

The Solidarity Circle

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When we, or another person, acts in a way that is not in solidarity with others, we know it. We may feel it in our bodies. But we may not always have had the tools to comfortably or effectively deal with it. The **Solidarity Protocols**, below, are a set of tools to support us during these times: with greater clarity, strength, compassion, and effectiveness. The **Solidarity Circle** is a time and a place to practice. We may not have all the answers, but wherever we are, we can learn from each other,

The TIME is Wednesdays from 4:00 to 5:00 pm (Eastern Standard Time).

The PLACE is on Zoom. The meeting ID# is: 878 5183 2925. The passcode is: 628598. You can get there by using this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/keH13Azbi0>

The Three Patterns

These following three protocols are based on The Power of Difference Model (PDM) which describes three patterns of thinking, of belief, of behavior, worldview, managing fear, and moral superiority, related to our differences. *Each of these three patterns has both assets and limitations. We can use these patterns from a "needy", "grasping" place...or a powerful, caring, present, and potent place. Ultimately, the goal is for each of us to integrate the assets of all three in a way that feels good, strong, clear and connective!*

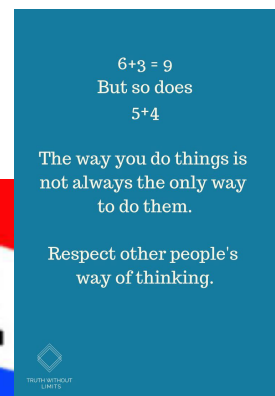
When a person does not act in solidarity with others, it is typically, from one of these three patterns and each one requires or invites a different response. These three responses are the "Solidarity Protocols."

Note: If you notice that one of these patterns below feels "right" or "comfortable" to you...it is probably YOUR primary pattern!

Sensitivity – In this pattern, I value the power of understanding others' perspectives as the way to safety for all of us. I recognize and deeply *value* differences and recognize them everywhere! This is the primary asset of Sensitivity. *On the other hand, I can over-focus on political correctness out of a fear of offending others...and I can become frozen or confused.* In my effort to get others to "get it" I can become exhausted and patronizing and miss connecting personally. My learning edge lies in the Strength pattern: courage, powering up, being ferocious but in a way that refuses both silence AND violence. This pattern can sound like: "If only we could get our supervisor to take this workshop" or "I'm not sure what do to, I don't want to offend anyone." Here are a few examples in which these authors are "teaching" the rest of us, and assuming they have understanding we don't! You might notice how it feels when someone makes this kind of assumption about you.

We must start understanding other cultures, such as the Aboriginal culture. They have a harmony with the Earth and from that harmony has grown a certain spirituality.

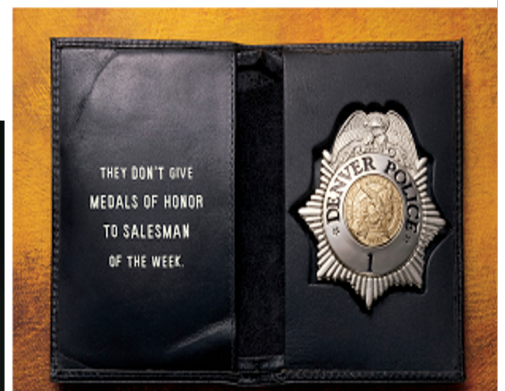
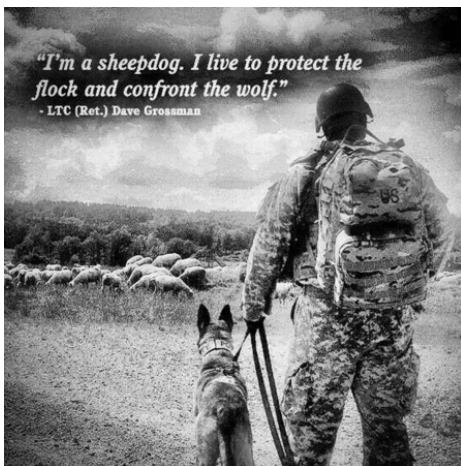
Ian Cohen



Oneness – In this pattern, the lover archetype, I value the power of unity as the way to safety for all. I recognize an important truth: that we are one human family, that we are all one. This is the primary asset of Oneness. On the other hand, I can focus so strongly on our common humanity that I can impact others as *devaluing* and minimizing differences that might be important to the other person. I might seek to a "spiritual bypass" – opting to move beyond the sometimes "messy" world of relationships, challenge, and hardship that our differences can seem to bring. My learning edge lies in Sensitivity: understanding the profound importance of difference. I want to learn to recognize the need for people to identify for themselves what matters. It can sound like: "I don't see disabilities, I just see people," "All Lives Matter" or "Talking about difference just causes divisions," "The only race I care about is the Human Race!" Below are a few examples. Oneness can be a way to feel safer in a dominant group for someone who is from a marginalized group and concerned about "sticking out" and being "targeted." Or it can be a way for a person in a dominant group to minimize another person experience (a form of "gaslighting") as a way to maintain power and privilege.



Strength – In this pattern, the warrior archetype, I value the power of courage, decisiveness, clarity, and a noble willingness for self-sacrifice as the ways to create safety for my “own” group (familial, racial, organizational). These are my gifts. On the other hand, I may employ denigration of the other: dominance, aggression, *evaluation* of difference, and the identification of “other” as “enemy.” My learning edge lies in Oneness: unity, commonality, connection to all. The Strength pattern can sound like: “People should just stop complaining and take care of business”, “the real problem is reverse discrimination,” “I stand with the police.”



The Three Protocols

1. The “Sensitivity” Protocol

When a person appears confused, frozen, or desiring others to “get” something:

- Is there a payoff for you to be confused (or frozen, or focused on getting others to change)?
and/or
- If you weren’t confused (or frozen or needing to get someone to get something)...but you saw an empowered path that refuses both silence and violence, what would that path be?

2. The “Oneness” Protocol

When a person’s words reflect an overfocus on our common humanity and a devaluation of difference:

- I hear your intention to honor all people...and I feel called to speak in solidarity with _____ whose difference society attempts to minimize by over-focusing on our oneness.

3. The “Strength” Protocol

When a person’s word reflect aggression, combativeness, or evaluation of difference:

- When you (say/do) _____ I feel called to speak in solidarity with both you and with _____ as your words (actions) don’t serve you or the unity and dignity of all people.

Practice

Note: When practicing, it is not necessary to remember the protocols verbatim. See if you can get “ahold” of their essence or “feeling” of them.

Think of an early time you felt called to stand in solidarity with a person or a group or even yourself--and you didn’t. You probably didn’t have the tools or the modeling, so you can be gentle with yourself and forgive what you didn’t know. For me, it was in the 7th grade when I was bullied and didn’t know what to do or say!

Now you will have the opportunity to “redo” that experience through a kind of role-play.

1. Pick who will go first.
2. Take yourself back to that moment now in your imagination (for some this is easier—for others, less so...we encourage you give it a try!).
3. Describe the situation.
4. Now, try using the protocol that best matches the situation to “replay” the scene.
5. Try it more than once. Maybe louder or softer. Try different tones. What’s it like to speak with ferociousness—strong but not violent. Notice how all this feels and where you feel it in your body?
6. If you feel comfortable, ask your partner for feedback. A basic question might be: on a scale from 1-10, how believable were you? Maybe you’ll want to try again to see if you can get a higher “score.”
7. When the first person is complete, switch to the other. You may each want to bring a different situation to mind in order to try another pattern.

My Pattern

Because I too have a primary pattern, it is helpful and important, in the beginning, for me to do “internal checks” to ensure the following:

- Am I ready to speak my truth (with clarity and strength--not motivated by a desire to get anyone to ‘get’ anything [sensitivity pattern])?
- Am I motivated by a desire to honor and celebrate difference (and not by a desire to over-emphasize oneness at the expense of our differences [oneness pattern])?
- Am I experiencing both compassion because of our common humanity and strength (rather than anger and evaluation [strength pattern])?

If I don’t experience these things, I am invited do my own internal “inquiry” before attempting to communicate with the other person. The Power of Difference Assessment (PDA) can offer a map of my unconscious patterns. A free sample is available by taking the RPQ (Race Pattern Quiz) on The Sum’s homepage at www.thesum.org. Our more in-depth “belt” or level training can support you in this inquiry. The more I’m able to integrate and leverage the assets of these three patterns as needed, the more we find that people report greater:



- a. effectiveness across difference
- b. recognition of their own privilege and how to use it efficaciously
- c. impact on others, generally, as intended across differences
- d. sense of solidarity across differences
- e. pride without prejudice
- f. ability to “refuse both silence and violence”
- g. ability, clarity, and courage to withdraw participation in violent aspects of systems
- h. capacity to catalyze meaningful systemic change w/o effort
- i. greater internal stability...less rising and falling on external conditions
- j. experiencing greater clarity, purpose, passion
- k. ability to hold others accountable to increased integration w/o blame or shame