Vlog Summary: Allyship - Understanding and contributing effectively to an inclusive workplace.

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You can be an active ally because we all are allies of something.

One of the definitions of Allyship is someone who helps and supports other people who are part of a group that is discriminated or harassed or treated unfairly, although they're not themselves a member of this group. How do we use your power to create a more inclusive workplace where everybody can thrive? How do we find ways to make our privilege, which is implied or given, work for others?

It is important to remind ourselves that allies should act in support of and in partnership with different communities, not on behalf of them. As someone once said to me, *'I don't want you to walk behind me, I don't want you to walk in front of me, I want you to be there beside me and doing'*. It's an active role in that sense.

Allyship is a journey, it's an ongoing process of learning. At the start of the journey there is often a fear of engaging in diversity and equality conversations. People are unsure where to start. '*Oh, I don't want to offend'* can be a common thought. A cancel culture environment only creates fear and prevents growth and learning.

Allyship is about lifting each other as people, creating platforms and opportunities. If you are noticing that someone is not being included, it may not be happening deliberately, but it is important to raise awareness to it. Think why is someone's opinion is not being considered. Why is that when other opinions are being considered?

Being an ally of unrepresented communities is not about fixing people. It means learning about and acting in support of communities we are not part of. It requires a growth mindset; being open, knowing we will get it wrong, but we want to grow and learn.

Allies are what we sometimes call "goodish people". People who are always a work in progress, who want to learn, who will be making mistakes, but they also remember to own those mistakes, because it's no use making a mistake and not learning from it.

Allies are not "cookie seekers"; a human tendency we all have that if we take positive action, we expect a pat on the back because we've gone out of our way to do something. It should be something that we just do because it's the right thing to do.

The impact you are having on others can be measured by the other person's experience; sometimes we are thinking we are having the right impact when it's not the right impact. It's important to check in with each other. *Have you really heard me?*

Within the workplace, allies enable *an equity of voices*, an environment where everyone feels safe, and everyone can be themselves and able to do their work effectively.

Inclusion is not about the action plans, the strategies, the roadmaps. Inclusion and allyship are about being active, it is about how we make each other feel. As Maya Angelou said, *"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*

So yes, we may have it right on paper and we may be saying the right things on corporate comms. But, we need to be thinking, what does that mean *in reality*?

Here are 7 ways to practice active allyship; from Poornima Luthra's book 'The Art of Active Allyship'.

1. Deep curiosity - about our own and others' diversity thumbprint

2. Honest introspection -understanding our own biases and how they impact what we say and do

3. Humble acknowledgement -we don't fully comprehend how someone else experiences life

4. Empathetic engagement -listening and addressing microaggressions

5. Authentic conversations - psychological safety in open conversations

6. Vulnerable interactions -overcome the fear of being uncomfortable or saying the wrong thing

7. Courageous responsibilities - take steps to include others and ensure they are seen and heard

(Find out more: 7 Ways to Practice Active Allyship (hbr.org))

As we engage in allyship work we start to use our *'noticing muscles',* noticing who's speaking, who's bring interrupted, who's getting the credit for ideas, who's being attributed for being emotional, or angry or aggressive, who's being lauded for doing great work and who is not getting the accolades.

So, where do we start? Flex your noticing muscles, don't try cookie seeking because it's not nice. Learn as you go. Be goodish people and make that right effort. People will then feel valued, respected, appreciated, and enjoy that sense of belonging.

Thank you very much for having me.

Reflective challenge: What can ***you*** do to be an active ally?