

Gender, Equity and Public Lives
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Train Your “Social Eye” and Practice Big Picture Thinking

1. Begin to see moments when **culture expectations** are being created and how everyday interactions either reinforce or revise those expectations.
2. Begin to see and name **gender stereotypes** racial stereotypes, ability stereotypes... Practice discussing what you see with different audiences and notice how the discussions differ.
3. Identify **power relationships** and resulting privileges that correlate with conformity, appearance and behavior.
4. Identify moments when **reclaiming power as culture-creators** can increase positive interactions and inspire greater campus involvement.
5. Make clearer decisions about how to **use media**, rather than media using you.

Five Strategies for Social Creators: Gender, Equity and Public Lives

1. **Learn to listen with empathy (and without accepting insults or abuse).** If there’s a topic you want to discuss, write down a few “How” questions to prompt a person’s experience of the topic, not just their thoughts on the topic. “How did it make you feel when X said that? How have things been for you since X happened?” Listen as you would like to be heard, even when you don’t like or agree with the person talking. Read and ally with others – not just on your own issues, but across issues.
2. **Plan ahead for the uncomfortable topics that come up again and again. Pay attention to your own discomfort.** Someone talking negatively about fat or an intimidating guy catcalling or people who act like others don’t belong (because of race, gender, whatever) – these things are going to come up again and again. Plan ahead. Decide who you will be and what you might say.
3. **Stay focused when having discussions about difficult themes. Yes, it’s good to talk about interrelated topics, but not good to build an ammunition pile to “get your way” in a discussion.** If someone disagrees when you say “this is just like that,” pay attention. Try to communicate again –for understanding – not to “win” the discussion.
4. **Create situations where it’s easier for people to be good to one another in the moment.** Good relationships and clear structure create comfort. And comfort keeps us in productive conflict rather than divisive conflict.
5. **Become like Teflon for shame. Anything that would lessen your human dignity, regard it as a cultural flaw, not a personal failing.** Many times, we participate in our own oppression without even knowing it. If you feel like you want to disappear, that’s your cue that shame is coming toward you. Deflect it and refocus the discussion. We’re better when we don’t work against sexism (for instance), but in favor of human dignity. That will include anyone who’s in the hot seat as the moment shifts. Small moments of human dignity may be like drops in the ocean, but they rise up into waves of social justice, respect and equity.