = The first step in approaching any difficult conversation is to Empower and Engage Stakeholders, Staff and Customers. This first step in preparation is where you get ready for the conversation and set the stage. Proper preparation in this empowering and engaging step will make these conversations less intimidating and much more effective.



An important step here is to schedule meetings to have courageous conversations about equity far enough in advance so that everyone can prepare their own thoughts. Do not surprise people with these difficult conversations. Having these conversations without preparation can lead to staff being defensive.

Frame equity conversation in positive tones and not as must 'do's'. The point is to not make people feel like they must agree.

**Q** = Quantify the level of inequities in the business. How? Ask good questions. Conduct anonymous assessments. Survey questions should ask for their point of view. Assessments and questions should show empathy and grace. We have all experienced the world differently and therefore do not all think the same way.

In your assessments or surveys stick to open-ended questions (why, what, how) to encourage thinking and lead to inclusive discussion.

**U** = Understand the barriers to equitable access.

Understanding does not mean agreement. It is okay to view barriers as opportunities. You can recognize these different perspectives and work towards solutions.

**I** = Integrate equity goals, approaches, and indicators into policies, plans and all meeting agendas. This is where your leadership will come into play. Do not be afraid to be vulnerable. Nothing will get solved if you bury these next steps forward and being vulnerable might inspire your staff to have courageous conversations when equity is integrated into all policies plans and meeting agendas.

**T** = Target resources.

Targeting resources without an action plan is like preparing cookies without putting them in the oven. We need to work to build sustainable, long-term solutions based on understanding and trust. Having a clear plan to target resources ensures accountability.

**Y** = Yield outdated policies and processes that no longer serve the common good or are not inclusive or equitable. You got this! The more you address equity through crucial conversations with a positive and solution-oriented approach, the better your work environment, employee morale, retention, hiring and customer service will be.

