Diversity is a Disease – and Inclusivity is the Cure

Google the word *diversity*. You will get three-point-nine billion results. A research paper drops a demographic figure in passing. Stock photos paint a palette of plastic faces. A medley of articles pops up, their headlines highlighting white-collar workers that support the "diversity movement" while degrading the figures who act against it. The D-word is everywhere, and we've grown desensitized to it. From the dictionary entry, one can identify the slope of the use of *diversity* over time: a gentle curve, akin to a steep hill, that plateaus at the dawn of the century.

All that means nothing. Zilch. Zero. Diversity is the Marie Antoinette of our language, a temporary solution that fades into toxic resentment. What was once a previously shining beacon now screams *overused corporate buzzword.* At first, the comparison seems rash; after all, Marie Antoinette fell victim to the violence of the French Revolution. She was an obstinate obstacle on the bloody path to reform. Where is this so-called revolution today?

The answer: it lies in our schools, our workforce, and our communities. It is the result of a decades-long effort to incorporate people of all races, hardships, and perspectives. The push for diversity has answered the *what* – what constitutes a diverse population, what differences are present in our communities. Enter *inclusivity*, the neglected counterpart in the fight against prejudice. With just 105 million hits on Google – almost 30 times less than *diversity* – the modest word poses the second part of the question, one that society has largely ignored: *How?*

How can we take advantage of diversity? In a gridlocked, polarized, instantaneous world, finding community in diversity is facilitated by inclusivity – from feminine hygiene products to multi-colored bandages, wheelchair-accessible ramps to colorblind-friendly palettes. Even the simplest gestures can indicate a new understanding, a change in perspective, even a willingness to listen – and learn.

How can we provide equal opportunities for all? Enforcing variation without promoting integration leads to dissent and distrust. Cake batter, a lumpy sum of ingredients, will not rise in the oven without proper mixing. How can we push for an emulsified, well-rounded, multidimensional society without providing its constituents an equal opportunity to shine?

How can we embrace our differences? With love and compassion, rather than suspicion and neglect. With open hands and malleable perspectives instead of turned backs and shuttered mindsets. We have made great strides in accepting our differences and diversifying our communities. Without diversity, there is no progress – but without inclusivity, there is no diversity. In a stifled and unresponsive environment, there is no room for discussion, no place for healthy disagreement. There is no opportunity for change.

The French themselves say it best: *Vouloir c'est pouvoir* – to want to is to become able to. Instead of engaging in disputes, we must embrace our differences because it is the differences that make us human. Chandler is unique because its demographic is already extremely diverse, influenced by Mexican, Native American, and immigrant cultures. It is only by including and incorporating our diverse population into a coordinated and mindful landscape can we truly thrive as a whole, whether that be at our table, in the office, or around our city.