

NARRATOR:

The Disability & Philanthropy Forum presents Dr. Zakiya Mabery, Author, Speaker, and Independent Consultant.

DR. ZAKIYA MABERY:

How can we ensure that the environments are more inclusive? Well, it starts with making sure you have an organizational culture that is inviting because you may do all that work, spend all that money to do the recruiting, bring them on board, what does your onboarding look like? When you're developing your onboarding strategy, do you have individuals with different types of disabilities to get feedback to be part of that group? Maybe you might want to have a buddy, an onboarding buddy to make sure that someone goes with that person through the 60, 90 day, 120 day mark to make sure that their needs are being met.

Are you ensuring that you are transparent with your policies? Are your policies updated? I worked with one organization, and it was 25 years since one of their policies was updated. Your position description. Why does someone need to type 40 words per minute or be able to lift 25 pounds? We need to look at them with an inclusive eye to see if it's excluding or including more people. There are a laundry list of things that we can do to make sure the environment is inclusive and welcoming to all people, but first thing is to take a look, like Eman said early, at yourself. We have to look at emotional intelligence. How many of our leaders and our middle managers actually have a high level of emotional intelligence? They may have the title, they may be on the top of the, quote, unquote "food chain," but do they really get it? What is their 'why' for being in it? Are they being vulnerable in storytelling?

Storytelling is a catalyst for change. I'm going to say that again. Storytelling is a catalyst for change. I share my stories not because I'm trying to impress or because I want some sympathy, I'm sharing it because maybe you may know someone or you listening may know yourself, "Hey, I went through something like that. I didn't know it was okay to share it." It is. There's someone going through something right now, and maybe they didn't know who or what to do about it. You can share your story, even a micro. The mustard seed is the smallest thing. Taking steps each day as small as a mustard seed with yourself can change a lot of outcomes. And then with others, sharing the information.

I know I said a lot, but one thing I want to emphasize is emotional intelligence, doing the work, looking at yourself and taking action steps. Small steps they may be in the beginning, but those small steps over time turns into a change outcome for other people.

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