HUMANKIND
SHARED PLANET DIVIDED BY NORMS

A handbook for addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion through social responsibility.

Matthew Ajiake, PhD

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While the concepts, decision-making processes and practices discussed in this book are organization-focused, the models presented are also applicable to familial and other non-organization-based relationships. Since this is a handbook, not all the presentations are applicable to all readers as presented, but because we share one humankind and one planet, they are applicable in varying degrees by responsibility, association and/or impacts. They also provide actionable steps that we can each take to close the gaps in our divisive norms within our respective spheres of influence.

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DEDICATION

To my children Olivia Ngozi Ajiake (husband Dana Farley), Jason Ozaoghena Ajiake (wife Rebeka), Austin Bawa Ajiake, (fiancé Rhonda Johnson) and granddaughter Eliana (Olere), Josiah Ayodele Ajiake, and Grace Anoke Ajiake—you have enriched my humanity and life beyond measure, and I am forever grateful for your love and support. Original manuscript was dedicated to Austin for his 20th birthday.

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INTRODUCTION

We live on a shared planet that is shaking itself to pieces through biases; on this much we can all agree. Every organization, society, community, locale, country, and continent has its own norms and biases. Every human being alive today has their own biases. Norms and biases are the moderators that shape our decision-making because they are the intersection between our minds and our realities. Norms or biases affect the decisions that we make and the activities that we get involved in whether individually or collectively.

Norms live in our thoughts and manifest in everyday decisions and activities. Our successes in creating socially responsible organizations and meeting our sustainable development goals rest on how well we address them. In this book, I focus on addressing divisive norms that are discriminatory and have long plagued humankind. While racial discriminatory practices as we know them today are less than 500 years old, gender inequality and religious discriminations goes back to the beginning of recorded history. This is where diversity, equity and inclusion (referred to throughout this book as either DE&I or DEI) as an emerging social science becomes a very important tool for addressing organizational norms that are unfair and unjust, even if they are society-endorsed.

How do we define unfair or unjust norms? Unfairness, in its simplest definition, is any form of injustice, partiality, or deception that manifests in inequitable or unequal practices. According to the Federal Trade Commission and the US Dodd-Frank statutes, each unfair practice has three basic injury tests: *"It must be substantial; it must not be outweighed by any countervailing benefits to consumers or competition that the practice produces; and it must be an injury that consumers themselves could not reasonably have avoided (FTC 1980)."*

Discriminatory norms can cause personal, psychological, spiritual, mental, and generational injury to minority, marginalized, disadvantaged or

vulnerable groups. They become rooted and amplified in social contracts—divisive norms that they cannot avoid because they are endorsed and enforced by society. These social contracts can be traditional (gender inequality), or they can be new, for example the segregation based on the European and American history of slavery. While much progress has been made since the 1960s to address discriminatory practices in America, systemic and structural racism have not gone away. Instead, they remain deeply rooted in housing, employment, consumer markets and credit markets.

There is abundant research in the Social Sciences on defining discrimination which is primarily focused on behavior. Some scholars and legal experts contend that discrimination by itself does not assume a specific cause but may be driven or motivated by racism (ideologies), prejudice (attitudes), or stereotype (beliefs)—(Pager and Shepherd 2008). These experts define racial discrimination as either having a disparate impact or manifesting as differential treatment. In differential treatment, a person is treated unequally because of their race; but in disparate impact, they are treated equally based on established norms or rules and procedures, which nonetheless generally favor one racial group over another (Pager and Shepherd 2008).

Contemporary literature on racial discrimination questions its relevance in the face of the progress that has occurred since the 1960s. But Dr. Martin Luther King's answer (part of his Washington DC "I have a dream" speech) remains true: *"There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, when will you be satisfied? We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality…We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one…No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."*

The inequitable or unequal treatments of groups and persons based on ethnicity or race is the simplest form of racial discrimination. But racial discrimination goes beyond treatments due to race, because racial disparities go deeper; they manifest in divisive norms established over time through policies and privileges that deliberately accord one group privileges over another. For example, white privileges, established by policies and sustained by politics, continue to drive racial inequalities in America regardless of efforts to improve acceptance of our shared humanity and the quality of life for minorities, especially African Americans. Why?

Today's racial discriminatory norms in America were established not by the legacy of slavery alone, but by deliberate housing policies which began in the 1930s as the nation was coming out of the Great Depression. At the time, the government funded the establishment of white suburban neighborhoods with incentivized investment programs (including the GI Bill)

while at the same time it disincentivized minority and black neighborhoods with disinvestment programs (including the later overrepresentation in subprime markets that led to the loss of black owned homes). These policies allowed white racial groups to prosper and pass down intergenerational wealth accrued through home ownership, provided a stronger and more sustainable tax base for schools, promoted quality of life through environmental and other life-enhancing ecosystems, supported healthcare access and affordability, etc. There's nothing wrong with these policies per se, but they deliberately marginalized and disenfranchised whole populations of minorities for generations.

Capitalism at the turn of the 20th century, amplified by a tremendous surge in economic prosperity after World War II, should have raised all peoples' "boats," but it did not because of white policies, politics, and practices. These decisions and activities economically pushed minorities back to the dark ages while enabling the white population to sail through generations of unchallenged prosperity.

Part of social responsibility involves not holding someone responsible for the actions of others from their identifying group when they were not involved in the decision-making process. White people living today cannot be blamed for the decisions and activities perpetrated against minorities by their forebears, but they are socially responsible for ensuring that those discriminatory norms and social contracts do not continue to marginalize and disadvantage minorities.

Racial discrimination in America and the systemic and structural decisions and activities that gave it sustenance were not level playing fields. A level playing field can't be considered fair and just when one group of runners begin a 100-yard race at the 50-yard mark while the rest of the runners are huddled back at the starting line. Understanding that at the end of slavery in 1865, the freed slaves were the most highly skilled workforce in America provides the illuminating context. What happened when the hopes and dreams of highly-skilled African Americans were systematically dashed and as a people group—for over 150 years—disenfranchised from the economic engine that capitalism birthed on their backs? The suggestion that the increased number of African Americans in the workforce is an indication that America has reached parity in race relations is a misnomer.

Are we supposed to forget that the plight of African Americans today is the result of engineered social change established and sustained by deliberate policies? If the Bible had not recorded the highs and lows of human beings who once lived out their lives in living colors, would Sunday school teachers or preachers have material to teach or preach about morality and how we can be better human beings because of their lived experiences? Right out the gate in human relations development, we learned that Adam and Eve's first offspring, Cain, killed his brother Abel; when asked the

question, *"Where is your brother Abel?"* he responded with a question of his own: *"Am I my brother's keeper?"* Today, we answer this question in the affirmative, when we acknowledge the past unjust and unfair practices and create solutions to solve them together as our brothers and sisters' keepers by affirming the people and the impact of the human decisions and activities that adversely affected and continues to affect them as a people group. Therefore, applying DE&I as a moderator of human relationships within the social responsibility and sustainable development framework makes sense.

White policies, privileges, and politics kept America a racially divided nation in many ways, making them DE&I matters that cannot be resolved by wishing them away or by benevolent gestures or denial theatrics. We must study them as a social science so that current and future generations would learn from them and make our shared humankind better for it. If racial and gender inequalities could be wished away and we arrived at a utopian parity, we would have long been there. But systemic and structural racial and gender divisive norms require systemic and structural responses. There isn't an easy fix. Even when they work, ad hoc responses always have shelf lives.

As an emerging social science, DE&I impacts every single academic discipline and organization. Most college disciplines today do not include DE&I as a core competency alongside general education subjects such as western history, arts, literature, arithmetic, etc. This is a missed opportunity to create awareness and knowledge about our shared humankind's lived experiences through a DE&I lens. DE&I is so encompassing and penetrating because it involves the core of our humankind's norms—the good, the bad, and the ugly! Medical students need a good dose of DE&I awareness and training as much as practicing physicians do. Engineering students need lessons in DE&I as much as practicing engineers do in community planning, building bridges and widgets that make the human experience on planet earth more enjoyable. Arts and science students need DE&I competencies as much as practitioners who use knowledge from these disciplines to propose new ways of doing things or interacting with one another.

All school administrators, professors, and workers need working knowledge and understanding of the DE&I storylines of society because it is essential to moving forward. It's not a response to a social reckoning movement due to racial or gender tensions but rather a part of our human yearning for understanding, acceptance and belonging. From family interactions to organizational networks to national unity policies, DE&I is an invaluable tool in straightening the crooked edges of our current humankind's divisive norms. The irony is that we cannot fully realize the gains from social responsibility and sustainable development commitments without using DE&I as a moderator or currency for facilitating the conversations that lead to the development and implementations of these commitments. Ignoring the historical needs of sections of a population is not

socially responsible, nor does it yield globally sustainable fruits like the wholesale adoption of climate change mitigation and adaptation for the good of our shared humanity.

Before we can address our divisive norms, we must first uncover how they were formed and how we process them. This is important because we cannot talk about DE&I without first understanding how our history and societal influences contribute to how we process everyday decisions that impact our workplace, workplans, and work-partners—our organizational eco-system. Ad hoc response to systemic problem is a Band-Aid at best.

The past is the lived experiences of human beings, a continuum that cannot be ignored, denied, or erased; it can provide us with lessons in healing our broken humanity for good. Humankind Shared Planet Divided by Norms looks at our past experiences on the DE&I questions and provides tools and structures for addressing them from a perspective of social responsibility and sustainable development. These tools and structures include the seven principles and seven core subjects as presented by International Standards Organization in its ISO 26000 Social Responsibility, supported by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Since every country has its own DE&I issues, challenges, and opportunities, we need a systemic approach to evaluating, addressing, and reporting on them. How do we then collate these divisive norms and address them in a way that is applicable across families, organizations, countries, cultures, and societal proclivities?

I am introducing the Knowledge, Creativity, and Governance (KCG) framework as a model that is applicable in how we can close humankind's divisive norms through a deliberate systemic approach that is moderated by DE&I. The KCG model anchors two other models that we need to bring unfair and unjust societal practices into focus. The KCG framework provides a seamless flow between knowledge and responsibility driven by wholesome principles through (1) knowledge-informed diversity call to action, (2) creativity-driven 3-Step Equity Lens model (opportunity, reconciliation, and disruption) and (3) governance-centered inclusion actionable steps guided by a 3-Step racial and gender inclusion principles that are redemption-driven, restoration-focused and responsibility-centered.

By focusing on what we know about the history and impacts of divisive norms and biases, we can create fair and just solutions. These solutions must be centered with inclusion principles that allow our shared human desires for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in our generation to mirror the concerns and actions we take to preserve our shared planet for future generations so they too can live in a fair and just world. After all, fairness, and justice for all are not utopian thoughts but human yearnings that have been silenced for too long by what has become an unsustainable despotic system—unfair and unjust societal and organizational decision-making and

activities that exalts some and marginalizes others, using artificial differentiators amplified by societal norms.

This may explain why organizational policies and procedures about DE&I matters are ignored in decision-making, even by those well-trained on why inclusivity is important to make our shared humankind whole. Yet, we know from experience that honor given in a place of dishonor—where our shared humanity is divided by norms—will always be out of order, just as a square peg is out of place in a round hole. Organizations can have the best-designed, most eloquent DE&I policies and procedures, but they are only as effective as the people who use them.

One thing we humans share with water is that we are full of it—water. It is estimated that our human bodies contain 65% to 90% water. Water always looks for a level playing field so it can do what it does best—flow! Humans likewise also pursue a level playing field to do what we do best—live! As water flows, it can become a lifegiving source or a destructive force even as it awaits another moderating force of nature—evaporation—and the return to earth as rain. In like manner, as humans live, we can choose to become a lifegiving source for reevaluating, reimagining, or reinventing ourselves from past unfair and unjust societal practices – or stifle growth with divisive norms and biases.

The question remains whether one generation can physically, mentally and spiritually cancel out or erase a previous generation's decisions—good, bad, and ugly—that contributed to our divisive norms and that marginalizes racial groups, denying them the rights and privileges of being human. Yet, the past never dies because it is a living classroom from which we can learn about broken divisive systems that enabled unjust and unfair practices to take root and thrive. We face the past to change for the better, not run from it, because we can only change what we face and running away from the past puts us in a constant holding pattern, useless motion that kicks the proverbial can down the generational road.

So, we come today to an era of higher purpose, beckoning us to a place of reckoning to become the change we want to see about the divisive norms birthed and administered untethered by previous generations. We still have norms established by people, for example, who believed women cannot be leaders over men–even though they play that role naturally in raising the next generation. We have men paying for the sins of other men in the way women have been treated in the past, becoming guilty today just by showing up male. We have white extremists everywhere afraid of becoming minorities (which tells you how they think minorities are generally treated) and blaming black and brown immigrants for the decisions of their own parents. We have women earning less than men for the same work—spurious inequities framed by gender-supremacist idealism. We even now have Millennials who think Gen Zs are weird and needing deliverance from

their social media addictions—two generations that will be interacting in time for the foreseeable future while the older generations sunset. All this does not even scratch the surface of the plethora of humankind's divisive norms that we must face because pretending they don't exist is not a working plan.

My use of the term's "organization" and "organizational ecosystems" throughout this book is applicable to any family unit, association–groups, corporations/associations (for profit of not-for-profit), schools, institutions, small or large businesses, bodies, parties, clubs, etc. Every person works in or through any of these concerns to express their will or purpose or decision on some context or decision. Every human being alive today has norms or biases which they bring to the table. The key is recognizing them, understanding them, and ensuring that they don't negatively influence decision-making.

HOW HUMANS THINK AND MAKE DECISIONS

Before the 1980s airplane cockpits were becoming a challenge to pilots because the very instruments developed to better assist them navigate their aircrafts (norms) became onerously impersonal. Beginning in the 1980s, more attention was given to simplifying pilot decision processes through redesigned cockpit technologies (new norms) and how pilots interacted with them based on training and experience. Designers were engaged to assist instrumentation designers because they understood the nexus between the mind and context in decision-making. The results led to cockpit redesign that enabled pilots to use the technologies in a manner more consistent with how the human body uses its cognitive abilities (intellect, reasoning, thinking, cerebral, mental, etc.,) to make decisions (Wiener 1988).

DE&I and the approach used to address its challenges and opportunities generally take a cause-and-effect paradigm where cognitive solutions are heavily favored. We design DE&I policies, craft carefully curated procedures to address issues, and then make elaborate proclamations that often fall short at key moments. Why? By ignoring the social and psychological influences in our behavior, we create DE&I commitments that are like artificial intelligence coding for people instead of machines. Yet, humans are *"… malleable and emotional actors whose decision making is influenced by contextual cues, local social networks and social norms, and shared mental models. All of these play a role in determining what individuals perceive as desirable, possible, or even "thinkable" for their lives (World Bank 2015)."* We need systemic solutions for systemic problems not ad hoc responses that have shelf life and may buy time but not heal brokenness.

Our existence today is shaped by moderated social norms and biases that we need to understand if we hope to stop those DE&I divisive norms.

These divisive norms create or accentuate societal and organizational inequities and lack of inclusion and belonging by tossing into the social atmosphere the two-faced coin of favoritism and hostility. If, indeed, human identities are not fixed but malleable, then even a person's most entrenched and divisive habits can be reshaped to produce fair and just decisions. In designing effective DE&I plans and programs, consideration should be given to social norms as moderators of behavior and values.

In 2015, the World Bank produced a world development report titled "Mind, Society, and Behavior" that presented new research and practice from across many disciplines about the interrelatedness between mind and context in decision-making. The report integrates findings drawn from disciplines such as neuroscience, sociology, behavioral economics, political science, cognitive science, anthropology, and psychology to explain our understanding of social and psychological influences on how humans make decisions.

I am adapting the three thinking modes of human decision making in this report to explain how our thoughts play out in our DE&I decision paradox and how our biases impact them. These three thinking modes should serve as individual and organizational guides in relation to how the information presented in this book is understood, used as exchange currency for ongoing dialogue, and applied to create new healing norms to our current broken DE&I ecosystems. The three thinking modes of human decision making are: (1) automatic thinking, (2) social thinking, and (3) mental models thinking. This World Bank report captured the interplay between them:

> *[T]he idea that paying attention to how humans think (the processes of mind) and how history and context shape thinking (the influence of society) can improve the design and implementation of development policies and interventions that target human choice and action (behavior)…In ongoing research, these findings help explain decisions that individuals make in many aspects of development, including savings, investment, energy consumption, health, and child rearing. The findings also enhance the understanding of how collective behaviors—such as widespread trust or widespread corruption—develop and become entrenched in a society (World Bank 2015).*

As this report contends, humankind is not a victim of its own actions, and we always have the ability and capability to change course if we exercise our will:

> *[W]hen failure affects the profit-making bottom line, product designers begin to pay close attention to how humans actually think and decide. Engineers, private firms, and marketers of all stripes have long paid attention to the inherent limits of human cognitive capacity, the role that social preferences and the context*

play in our decision making, and the use of mental shortcuts and mental models for filtering and interpreting information (World Bank 2015).

For example, in the United States, there was a time when slavery was legal, and slaves were forced by law (and the barrel of a gun) to assume a less-than-human status in life. Both White slave owners and their slaves utilized automatic thinking to assign and exist by societal roles and responsibilities and the quality-of-life measures—opportunities, values, and behaviors. This was the norm in the Antebellum South, notwithstanding the constitutional declaration that all men were created equal and endowed with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It was also a social norm in the North—where the champions of ending slavery were a majority—and where slavery was not prevalent, though a significant number of White people still believed innately and in everyday situations that they were a superior race to all others. For those to whom white supremacy was beneficial, it was easy to accept the interpretation that the constitutional reading of this declaration was color-and gender-blind and only meant for the perpetual benefit of White men.

Automatic thinking labeled blacks as inferior and whites as superior. Social thinking determined what roles or responsibilities blacks could assume in society and mental models of white supremacy in every aspect of society ruled the day. A century and half after slavery was abolished, racial injustice still dogs America with the same reinforcing three motifs—automatic, social and mental model thinking. Why?

Systemic and structural racism became the reinforcing social contract that replaced the law and spirit of slavery; it has proven to be a formidable foe to America's pursuit of racial reconciliation pursuit. The three thinking modes provides new scientific insights into how DE&I plans and programs can be made more effective social responsibility reinforcers when a systematic approach is used to drive fair and just organizational values and behaviors through the organization's consciousness. This type of DE&I-inspired systemic change requires individual buy-in to work. One-size-fits-all solutions will not get the job done, because each person must weigh what they must freely give up for the organization and society to move forward in fair and just practices. Exchanging old values and behaviors for new ones are not easy asks but necessary for humankind to progress collectively in an era of globalization and shared common interests including the saving of our planet for this and future generations.

The three thinking principles of decision-making are applicable to DE&I because every person alive have been labeled, have societal role models and mental models of what they can aspire or hope to achieve in the continuum of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The difference is that depending on country, race, tribe, gender, sect, and other factors all contribute to

shaping the narratives and the psychological and social influences that go into decision making.

In the twenty-first century, there are some White people in America who question why they should bear any responsibility for slavery when they never owned slaves. While this is a legitimate question to ask, it ignores the continuum of adverse impacts persisting through societal and organizational values, behaviors and culture because slavery and segregation laws once existed and are now comfortably embedded in systemic and structural racism and its many forms of manifestations.

Therefore, in addressing DE&I within the American context, ignoring the historical, psychological, and societal influences on behavior as causes for the enduring legacies of systemic and structural racism would be a mistake. This is because failing to connect the three principles of decision-making impact organizational behavior and to neglect them empowers the continuation of systemic and structural racism by those who deliberately or ignorantly make decisions that promote these values and behaviors. It is true that other nations have their own DE&I issues. But while the issues may be different, their systemic and structural strongholds and the determinations by those privileged by them to keep the status quo are eerily similar. It is the reason we need to understand how human thinking at the moment of decision-making affects the outcome.

AUTOMATIC THINKING

Psychologists broadly agree that human beings generally make decisions by simplifying problems and utilizing two different processing systems of thinking. The first is the automatic system, in which the individual frames a decision based on what immediately comes to mind. The second is the deliberative system, in which the individual is more reflective and considers a broad set of factors (World Bank 2015). According to this World Bank report,

> *Most people think of themselves as primarily deliberative thinkers—but of course they tend to think about their own thinking processes automatically and under the influence of received mental models about who they are and how the mind works. In reality, the automatic system influences most of our judgments and decisions, often in powerful and even decisive ways. Most people, most of the time, are not aware of many of the influences on their decisions. People who engage in automatic thinking can make what they themselves believe to be large and systematic mistakes; that is, people can look back on the choices they made while engaging in automatic thinking and wish that they had decided otherwise. Automatic thinking causes us to simplify problems and see them through narrow frames. We fill in missing*

information based on our assumptions about the world and evaluate situations based on associations that automatically come to mind and belief systems that we take for granted. In so doing, we may form a mistaken picture of a situation, just as looking through a small window overlooking an urban park could mislead someone into thinking he or she was in a more bucolic place (World Bank 2015).

Figure 0.1 Automatic thinking

Automatic thinking gives us a partial view of the world

To make most decisions and judgments, we think automatically. We use narrow framing and draw on default assumptions and associations, which can give us a misleading picture of a situation. Even seemingly irrelevant details about how a situation is presented can affect how we perceive it, since we tend to jump to conclusions based on limited information.
Humans are inherently social. In making decisions, we are often affected by what others are thinking and doing and what they expect from us. Others can pull us toward certain frames and patterns of collective behavior.

Source: World Bank 2015. This is an adaptation of an original work by The World Bank. Views and opinions expressed in the adaptation are the sole responsibility of the author and are not endorsed by The World Bank.

In the above picture, all four individuals made decisions from an automatic thinking mode because the view available to them provided a narrow framework. Water gushing out of a fire hydrant is misconstrued as rainfall and even the person with a direct view of the hydrant still unfurls an umbrella believing it was rain because of the actions of the other three. We tend to fill in additional information based on *"assumptions about the world and evaluate situations based on associations that automatically come to mind and belief systems that we take for granted."* Moreover, while it is true that we tend to jump to conclusions based on limited information, we also generally process the information that has the most meaning to us – which may not consider important consequences or omit key information from the decision-making process altogether. Sometimes, there is a significant gulf between our intentions and actions. Even with clear knowledge of the full consequences, people may choose to *"make decisions that favor the present at the expense of the future, so that they consistently fail to carry out plans that match their goals and fulfill their interests."*

This paradigm is also applicable when an individual has the authority and the responsibility to make decisions on behalf of a socially responsible organization but allows their own influences and preferences to dictate the decisions they make on behalf of the organization. We know from experience that other people do influence our decisions and choices by what they think, expect, and do. As the World Development Report suggests, in *"experimental situations, most people behave as conditional cooperators rather than free riders (World Bank 2015)."*

Organizational policies and procedures on DE&I matter that affect decision-making and activities face the added challenge of widespread adoption, because they must contend with belief systems that we take for granted, sometimes erroneously assuming that we have overcome these limitations. How many times have you heard someone say they do not see color, and yet their decisions are colored by societal racial divisive norms? Conversely, how many times has an individual had their decisions labeled as racist because they belong to the racial group whose predominant worldview and cultural inclinations historically is racist, though they may not be racist? The novelist Jane Austen reminds us that *"We each begin probably with a little bias and upon that bias build every circumstance in favor of it* (World Bank 2015)*."* As the World Bank report suggests:

> *We normally think of ourselves in terms of the deliberative system—the conscious reasoning self—yet automatic operations generate complex patterns of ideas that influence nearly all our judgments and decisions...Confirmation bias contributes to overconfidence in personal beliefs. People may fail to recognize that they do not know what they claim to know, and they may fail to learn from new information…Persuasion and education must engage with the automatic system to overcome resistance to new points of view (World Bank 2015).*

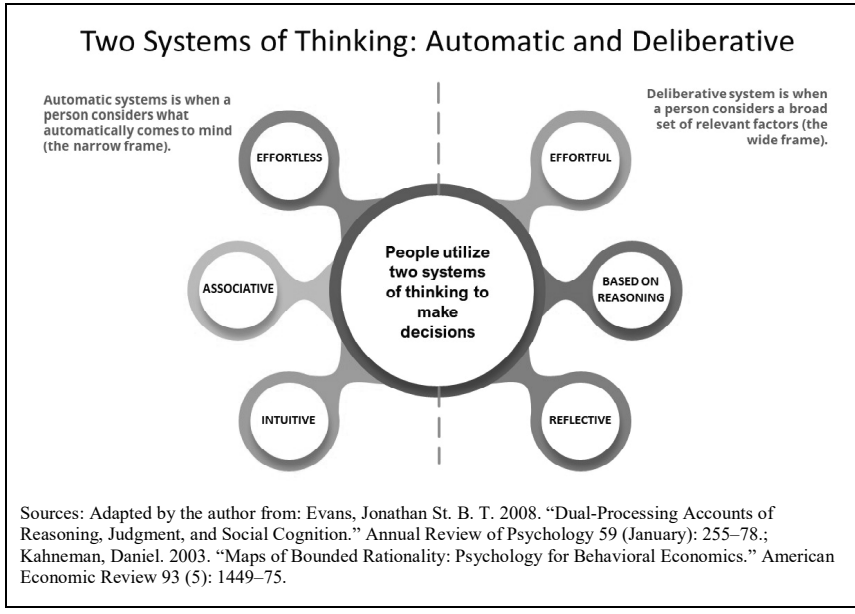
Work in the field of behavioral economics by psychologists such as Daniel Kahneman, Amos Tyversky and many others has expanded the knowledge base on the roles that psychology, social and cultural tendencies play in decision-making. These understandings have informed us that people rarely weigh decisions by comparing them to alternatives (World Bank 2015). This does not mean that people are not capable of considering alternatives, but rather that *"people are hard wired to use just a small part of the relevant information to reach conclusions* (World Bank 2015)*."* The World Bank report clarified these dichotomies:

> *[O]ver the past few decades, evidence has mounted that automatic thinking cuts across wide swathes of human behavior to the point that it can no longer be ignored. The anomalies that behavioral economics is trying to explain are not minor and scattered. They are systematic regularities that can be of first-*

order importance for health, child development, productivity, resource allocation, and the process of policy design itself...In standard economic theory, an important behavioral assumption is that people use information in an unbiased way and perform careful calculations. The calculations allow them to make choices based on an unbiased consideration of all possible outcomes of alternative choices that might be made. After people make a choice and observe the outcome, they use the information in an unbiased way to make the next decision, and so on……But confronted with the mounting empirical evidence on large and costly errors that people often make in critical choices—such as poor financial decisions and the failure to adhere to health regimens, take health precautions, and adopt income-increasing techniques after receiving new information—economists have come to recognize the importance of considering the possible impacts on behavior of our dual system of thinking, automatic and deliberative, in the design and testing of policy (World Bank 2015).

Research also indicates that people can switch from automatic to deliberative thinking within an automatic thinking framework. They describe these two thinking patterns as system 1, where decisions are fast, automatic, effortless and associative, and system 2, where they are slower and more reflective.

Figure 0.2 The two systems of automatic thinking



Sources: Adapted by the author from: Evans, Jonathan St. B. T. 2008. "Dual-Processing Accounts of Reasoning, Judgment, and Social Cognition." Annual Review of Psychology 59 (January): 255–78.; Kahneman, Daniel. 2003. "Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics." American Economic Review 93 (5): 1449–75.

When DE&I policies and procedures are written, organizations assume that people follow these guidelines in a lineal manner—observing every established cue and considering the consequences of their decisions on all people groups and environments impacted. Yet, even before the age of social media, people were already bombarded by race and gender norms in such quantities that organizing them in furtherance of socially responsible decision-making was near-impossible. In particular, the influence of social media far outweighs some of the motivation for socially responsible changes in decision-making at many organizations. While our understanding of social media and its influence on decision making is in its infancy, economic theory has evolved to more realistically align with how and why people make decisions the way they do. The World Development report made the case for how economics has evolved:

> *After a respite of about 40 years, an economics based on a more realistic understanding of human beings is being reinvented. But this time, it builds on a large body of empirical evidence—microlevel evidence from across the behavioral and social sciences. The mind, unlike a computer, is psychological, not logical; malleable, not fixed. It is surely rational to treat identical problems identically, but often people do not; their choices change when the default option or the order of choices changes. People draw on mental models that depend on the situation and the culture to interpret experiences and make decisions (World Bank 2015).*

This is instructive for leaders and policy makers who establish organizational DE&I frameworks. Just because DE&I policies and procedures are written down and explained in detail does not mean the message is internalized by the workforce and used in a socially responsible manner when making decisions. The role of automatic thinking at this moment of decision must be part of the curated DE&I design.

SOCIAL THINKING

By nature, humankind is a species that shares a common attribute—we are all social creatures. We are influenced by our social identities, networks, norms and preferences (World Bank 2015). Those we value provide the behavioral inference points that we emulate and preferentially identify with in our own decision making. According to the World Bank report:

> *Many people have social preferences for fairness and reciprocity and possess a cooperative spirit. These traits can play into both good and bad collective outcomes; societies that are high in trust, as well as those that are high in corruption, require extensive amounts of cooperation… Human sociality (the tendency of people to be concerned with and associate with each other) adds a layer*

of complexity and realism to the analysis of human decision making and behavior (World Bank 2015).

When it comes to DE&I, we assume people in general would make fair and just decisions based on our shared humanity when dealing with people from groups that are different from their own. We make this assumption believing that DE&I policies and procedures, driven by well-intentioned trainings and promoted by executive proclamations, are enough to overcome the powerful social narratives that reinforce decisions by social preferences. The World Bank report reminds us that assumptions and reality can actually be miles apart, because people tend to behave as conditional actors in these situations:

> *However, human sociality implies that behavior is also influenced by social expectations, social recognition, patterns of cooperation, care of in-group members, and social norms. Indeed, the design of institutions, and the ways in which they organize groups and use material incentives, can suppress or evoke motivation for cooperative tasks, such as community development and school monitoring. People often behave as conditional cooperators—that is, individuals who prefer to cooperate as long as others are cooperating (World Bank 2015).*

A key reason why good and decent people belonging to dominant preference-driven groups remain complicit is because they enjoy the benefits of the privileges conferred on them by societal networks. This makes them conditional cooperators in the face of unfair and unjust treatments of groups on the receiving end. Preserving privilege becomes the clarion call that reinforces in-group membership and thinking and shows up prominently in decisions. This explains why any threat or perception of the loss of that privilege conjures up the worst norms and biases. Why? One explanation rest in the power of social networks. The World Bank report surmised as much:

> *All of us are embedded in networks of social relations that shape our preferences, beliefs, resources, and choices…Social networks are the sets of actors and relational ties that form the building blocks of human social experience. Networks provide scope for individuals to reinforce existing behaviors among one another, but they can also transmit novel information and normative pressures, sometimes sparking social change…The ability of social networks to both stabilize and shift patterns of behavior means that they may be able to play an important role in social settings where formal institutions are lacking (World Bank 2015).*

The United States provides the context that explains how societal networks stabilize and shift patterns of behavior. In 1865, the Emancipation Proclamation ended slavery in all the Confederate states then at war with the United States through Executive Order. In 1865, the Thirteenth

amendment ended all slavery and indentured servanthood in America. In 1868, the fourteenth amendment followed to grant citizenship and equal civil and legal rights to African Americans and other enslaved people. Then in 1870, the fifteenth amendment guaranteed the right to vote to all citizens regardless of race, color, or previous status as slaves. All these were intended to guarantee African Americans the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, just like their White American counterparts. It's been more than a century and half since then; while much has changed, much remains the same in social preferences that shape everyday decisions framed by societal values and behaviors in America.

The fact that America still struggles with racial reckoning is perplexing considering it has done more work to correct its original sin of slavery through legislative means than most countries have done in addressing their own respective DE&I challenges. Yet, ingrained social preferences and networks are difficult to change even with very reasoned DE&I plans, as the World Bank report attests:

> *Social preferences and social influences can lead societies into self-reinforcing collective patterns of behavior. In many cases, these patterns are highly desirable, representing patterns of trust and shared values. But when group behaviors influence individual preferences and individual preferences combine into group behaviors, societies can also end up coordinating activity around a common focal point that is ill-advised or even destructive for the community. Racial or ethnic segregation and corruption are just two examples (World Bank 2015).*

After DE&I trainings are completed and DE&I policy and procedure documents the organization's order of how everyone should conduct themselves when making decisions, these well-intentioned interventions fall short of producing the expected values and behaviors because social preferences are strongholds not lightly discarded. These call for more intentional interventions to counter the stronger social narratives. The World Bank report provides this insight:

> *When self-reinforcing "coordinated points" emerge in a society, they can be very resistant to change. Social meanings and norms, and the social networks that we are a part of, pull us toward certain frames and patterns of collective behavior. Conversely, taking the human factor of sociality into account can help in devising innovative policy interventions and making existing interventions more effective. In India, microfinance clients who were randomly assigned to meet weekly, rather than monthly, had more informal social contact with one another two years after the loan cycle ended, were more willing to pool risks, and were three times less likely to default on their second loan (World Bank 2015).*

Having a systemically structured response to racial and gender inequalities is probably the only surefire way to establish new norms that can counter the deep-rooted systemic and structural systems upon which current societal social networks are based. Well-intentioned government policies and affirmative action initiatives have not sustainably worked because the pull towards racial and gender frames and patterns of discriminatory collective behaviors have been allowed to be a strong force with no counter-balancing equal and opposite force of change. We generally have DE&I mitigation meetings and corrective actions after a fiasco, but not in everyday encounters. DE&I commitments need just-in-time reinforcements through social contacts that contextualize the changes we want to see within routine interactions.

The workplace is generally functionally designed for people to work in specific disciplines or fields, and it is within these spheres that decisions are made by content matter experts who should be seen as allies on changing the organization's DE&I ecosystem because it is within these settings that the DE&I battles are won or lost. When individuals accept the benefits inherent in our shared humankind as a strength to be harnessed, they can be trusted to reimagine and reinvent their own ecosystems when DE&I moderates social responsibility and sustainable development goals to save our planet for future generations. It ensures that those living in this generation can achieve their purpose and dreams through a more inclusive drive. It begins by moderating social thinking actions to more just and fair patterns for all.

MENTAL MODELS THINKING

The adage that "nothing is new under the sun" is applicable to human mental models, as rarely does a person invent new ways of thinking other than the ones he or she was, is, and continues to be exposed to by others, society and even organizations. These mental models are programmed into our thinking patterns in the form of identities, concepts, categories, causal narratives, prototypes, worldviews, and stereotypes (World Bank 2015). In mental models, perceptions rule reality and interpretations; what individuals perceive to be true become manifested in values and behaviors which end up in decision-making. As the World Bank report notes:

> *The links between perception and automatic thinking are strong, as emphasized by Kahneman (2003)…While both involve the construction of meaning, in both cases the perceiver or thinker is not aware of constructing anything. He imagines that he is responding objectively to the stimulus or the situation…Individuals can also hold onto multiple and sometimes even contradictory mental models—drawing on one or another mental model when the context triggers a particular way of looking at the world.*

Mental models matter for development because they affect decision making (World Bank 2015).

Mental models aren't intrinsically bad; they make the world of decision making possible. Without them, we cannot make shared decisions or understand each other, build networks, take collective actions, or find common ground. They differ from social norms because there is no pressure to conform to values or behaviors that are socially enforced. Instead, mental models are broad themes of how an individual fits in a predefined understanding about how the world works (World Bank 2015). Mental models can also be enablers or exacerbators of divisive norms and biases. For example:

Evidence suggests that historical experience exerts a powerful influence on mental models and, consequently, on how individuals understand and react to the world. An example is the legacy of the Atlantic slave trade. Slavery was ubiquitous in many eras and in many societies, but the slavery associated with the Atlantic slave trade had some properties that made it especially destructive. The middlemen for the white slave traders included local Africans. To protect themselves from being captured and sold as slaves, individuals needed guns, but to buy guns they needed cash. The main way of obtaining cash was to kidnap someone and sell him into slavery. Thus the Atlantic slave trade turned brothers against each other, chiefs against subjects, and judges against defendants. Lower levels of trust in some parts of Africa today are related to the intensity of slave trading centuries ago. Regions that were more susceptible to slave raids due to accidental features of geography have lower levels of trust today—trust toward strangers, friends, relatives, and institutions (World Bank 2015).

Mental models about how the world works vary from one society to another and from one country to another; this makes them DE&I matters for all organizations, whether local or global in scope. If DE&I frames how fair and just decisions are made, it should also provide mental models of how social responsibility works the world over.

The twenty-first century has seen mass movements of people from one society or country to another. We have also seen global organizations exert direct influence as both employers and providers of products and services. Mental models are of particular interest in decision making because when individuals move from society to society, their mental models are called to question by the expectations in their new environments—workforce, workplace, and work-partners. The World Bank report contends that:

Institutions and mental models are closely related; sometimes a change in a mental model requires a change in an institution. But in some cases, exposure to alternative ways of thinking and to new

> *role models—in real life, in fiction, and through public deliberation—can have a measurable influence on mental models and on behaviors, such as investment and education (World Bank 2015).*

Consider, for example, a manager in a high-tech company in Silicon Valley, California who grew up in India where their mental models were framed by a caste system. While not every person who grew up in India subscribes to mental models framed by caste systems, this manager (within this context) would need to adjust their mental models to match the expectations in a country that has its different mental models—imperfect, but models, nonetheless. What if the Indian manager works in India and must make decisions impacting Americans with a mental model based in a caste system? How does an organization capture broad, socially responsible DE&I mental models? The World Bank report continued:

> *As studies of immigrants show, mental models can be passed down from generation to generation: mental models of trust, gender, fertility, and government, for instance, are typically learned from the culture one grows up in. Social learning processes allow for the intergenerational transfer of mental models. A society's past may affect the perceptions and evaluations of opportunities by current members of the society (World Bank 2015)…Since we are social animals, our mental models often incorporate the taken-for-granted beliefs and routines of the culture in which we were raised. One way of thinking about culture is as a set of widely shared tools for perception and construal. The tools may not be fully consistent with one another [and] a given person might exhibit different behaviors when the mental model that is most accessible to him or her changes (World Bank 2015).*

Mental models are sometimes collectively referred to as "culture" because they originate from the cognitive side of our social relationships and play key roles in our individual decision making by providing links to the meanings, we use to justify the actions we take. The linkage therefore between culture and meaning serves as *"tools for enabling and guiding action; (World Bank 2015)*" the World Bank report affirmed that:

> *Mental models and social beliefs and practices often become deeply rooted in individuals. We tend to internalize aspects of society, taking them for granted as inevitable "social facts." People's mental models shape their understanding of what is right, what is natural, and what is possible in life. Social relations and structures, in turn, are the basis of socially constructed "common sense," which represents the evidence, ideologies, and aspirations that individuals take for granted and use to make decisions—and which in some cases increase social differences (World Bank 2015).*

In the American classroom of social change, the Constitutional Amendments and Civil Rights Acts were tools to enable and guide Americans to choose a path towards racial reconciliation and build a more perfect union. Unfortunately, white supremacy and its quest for dominion has kept America racially polarized and conspiratorially imprisoned many within the White racial group. The Ku Klux Klan was formed in 1865 specifically to defend and reestablish Southern norms (continuing the automatic thinking about race relations). Jim Crow laws legalized these norms through separate but equal laws (continuing the social thinking). Movies like *Birth of a Nation* justified these norms, establishing mental models for generations of White Americans about their roles and responsibilities in society. Together, these three institutions framed the white entitlement mental models (privilege, politics, policies) that are at the heart of white supremacy which manifests as racial injustice, unfair equity practices and culturally exclusive America even today. About mental models, the World Bank report attests:

> *A body of writing by anthropologists and other social scientists points out that what people take to be hard evidence and common sense (their basic mental models of their world and how it works) is often shaped by economic relationships, religious affiliations, and social group Identities. Much of that work argues that achieving social change in a situation where mental models have been internalized may require influencing not only the cognitive decision making of particular individuals but also social practices and institutions. A canonical example of a mental model is a stereotype, which is a mental model of a social group. Stereotypes affect the opportunities available to people and shape processes of social inclusion and exclusion. As a result of stereotypes, people from disadvantaged groups tend to underestimate their abilities and may even perform worse in social situations when they are reminded of their group membership. In these and other ways, the stereotypes can be self-fulfilling and can reinforce economic differences among groups (World Bank 2015).*

When a ten-person corporate board, for example, is forced by law or stakeholder pressures to include minorities and women in their ranks, they typically include a single person of color and one woman to comply, and then celebrate these appointments as if they fully accomplished the intention of the ideals. It's not hard to see that even if the two newcomers vote in tandem on board decisions, they remain vastly outnumbered, and the old boy network can easily continue business as usual. When the person of color and the woman are made to feel as though they should be grateful to be allowed as part of the board, it reinforces the stereotypes, adding acrimonious feelings on all sides. The World Bank report states:

> *Since we are social animals, our mental models often incorporate the taken-for-granted beliefs and routines of the culture in which we were raised. One way of thinking about culture is as a set of widely shared tools for perception and construal. The tools may not be fully consistent with one another [and] a given person might exhibit different behaviors when the mental model that is most accessible to him or her changes (World Bank 2015).*

In the above example, the minority male and female must find new ways to create a new normal within the context of cultural relationships in which they must exercise their roles and responsibilities as board members. Since human divisive norms are etched in the mind, policies and procedures by themselves—no matter how well curated or intentioned—are generally not enough to address DE&I matters of the heart. This is further exacerbated when the individuals that must carry out these decisions are unaware of the principles that frame their own decision-making processes.

Leaders, policy makers, and all those involved in carrying out decisions within an organization's eco-system should be aware of their own individual and institutional proclivities that impact these decisions and the three principles that frame them—automatic and social thinking and mental models. Even DE&I professionals, advocates and champions are not exempt from biased norms that can creep up in their decision-making. Awareness of these three decision-making principles along with the seven principles and seven core subjects in ISO 26000's social responsibility framework and the three models introduced in this book provide a systematic approach to implement in policies and procedures around organizations' DE&I commitments.

Knowing the principles that affect our decisions allows individuals and organizations to create procedures to mitigate their divisive and adverse impacts on minority and vulnerable groups. After all race, tribe, gender, caste, class and other forms of -isms used to divide humankind are themselves perpetuated by systemic and structural norms. Below are findings summarized in the World Bank report of 2015:

> *In India, low-caste boys were essentially just as good at solving puzzles as high-caste boys when caste identity was not revealed…However, in mixed-caste groups, revealing the boys' castes before puzzle-solving sessions created a significant "caste gap" in achievement in which low-caste boys underperformed the high-caste boys by 23 percent, controlling for other individual variables (Hoff and Pandey 2006, 2014). Making caste salient to the test takers invoked identities, which in turn affected performance. The performance of the stigmatized low-caste boys declined relative to the performance of the high-caste boys. When caste was revealed to the high-caste boys when they were not*

> *mixed with low-caste boys, the high-caste boys underperformed, perhaps because the revelation evoked a sense of entitlement and "Why try?" The simple presence of a stereotype can contribute to measured ability differences, which in turn can reinforce the stereotype and serve as a basis for distinction and exclusion, in a vicious cycle.*
>
> *Finding ways to break this cycle could increase the well-being of marginalized individuals enormously. Evidence from a number of contexts suggests that invoking positive identities can counteract stereotypes and raise aspirations. Having individuals contemplate their own strengths has led to higher academic achievement among at-risk minorities in the United States, to greater interest in antipoverty programs among poor people, and to an increase in the probability of finding a job among the unemployed in the United Kingdom (Cohen and others 2009; Hall, Zhao, and Shafir 2014; Bennhold 2013).*

The above findings are instructive when creating or developing DE&I-moderated solutions across sustainable development principles, because the goal is to break the cycle of divisive norms and not amplify or create new ones. Understanding the seven principles and seven core subjects of social responsibility moderated by DE&I gives an organization added tools to ensure DE&I commitments as decision-making frameworks are implemented across its eco-system with value-added, incentivized new norms that effectively supersede older, inequitable ones.

Furthermore, since our global divisive norms are interrelated—like gender and racial or ethnic inequalities—understanding where the rest of the world is aspiring to go in making our planet safer and the humans living in it reaching their full potential becomes very important. The United Nation's Sustainability Goals 2030 provide opportunities for organizations to make impacts through structured organizational actions that feed into and support global collective actions. Finally, the KCG, 3-Step Equity lens and 3-Step Inclusion actional principles provide a synergistic approach by bringing all the above-mentioned knowledge, principles, and tools together to address our divisive norms, laying out systematical counterbalancing measures to systemic and structural racism and gender inequalities.

WHY I CHOSE TO GET INVOLVED ON DE&I MATTERS

As a C-suite executive, I was often baffled by how some academically curated solutions to organizational challenges sometimes fail to include people that look and think like me. These solutions, in other words, do not identify or engage me as a stakeholder of interest and of influence.

So, in my 40s, I decided to go back to school and earn a PhD in Management with Leadership and Organizational Change specialization. Since the adage that, "if you cannot beat them, join them" is true, I decided to base my research and creation of new knowledge in the areas of change management and leadership with a global perspective, uninhibitedly energized by my African flair and the vitality of a global citizen. For my dissertation, I researched the application of a social responsibility construct on the triple bottom line of prosperity, people, and planet within the public sector. This research, titled "The Triple Bottom Line and Social Responsibility Framework in Public Sector Management," has been downloaded in 130 countries by individuals representing 517 institutions (education 43%, commercial 37%, government 13%, other 3%). Taking this research further, I am now applying it in this book to DE&I as a moderator for Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development frameworks from both academic and practice perspectives.

This book is part of my own journey to choose a path with a higher purpose so I may leave the world better than I found it. As an African American of Nigerian descent, I learned to appreciate my roots, particularly thanks to the self-esteem and self-worth that was infused in me through my family and through prevailing societal social thinking and mental models. Nowhere did this become clearer for me than when I heard the famous South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu recall how his self-esteem and self-worth was damaged because he was born and raised in then Apartheid South Africa.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu recalled a time in the 1970s when he visited Nigeria and boarded a local flight where the pilot and copilot were black. Tutu was thrilled to see this, because in his mental models from South Africa, such a sight would be considered an aberration. However, while the impact of this sight was real to Tutu because it shattered a false mental model of what black people could do, it did not free him from the damage already done to his psyche about his humanity, reinforced by societal divisive norms and applied to his everyday view of realities.

Once they were fully seated, Tutu went effortlessly into automatic thinking mode and became uneasy and scared, wondering whether that day was his last on Earth because black pilots were in the cockpit. Tutu then moved into deliberative thinking by giving meaning to his fear, because a White person was not in control in the cockpit which meant that they were likely going to crash and die. This false belief trap led Bishop Tutu to conclude later that discriminatory and divisive norm promoted within the apartheid system *"… can cause a child of God to doubt that he or she is a child of God... You come to believe what others have determined about you, filling you with self-disgust, self-contempt and self-hatred, accepting a negative self-image (Tutu 1986)."*

Divisive norms that marginalize minority groups and women do not stop at denial of rights but extend to damaging their self-worth and wellbeing—psychologically, socially, spiritually and even generationally. When a person's identity and capabilities are framed by societal norms that are so divisive and marginalizing, our collective humanity is diminished beyond what we can fully capture in research studies. Dreams never come to life, cures are never invented, and solutions to humankind's problems remain unsolved. Unfortunately, sometimes these decisions and the frames and patterns that moderate them are ingrained so deeply that they manifest in automatic, social and mental models thinking without the individuals even realizing what affected their decisions.

As a Nigerian studying in the United States, I faced the same historical automatic, social and mental models used to categorize and marginalize black people. But because I had a deeper infusion of self-esteem and self-worth moderated by my national pride in being a Nigerian, I struggled to understand the new social thinking and mental models used to identify and engage me as a person. It took me almost three years to wrap my brains around the extent of racism and its various manifestations as frames and patterns that shaped the values and behaviors that I confronted daily from both white and black and brown people groups—all expecting me to conform to their models of who I was and what I can and cannot achieve in life. But conformity to a divisive and marginalizing system was a slow death, and I wanted to live a life uninhibited by societal limitations based on the color of my skin. I learned to stop wasting time shadow boxing people who did not understand why I could not conform or buy into a white supremacy framework or allow it to define my humanity, even if I lived in America.

It all began for me innocuously in college after living with all racial and tribal groups in Nigeria. Yes, there were ethnic and cultural differences, but not superiority-inferiority dichotomies cemented by public policy and implemented in societal norms. I remember a White professor in college who felt they could not give a black person an "A" grade in a class where White students were earning lesser grades **(social thinking)**. It had nothing to do with work product, because in my case, the curriculum for this Sophomore class was equivalent to my high school third year curriculum in Nigeria. In a sense, I was repeating a class I received an "A" equivalent in Nigeria for, but because of racial profiling, I could not get more than a "B"—and that was "generous" from the professor's perspective.

Then I had another White professor who had experience with many Nigerian students who generally got "A's" in his classes. This professor was confused as to whether I was really from Nigeria because I was dribbling in circles between a B and a C+ in one of his classes **(mental model thinking)**. I quickly awoke from my lackadaisical slumber, sharpened my chops and scored A's in this professor's classes going forward. I was not going to be the

exception or the asterisk in this professors' mental model of Nigerian students.

Finally, I had a professor who already established I was a "D" student just by showing up in his class black **(automatic thinking)**. I quickly figured out the situation and changed the class to an audited one, which meant no grade could be assigned. Two weeks before the end of class, I sat in front of this teacher as he regrettably explained how he was struggling not to give me an "F" for the class. I watched this professor just about explode when I informed him that I was auditing the class.

I had no concept then of the role automatic, social, and mental model thinking played in society let alone in academic environment—mostly driven by racial and gender stereotyping. The same thinking models followed me as I climbed the corporate ladder with an MBA, backed by work experiences. This did not spare me from the assumption by some that I was an affirmative action hire, my qualifications and merits explained away by stereotypical profiling. Today, I am using these experiences and those of others before me and my contemporaries to research and produce new knowledge on global leadership and DE&I from around the world.

The first version of this book was a 600-page titled ***"Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, a Social Responsibility Currency"*** but just before the release, I shared the book with some members of the Harvard Business School Community Partners who took special interest in both the topic and material. After reviewing the book and with input from my editor, Lisa Sanchez-Corea Simpson from the group reported that I actually had three books compressed into one. We agreed that a handbook for both academic and practice leaders on DE&I was needed as the subject was becoming an emerging social science and the implications were global not just relevant to one country. So, I did what humans do best: adapted. I:

1. reimagined a book series that can speak to most people around the world on the DE&I issues, challenges, and opportunities as a handbook for this emerging social science, thus ***Humankind Shared Planet*** became the new lifecycle title for the series,
2. reevaluated my existing material and how best to present and apply them in more manageable and consistent manner beginning with establishing the key principles and models introduced in this book for a wholesome social responsibility ecosystem moderated by DE&I, thus "…**Divided by Norms**, **a handbook for addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion through social responsibility"** became this first volume, and
3. reinvented or repurposed the exploration of each countries DE&I from its own unique DNA story (issues, challenges, and opportunities) using the key principles and models introduced in volume 1. I then shifted or repurposed my existing research and

writings on four countries, moving them into a second volume, thus, the **Global DE&I Stories…a handbook for exploration and navigation of the social science of diversity, equity and inclusion** became the focus and drive for each country to be examined each year.

Volume I establishes the structural tools, principles, and key understandings in utilizing DE&I as the moderator for social responsibility and sustainable development for addressing societal and organizational norms that are divisive and marginalizing of people groups on artificial differentiators. I also used them to research, examine, explore and share new understandings around DE&I issues, challenges, and opportunities from various countries.

Volume II of the Humankind Shared Planet book series looked at global DE&I stories from Brazil, India, Nigeria, and the United States. Together, these four countries will be home to 27% of the world's population by 2050. Their high proportion of the global population, their educational profiles, and the mobility of their citizens across nations makes these four countries a force to be reckoned with both as a source of DE&I inspiration and a classroom for understanding the issues, challenges and opportunities of our divisive humankind norms and biases, along with what we can do to address them collectively. By 2100, the world's population is expected to top 10.9 billion people; these same four countries will still be home to over 27% of the population. By then India is projected to rank #1 at 1.09 billion, Nigeria at #2 with 791 million, USA at #4 with 336 million and Brazil at #13 with 165 million (World Economic Forum 2020).

These four countries have their own DE&I storylines with unique DNAs that tell their stories from their beginning until the present day. Yet, these countries also have correlations that are extremely rich and outstanding—two immigrant-built nations on top of preexisting indigenous people groups and two colonized nations with their DNAs framed by both the colonizers and their own actions after independence. Together, they offer rich insight on the divisive norms that vexes and blesses our shared humankind—their DE&I stories. These stories reveal the origins of some of our divisive norms, as well as the keys to solving them together through the utilization of some basic socially responsible frameworks.

DE&I IS A LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT MATTER

Change in the world continues at an ever-increasing rate, and the advent of the internet has only accelerated this pace in recent years. The internet has emerged as a connecting force for negotiating relationships with all stakeholders—internal and external. Communications tools such as cellphones have leveled the global playing field and provided widespread

access to products and services. Technological tools that would have left the developing world in the dark for decades are now seamlessly integrated and accessible by people in the remotest parts of our globe. Human demographics and the educational attainment of minority and vulnerable groups have also changed, no doubt due at least in part to the divide between communities which have ready access to high-speed internet connectivity and those which don't.

Whenever people of different races or genders interact, DE&I issues, challenges and opportunities always exist. But DE&I is not just an organizational or societal issue, it is also a family affair. The notion of a father and mother as a unit is the very definition of diversity. Family structures are increasingly diverse and have equity and inclusion challenges of their own. This book offers broad concepts that can be applied in family DE&I situations as well.

In the United States, it is projected that by 2045, no single race or ethnic group will be in the majority. This means that any organization serious about sustainability must embrace DE&I as core elements of its policies and procedures and do everything possible to create a culturally relevant environment. A diverse, inclusive, and equity-focused corporate ecosystem will be the differentiator between organizations today and in the future because the workforce will become even more selective about which corporate values appeal to their higher purpose.

Unfortunately, racism and deep-rooted hatred have become even more potent and aggravating, and organizations are paying the price in lawsuits for the actions of some of their employees. JPMorgan Chase Bank, for example, recently paid $24 million to settle a class action lawsuit with some of its African American employees who sued because of discriminatory practices by their supervisors and managers. There is no simple solution to this situation; racism in American businesses must be dealt with within each entity’s ecosystem.

The triple bottom line of economy, environment and social conversations have gone mainstream as organizations now see the big picture and integrate them as part of their social responsibility and sustainable worldview. While sustainable development is being tackled in a disciplined and structured way, systemic racism, sexism, tribalism, and sectionalism continue to confound attempts to weed them out. Without a clear and effectively implemented DE&I plan, organizations become environments where these stereotypes are perpetuated.

As people groups from around the world move away from their ancestral homes to new homelands, with mobility enabled by globalization, they also carry with them social mental models or contracts about human behavior that impacts their automatic, social, and mental models thinking. Studies of immigrants have shown that mental models are transferable from

generation to generation because they *"are typically learned from the culture one grows up in (World Bank 2015)"* and as social creatures, "*our mental models often incorporate the taken-for-granted beliefs and routines of the culture in which we were raised (World Bank 2015)."* Since "culture" is a shared tool for human perception and construal, we also know that a person has the capability to demonstrate "…*different behaviors when the mental model that is most accessible to him or her changes (World Bank 2015)."* Little academic work has been done to study these dynamics in relation to DE&I.

For DE&I plans to be sustainably effective, they should be systemic and in direct response to systemic and structural racial, gender and other related issues. DE&I platitudes and promises to do better in the future are no longer enough unless they are backed by actionable steps that lead to an ecosystem of inclusivity and belonging for all.

The truth is that marginalized and vulnerable groups did not become disenfranchised overnight. The actions and policies that marginalized these groups took time to develop before they became established divisive norms that were normalized by social contracts. Therefore, we cannot resolve divisive norms if we fail to acknowledge they exist. The past never dies, and it is foolhardy to believe that a generation removed from it can erase or deny it ever existed.

Human experiences are part and parcel of humanity's lived continuum on planet earth and serve as lessons to be learned—either for good or evil. Today, discriminatory practices adversely impact minority and vulnerable groups, preventing them from achieving their potential and impeding access to institutional processes, credit facilities, employment opportunities and other benefits easily accorded their counterparts in the majority.

At issue for most organizations, at least those whose leaders are truly committed to a diverse and inclusive workforce, workplace, and work partners, is what to do about residual racism and other forms of societal discriminatory practices. These longstanding biases are often heart-deep; they are far more difficult to root out with executive memos or governmental decrees. Employees bring life-long learned biased values and behaviors to the workplace, many of which do not manifest in explicit behaviors but are present, nonetheless.

Explicit bias is in-your-face blatant, outwardly lived, and easily identifiable, but implicit bias manifests inwardly. Implicit bias is not as easy to spot or root out but releases gut-wrenching punches that have significant adverse implications for minority and vulnerable groups. This makes implicit bias far more dangerous than explicit bias. Implicit bias cannot be easily "unlearned;" it requires social dialogue, where people describe and confront the issues of implicit and explicit bias head-on with lived experiences stories to illuminate the pain and suffering caused by them.

These externally learned values and behaviors create a gap with the organizational codes aimed at creating and promoting an equitable, diverse, and inclusive work environment. Promoting and upholding fair and just decisions and practices is hard work, but the potential payoffs are substantial. With a new generation of workers not satisfied working just for paychecks and wanting to find higher purpose meaning in their work, the competition for a sustainable workforce is a challenging but competitive investment for all organizations. In America, a positive glimpse into the workforce suggests that there are more White people ready and willing to join the cause for fair and just sea change on the divisive norms that have long plagued the country. They should be encouraged and supported, not lumped with those in their demographic who clamor for a long-gone era, wishing for a return to an irreconcilable and unrealistic quest for a white supremacist status quo.

The world has changed in the last half a century, America is still changing, and much of the workforce no longer supports divisive behaviors, values and norms. For example, a World Bank survey report on *"closing the gender gap (World Bank 2022)"* contends that no country or community or economy can prosper to its fullest potential when it ignores the full and equal participation of men and women. According to this Energy Sector Management Assistance Program survey report, when women are equally engaged in the workforce, financial performance is enhanced, development outcomes are improved, innovation is stimulated, and safe work environments become normalized (World Bank 2022). Further, when women serve in executive and management positions, they can assist organizations achieve gender equality faster and transform it to become more innovative, profitable and even generous (World Bank 2022). Other benefits include:

1. Global GDP could rise by up to $28 trillion by 2025 if women participate in the economy at the same rate as men.
2. Access to quality jobs and assets are key levers of change for women, communities, businesses, and economies. They are also fundamental drivers of economic growth, poverty reduction, and shared prosperity.
3. Multiple studies show that women are 9 to 23 percentage points more likely to gain employment outside the home following electrification. Although in 2018, $1.9 trillion was invested, globally, interventions and investment to address gender gaps in the sector remain minimal
4. At least 30 percent of female leadership in firms is linked with profit margins up to six percentage points higher than firms with no women in the top ranks (World Bank 2022).

Although the above numbers were focused on the electrification industry, they are relevant to the overall impact women can have in the workforce when they are represented in equal numbers as men. Today, women are 50% or more of populations in most countries. They are graduating from college at higher numbers than men and increasingly moving into the workforce. All these positive steps are the keys to unlocking socially responsible organizational values, behaviors, and cultures. This is the hope that globalization can help enhance and sustain for humankind.

One leader in the twentieth century who gave us a good lesson on identifying, reconciling, and closing the gaps between aspirational DE&I goals and actual lived experiences was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King taught us that we all share one humanity, and we live on one shared planet, and that our individual happiness is intrinsically tied to the freedoms we enjoy together. We are brothers and sisters, adorned in different hues. The color of a person's skin does not determine their character, qualifications, or experiences, and neither does the primary group he or she identifies with socially—certainly not in this new dawn. So, Dr. King prophetically painted a socially responsible and sustainable vision of what America as a country could become, while directly addressing the actual state of the nation's affairs on race relations during his time—hope captured by the renowned Sam Cooke song, "A Change is Gonna Come." Dr. King's words are inspirational, but they were also aspirational at that time. Using the models mentioned above, we could easily summarily categorize Dr. King's I have a Dream speech (King Institute) as follows:

- **Knowledge-informed diversity call to action**

  Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity. But 100 years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check.

- **Creativity-driven equity opportunity, reconciliation and disruption**

  Ajiake 3-Step Equity Lens model:

Equity Opportunity*: I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.* I have *a dream today.*
Equity Reconciliation*: I have a dream that one day down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification", one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.*
Equity Disruption*: I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.*

- **Governance-centered inclusion actionable steps**
  Ajiake 3-Step Inclusion Principles
  Redemption-driven Principle 1: *This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.*
  Restoration-focused Principle 2: *With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.*
  Responsibility-centered Principle 3: *With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.*

The time *"…to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood"* is upon us. America can and should take the lead in this era, because despite its deep-rooted racial problems, it has done the most work in DE&I. America continues to struggle with its racial reckoning because it has not fully resolved its racial divides. Yet, although deeply entrenched biases persist and still flare up in American policies and culture, America has not entirely abandoned the quest for a more racially equitable and inclusive nation. Today, the advent of globalization has made it a worldwide issue. It's actually disruptive to disregard DE&I these days.

While it's true that America is distracted and divided in unprecedented ways today, it is still a country that has demonstrated an ability to reinvent itself over and over, both in peaceful and chaotic times. History bears this out. America's racial reckoning and heightened discord are particularly heated today because a privileged group is dying out. After all, the heat from a dying sun is hottest not in the middle, but in the outer peripheries where embers flash themselves to oblivion. The middle of the sun is where new power comes to life and reinvigorates the sun's natural order. Racial rhetoric

that flames white supremacy ideals may burn hot but are no longer sustainable. It's heated rhetoric, spewing hate, longing for a bygone era.

Dr. King's words are prophetic, poetic, and poignant, especially for those in authority today. A lot has changed since he gave that speech; few African Americans living in America today are facing and fighting the same racist systems that Dr. King and his generation fought. We are no longer denied access to restaurants and restrooms; we more rarely face the ugliness of the evil face of racism, and when we do, there is often public backlash against the racists. There are more African Americans rising to the top of business and civic life, like President Barack Hussein Obama —"*every valley is becoming exalted."*

All the exalted hills and mountains of institutional racism and their support infrastructures that stood against equal rights and freedom for gainful employment, to vote and to exercise our human rights have and continue to be made obsolete—*made low*, even amid today's stubborn opposition from those who want to revive the inglorious days of divided America through manipulating the ballot box.

The *"rough places"* in our courtrooms, where inconsistent application of the law has dealt great injustice to African Americans, are no longer hidden or recognized only by the victims. The pervasive injustices have become more widely recognized and, more importantly, rejected by people of all colors. The rough places have become and continue to become plain.

The *"crooked places,"* where police dogs were unleashed on peaceful civil rights protesters or where minority and vulnerable groups endured cruelties up to and including lynching, are no longer everyday realities. And when they do occur, these events invite backlash from all Americans, not just the affected minority groups. The crooked places have become and are becoming straight. While there are still distressingly high numbers of racists and hatemongers in America, most Americans have come to terms with our shared humanity in recognition of our shared origin—revealing the glory and wisdom of a Creator who created many hues in wholesome representation of Himself, personified in male and female genders. Globalization amplifies our interdependence and our singular humanity. This is why it threatens those who prefer America isolated for the ideological benefit of one group.

Some people point to recent progress, so hard-won, and erroneously claim that remedies for racism are a thing of the past, because we're living in a post-racial society. Are we living in a post-racism era? Far from it! The forms of racism and other forms of -isms today are in some ways even more lethal now because they are better hidden and more difficult to diagnose and address. Historically, the widespread fear of Black people by White people that sustained racism for so long has been fading, as stereotypes are dispelled when the two groups intermingle, especially in the workforce and at sporting events. Movies like *Birth of a Nation* amplified these stereotypes;

movies today, which generally feature far more diverse casts, are much more likely to amplify the truth about real Americans.

I was barely three months old when Dr. King made his transcendent speech and called on everyone now under 60 years old today to be part of the generation who would hold hands together – brothers and sisters of a shared humanity. Holding the hands of our brothers and sisters metaphorically challenges us to heal our broken human systems by disrupting discriminatory norms. This is a stark contrast to previous generations of Americans (collectively) who refused to or could not achieve an American dream that embraced people from all racial and gender groups. That dream is the quintessential meaning of One nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all! Therefore, America can set an example for addressing DE&I issues, challenges, and opportunities if for no other reason but for the fact that it is still the leader of the free world and the sons and daughters of every nation on earth lives within its borders. As the saying goes, as America goes so goes the rest of the world!

This also means that when anyone works in an organization that is not diverse, they have a social responsibility to make waves, to question when there will be a more diverse board of directors, management, and workforce. When one occupies a position of authority, making decisions and establishing practices, one needs to consider ways to bring healing. To do nothing is to be complicit. In the past, this was socially acceptable. Today, it's unconscionable.

Lived experiences are the key. They are as real to those who lived through them as their humanity. These lived experiences are meant to light the way for present-day humans, so they can make better, fairer, and more just decisions, and promote activities that narrow or eliminate divisive norms. Attempts to ignore, deny, or erase past unfair and unjust human DE&I experiences only highlight the reasons why they must be preserved, studied, and learned from. In a sense, the desire to erase what happened in the past is a desire to avoid change, both now and in the future. This is not a sustainable plan because it confirms the adage that when we forget the past, we repeat it.

Humankind Shared Planet, Divided by Norms invites you the reader to come explore what humans do best: reexamine, reimagine, and reinvent ourselves, our divisive human legacies, and our visions of what is possible, both for ourselves and our shared legacy. Guided by social responsibility principles and core subjects, we can create a fair and just world today and still ensure that future generations can do the same in their time—thus sustaining a humankind that exists in a shared planet with less divisive norms. WELCOME ABOARD!

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