How to Attract Diverse People into Your Community

Diverse Personalities and Community
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A little about the session

The typical cohouser is a 50 year old white liberal. There is talk about creating a more diverse community. The only way this effectively happens is through personal changes:

- ... will be led through a personal journey about how their pasts inform the present and how to move into the future.
- ... will learn skills and ideas, including the importance of a “higher purpose” to assist their groups and communities function more efficiently by getting to know their neighbors/colleagues by knowing themselves better.
- ... will learn ways to deal with diverse personalities in the context of a agreed upon community culture.
A little about the facilitator

- **About the Presenter, Alan O’Hashi (Silver Sage Village Cohousing)**
  - I provide tailor-made cultural competency training and facilitation – short term, half day / full day. My work includes training for a variety of groups, including youth services, victim services and affordable housing organizations. I’m a graduate of the Visiones Advanced Leadership Training which develops transformational leadership skills and consensus-building. I represent the Rocky Mountain Region on the Cohousing USA Board of Directors; previously was a member of the city of Boulder Planning Board, formerly the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity St Vrain Valley – Longmont, Colorado.

- These days, though, I make movies. The most recent is “Aging Gratefully: The Power of Community” about macro-cohousing communities with an adjunct about Baby Boomer on-line micro-communities in preproduction, “Mahjong and the West” about dating violence now has Amazon and Vimeo VOD distribution, “Art of the Hunt”, “New Deal Art in Post Offices” and “Plein Air painting on the Grand Teton”, I also provide video production services for businesses and non-profits wanting to tell their stories better. I’m a member of the Boulder International Film Festival board of directors.
Behavioral Norms and Expectations

- Be respectful – speak one at a time
- Be good listeners
- Use ‘I’ statements
- There are no ‘mistakes’
- Challenge by choice
- What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas
- Importance of norms and expectations?
  - Accountability
  - Boundaries
Who’s in the house today?

- Please introduce yourselves:
  - What diverse personality trait do you perceive that you hold?
  - Give your grandmother’s birth (né) name
Your personality

- [http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp#questionnaire](http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp#questionnaire)

- Millennium event password cohous63
What does it mean?

According to Carl G. Jung's theory of psychological types [Jung, 1971], people can be characterized by their preference of general attitude:

- **Extraverted (E) vs. Introverted (I),**

Their preference of one of the two functions of perception:

- **Sensing (S) vs. Intuition (N),**

Their preference of one of the two functions of judging:

- **Thinking (T) vs. Feeling (F)**

Isabel Briggs Myers, a researcher and practitioner of Jung’s theory, proposed to see the judging-perceiving relationship as a fourth dichotomy influencing personality type [Briggs Myers, 1980]:

- **Judging (J) vs. Perceiving (P)**
Cultures: Why are they different?

Cultures are many and generally defined as race, ethnicity, practices and values that are common for a certain group of people possibly around a higher purpose. Culture may include:

- Familial and non familial networks
- Association patterns: formal, informal relationships, friends, allies, neighbors, cliques
- Roles around gender and age: respect of elders
- Food traditions: common foods, meals,
- Life transitions: birth, death
- Spirituality: individual vs. collective
- Core values: independence, interdependence, individuality, boundaries, consequences. accountability
- Diverse Personalities: complacency, under achievement, introversion, honesty and the polar opposites are NOT CULTURAL
- Personality types are inherent in all cultures and governed and checked by agreed upon behavior norms and community expectations.
What is cultural competence?

- Cultural competence is a developmental process that evolves over an extended period. At any given moment, depending on past histories and experiences individuals, groups, communities are at various levels of cultural awareness, knowledge and competency skills.

- Where does cultural competence begin?
  - Name a person, not a relative, who was a positive influence on you as a child and a particular incident that you continue to carry to this day?
Who and what are you?

- Relating about who helped you grow up to be healthy and strong is a starting point.

- As of now we can move forward with each passing moment while reflecting on the past and how those experiences influence the future.
  - Shields are symbols of self and community.
  - A way to identify from ancient times to now.
  - Remember your past and how that influences your future.
Your shield

- Draw a square on a piece of paper
- Divide it into quarters
- Write / draw your responses
- Self Identity – race, gender identity, etc.
- Two Holidays – one you celebrate now that you didn’t as a kid; one you’ve always celebrated
- Housing – What type of house did you live in before your current home
- Food – The type of bread you ate growing up
Diversity vs. Cultural Competence when attracting diverse community members

- Diversity consists of the characteristics of a cultural group
  - Not a very practical approach, daunting
  - How many diverse personalities? Introverts, extroverts, slackers, over achievers...
  - Book-learned, not necessarily personal change
  - Unintentional stereotyping

- Cultural competence is self guided work each of us undertakes to explore their own pasts, values and cultural baggage
  - Shedding learned behaviors, also daunting
  - Cultural Competence Netweavers
  - Recognize privilege, dominant cultural norms, sacrifice, change one’s self
  - Facilitated, over time: goal setting, implementation
  - Developed through relationships
Cultural Brokerage

- Are you finding yourself a part of the typical cohousing demographic?

- Cohousing communities generally are begun by a few “burning souls.” Why do you want a diverse community?

- Are you willing to change or do you want others to change and be like you?

- Conflicting cultural norms
  - American
  - Your own
  - Those of others
Fit a square peg into a round hole
American Cultural Norms vs Cohousing Cultural Norms

Stereotyping is drawing conclusions based on incomplete information. Stereotype of American cultural norms:

- Bigger is better, more is better,
- Rugged individualism, survival of the fittest
- Majority rules – win by one vote
Stereotype of cohousing cultural norms:
- Small is better, efficiency through less redundancy
- Collaboration and sharing
- Consensus decision making – all have an equal say
Stereotype of cohousing cultural norms from the “king of my castle” view:

- Only people who can’t afford a home are in cohousing
- Hippies in a commune free loving
- Community is for the weak and meek who can’t make a decision
Bankers and Lenders

- Bankers and lenders just want a secure loan.
- Sentimentality? Community? Sharing?
Institutional barriers

Banks and lenders

- Community Reinvestment Act – meet credit needs of low – moderate income neighborhoods
- Low Income Housing Tax Credits
Local government

- **Stereotype of local government officials**
  - Bureaucrat
  - Controlling
  - Stop projects
Local Government

• **Professional** – cities/counties with administrators or managers, weak mayors and councils
  • Likely has a professional planning / zoning office, public works department, bureaucracy with little meddling by weak mayor and council but politics may come into play

• **Non-professional** – cities/counties with strong mayors and councils/commissions
  • May or may not have a separate planning/zoning department or citizen board / commission
  • Strong mayor and council / commission make decisions sometimes based on politics
  • Hybrid forms with city/town administrators, but strong Mayor and council / commission
Follow the rules

- Get familiar with your local comprehensive plans, housing plans
  - Fit your project in with any existing plans
  - Affordable housing
  - Demographics

- Zoning regulations are implementation tools for plans
  - Fit your project with the existing zoning districts
  - Limit the number of approvals – keep it simple

- If your mission is cohousing advocacy, do that after the project is approved
  - At any public hearings, keep comments to the rules and how the project follows the rules
  - Talk about the community spirit, carpooling, working together, etc. only confuse the process since any opposition will pounce on all that “hippie” talk
Diverse Personalities and ‘Higher Purpose’

- Adopting a “higher purpose” for your community other than maintaining the property value or group mission
  - Higher purpose is a common core belief, ritual, activity (as opposed to values which are strategies to undertake a higher purpose)
Take a higher purpose cue from Robin Hood

- Give some examples of “higher purpose” that could be a fit for your community/group
- How a community culture and higher purpose form boundaries for diverse personalities
Learning about your biases

- Did you learn anything about yourself that can either help or hinder your journey to deal with diverse personalities?
- Is defining a community culture something you’re willing to advocate?
- Are there current beliefs formed by your past that you will try to ‘undo’ as you move forward?
- Are you willing to put in the time and effort become a more culturally competent person and walk your talk when dealing with diverse personality traits that are disagreeable to you?
- If you don’t have a community “higher purpose” what is the first step to take to determine one?
Need help with a new community building paradigm?

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