

Understanding Prejudice and Stereotypes

Why is Diversity important?

Maturity is seen in your ability to celebrate diversity. Their behaviour that pushes your buttons is just one aspect of them but does not always define them. EQ involves adapting and connecting with people. You can only do so with humility when you don't see yourself as superior. Be careful how you define people. Sometimes the definition we give only serves to deepen our hatred. This message will speak to the soul of the nation. Prejudice and stereotypes are love blockers. They hinder us when it comes to loving people. We tend to distance ourselves from that which we don't understand. We avoid that which we fear.

People don't have to become like you in order for you to relate to them. E.g. Friend saying I am becoming more white to him.

We don't deal with these issues because it's not PC to accept that we have gaps in these areas.

Common stereotypes and their impact

The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7)

Samuel needed divine assistance and revelation to see the true king. How do you see?

"French people are the best lovers," "women can't drive," and "all Irish people eat potatoes." Even positive ones like

All Asian people are gifted in academics or all women are nurturers;

Another thing to state is that sometimes there is an element of truth to certain statements. You have generalisations and over generalisations. The apostle Paul quoted a pagan poet who stereotypically described the people of Crete: *"One of Crete's own prophets has said it: 'Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.' This saying is true"* (Titus 1:12-13). Paul was not saying that such a blanket statement is universally applicable to every Cretan, only that Titus needed to be aware of the evil proclivities that existed within the culture where he ministered. When we say these things are we making an unfair judgment?

Stereotype Reduction workshop in Eastern Cape in the 90s. We learnt that we needed to speak about them and bring them out into the open. E.g. of clip I saw where people had written on themselves how they had been stereotyped. E.g. Woman wrote anorexic on herself and then had the opportunity to explain how she was not.

What is prejudice?

Prae = in advance

Judicium = judgement

It's problematic when we develop a fixed view despite evidence showing us otherwise.

The word *judicium* also speaks of injury or harm and therefore the violation of a legal right.

It makes life simpler but is still inaccurate.

E.g. the assumptions made about my cousin.

How does a pre-judgment become prejudice? Its ok if I have to lift a heavy object and assume that I am probably best suited if I am the only male. It's a problem when I find that a female bench presses more than me yet I insist that I am stronger.

Its ok to let a BMW pass you by as you assume it has a powerful engine and the probability of the driver wanting to pass you is high.

What is a Stereotype?

A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular person or group.

A typecast or label.

Archetype vs stereotype

Clothing stores take this into consideration eg men and height. Eg me being asked about Pork when booking a venue for a couples breakfast eg Vietnamese using warm water near child birth. This becomes useful information to ask questions NOT to assume.

An archetype is a very typical example of a person or thing eg the archetypal club chairman.

According to psychoanalytical (Jungian) theory an archetype is part of the collective unconscious. So archetype WOMAN as Lover, Maiden, Mother, Queen, Huntress, Sage, and Mystic. The danger is when we get stuck in roleplaying one archetype only. For example, the woman who functions as Mother but now want to mother everyone ranging from her husband to her boss at work. We also see archetypes at work when it comes to pastoral roles. In every culture there was a wise man or shaman of some sort. People try to impose these archetypes onto their "man of God". Sometimes this can be dangerous and limiting.

What did Jesus do with Stereotypes?

Jesus broke stereotypes and the mould of the day. He saw people differently.

His narrative about Samaritans was different. He made the Samaritan the hero of His story.

Luke 10:25-37 – we see that the parable of the good Samaritan is a powerful way in which Jesus showed the good in the outsider and the bad in the insider. Our neighbourliness is seen in how we care for those who are not like us. There was a strong history of hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans. When the Jews were taken into exile by the Assyrian empire the remaining ones in Samaria mixed with people who worshipped other gods. Samaria became a place for Jewish outlaws. Those that had been banished due to breaking Jewish law would go there. They were seen as half-breeds. They had different beliefs about where God was to be worshipped. They believed the place of worship was Mt Gerizim. When Nehemiah wanted to rebuild the temple he experienced great resistance from the leader of the Samaritans, Sanballat. The Samaritans received the books of Moses but not the Prophets. Yet we see how despite this, Jesus spoke to the Samaritan women at the well in John 4. In Acts 8:25 we see that Peter and John preached in Samaritan villages.

His narrative about Kings and what they should do was different – servanthood.

Mt 20:24-28 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

His statement about the Centurion's faith would have challenged a stereotype.

He treated children differently.

Luke 18:15-17 Now people were even bringing their babies to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them. And when the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called the children to Him and said, "Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them! For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 17 Truly I tell you, if anyone does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child, he will never enter it."...

In the church we can be like the disciples and not take kids and ministering to them seriously.

What's your narrative about ethnicity, government and marriage? Is it the same as the prevailing culture?

What do you say about local government? There are many working for government who break the stereotype.

1 Tim 2:1-3 First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be offered on behalf of all men 2 for kings and all those in authority, so that we may lead tranquil and quiet lives in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,...

There are many white farmers that break the stereotype. Do you bless farmers? Farming is very difficult. Its not for anyone. Canada blesses its farmers.

Jesus was so happy that God the Father broke the stereotype by giving simple people revelation.

Luke 10:21 At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

Jesus broke stereotypes when it came to women. The first to see the resurrected Christ were women followers of Christ.

How we embrace stereotypes will affect our choice of spouse.

Ask yourself, what will happen if I give my whole self to Christ?

My stories of Prejudice

When there is discrimination against me I like to see it as a teaching opportunity.

Types of stereotypes

1. Age – why don't you want people to know your age? Because of what comes with it. Labels etc.

Jer 1:6-8 Then I said, "Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, Because I am a youth." 7 But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' Because everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall speak. 8 "Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you to deliver you," declares the LORD....

1 Tim 4:12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

Acts 2:17 "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. The Holy Spirit is for all ages.

2. Occupation – eg Pastor’s wife but she does triathlons
Judges 5:24-27 Women can be warriors like Deborah (look at her song)
Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, most blessed of tent-dwelling women. 25 He asked for water, and she gave him milk; in a bowl fit for nobles she brought him curdled milk. 26 Her hand reached for the tent peg, her right hand for the workman’s hammer. She struck Sisera, she crushed his head, she shattered and pierced his temple. 27 At her feet he sank, he fell; there he lay. At her feet he sank, he fell; where he sank, there he fell—dead.
The trick is to not get stuck in one archetypal role. When she needed to nurture her kids I am sure she did.
3. Personality – bubbly so that means you are disorganised. But my value system is high on reliability. What about the cool blue Master of Ceremony.
4. Gender – Encouraging friend who felt she was not the nurturing type of mother. I told her that she had everything she needed in order to mother her son. Eg the lady who struggled playing mother and baby with her daughter accepting that the teaching moments with her daughter were the ones that made her feel strong. A boy liking ballet does not mean he is homosexual eg Rio Ferdinand. How would I react if my boys want to do ballet? I am happy getting them teddy bears even though its not my style.

Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

5. Nationality – Ibos from Nigeria are the ones who travel the most and are quite forthright and entrepreneurial. (Danger of a single story where Chimamanda says she was middle class Nigerian and didn’t listen to tribal music yet she was asked about it when she went to America.) Eg my wife training and someone said here come the drug dealers when they saw a Nigerian looking person. In that context its nice to see stereotypes broken eg Khotso swimming in the lake. Older white lady who lived on a farm said that her mother would say they couldn’t go to the water just like a black swimmer experienced. It has nothing to do with skin colour. It was refreshing to see the Jamaican female swimmer getting a silver medal at the Commonwealth Games. Alia Atkinson was the first black woman swimmer to win a world title (2014 Doha 100m breast stroke).
6. Disease stigma – we assume there is only one way of getting a disease. The impact of this is that judgments are made and people commit suicide or just don’t go to get medicine from someone who doesn’t even know them in the first place. Eg HIV, Hepatitis etc
7. Style – she dresses in black therefore she is goth and has a particular value system. He has that hairstyle therefore this is the type of person he is. But who actually gathers together and says “as people with this hairstyle this is our value system.” I saw a video of some legalists attacking women with high heels saying it was not modest.
8. Sport – rugby guys are boozers. Soccer is for black people. People that are good dancers go to these places and do this with the people they dance with.

Common examples of prejudice stemming from stereotypes

Border jumper because you are Mexican, too tall for a girl – so she now walks with a hunch yet if she was in Germany or Holland where women are tall she wouldn't. Too skinny then you are anorexic, or uneducated because you are a waiter