

Dear SIETAR Members and Supporters,

The theme for this month's newsletter is respect. This is a word that often comes up in the world of intercultural training when we talk of working with people of other cultures. Most corporate entities incorporate the word "respect" in their corporate values. It seems that value is universal and shared by all cultures. However, in reality, respect can be demonstrated very differently according to the enculturation of a person. Our editorial includes an extract from Guillaume Gevrey's blog on how the platinum rule first spoken about by Milton Bennet is more effective than the golden rule in cross cultural work.

REMINDER

Membership Renewal:

Those who need to renew their membership can click here to visit www.sietarindia.org/membership and download our membership form. Annual membership is valid until April after which membership must be renewed by paying the annual fee.

UPDATE

Networking Meet Up in SIETAR Delhi:

A group of thirteen people from seven different nationalities met in Delhi on 2nd of May 2013 for a SIETAR networking event at AFS India in Delhi. Some work in business, some in academia, some in education, some are practitioners and trainers and some are language trainers. Some are old SIETARians, some have never heard of SIETAR before. What they have in common is a common passion for the intercultural field. The group shared their experience with and passion for the intercultural field and got to know each other better. The future of SIETAR Delhi was aired, the participants shared their expectations and what they wanted to contribute with. And finally, after an intense very talkative networking break, the group played a great game facilitated by Sujata Banerjee, a long time supporter of SIETAR India and renowned inculturalist. The game was about becoming aware of the different synergies and roles in a team and about listening and creating a common ground. SIETAR Delhi looks forward to it's next learning event. You are welcome.

EDITORIAL - Blog Post by Guillaume Gevrey

Blog Post by Guillaume Gevrey, SIETAR India Treasurer and Director of C2C Consulting

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." We've all heard this as children but also as a guideline for building relationships in world of work. Sounds like good advice, right? Wrong.

I have actually experienced this first hand during my professional life in India. Being very egalitarian and informal, my definition of respect goes something like: "If something is not working for you or if you have an opinion about what we are talking about, whoever you are, speak up." Since this is what respect looked like for me, I happily applied that in the traditional Indian industrial house in which I was working a few years ago. As you can imagine, this behavior didn't really fly very well in the high power distance, implicit and group oriented work culture I was working in. I remember being told that I was rude and disrespectful, even though that was never my intention and I was doing everything right...according to me. This situation really frustrated me as I could not understand what was going wrong in my relationship with my boss, peers and even direct reports. I have since learned to appreciate different ways of living respect and have, hopefully, adapted my behaviour to respect diverse people

The golden rule is full of good intentions but let's not forget that hell is paved with good intentions too. I used respect for the sake of the example but this can be reproduced for almost all values. Professionalism, family, responsibility, accountability, honesty...the list is endless.

If you genuinely want to build effective relationships, you should treat people like THEY would like to be treated, not the way you'd like to be treated. The challenge of what some people call the platinum rule is that it requires people to actually sit down and talk with each other about values and behaviours, conversation that is never easy to have. The thing is that it is so much easier to avoid this uncomfortable discussion by minimizing differences and saying that respect – add any other value – means the same thing for everyone. To have this conversation, we need to actually care about the other enough to respect them in a way that might not be natural to us...that's leadership.



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