



Robert Van Arlen

Music and Diversity

Robert Van Arlen often speaks to organizations on the topic of diversity. He delivers keynote speeches and develops content for formal breakout sessions to help audiences think about opportunities to expand upon individual and team growth.

Music provides one of the most useful metaphors to build upon diversity awareness and practice. Robert Van Arlen developed a model using music to help organizations embrace change at all levels. Music also provides the opportunity to breakthrough barriers because of its relationship to culture. Most individuals are hesitant to embrace diversity primarily for two reasons; first because pre-existing thought patterns are formed based on beliefs and experiences or the lack of experiences. Secondly, it is in many cases difficult for individuals to understand the greater good and personal benefits of developing a culture that embraces diversity. The outcomes for organizations that truly commit to moving forward can be transformative for both the individual and company. Music provides the perfect platform to illustrate transformation and its benefits. Ultimately, music can be use to move the organization from awareness to enrollment.

Within Robert Van Arlen's book Focused Synergy the following quotes raise very important questions and discussions as it relates to diversity.

Quote:

"Free of any boundaries defined by race, religion or economic status, Music is a universal language, an earth-shaking force with the power to transform every human being in its range."

Discussion:

Why does music transcend diversity with its power?

Quote:

"Our ability to tap the power of music begins with recognizing our own personal notes, and then understanding their effect on others"

Discussion:

Where, when, and how does our diverse culture impact our organizational music?

Quote:

"The next time you experience a conflict with another person, consider what song they are playing. If you don't recognize the tune, let them know about it" "Try and place yourself in their notes and lyrics, rhythm and melody".

Questions:

Culturally and from a diversity perspective do we really practice this?

Quote:

"Creativity is especially expressed in the ability to make connections, to make associations"

Discussion:

How does diversity allow us to make broader associations and thereby better connections and therefore to become more creative?

Quote:

"If you don't kick things around with people, you are out of it"

Discussion:

Which people and why?

Quote:

"In a series of split-second decisions, we conclude whether a relationship will be nourishing or numbing, profound or superficial. It isn't necessary to hear someone's entire song to understand how meaningful he or she might prove to be in our lives"

Discussion:

Do we agree with this and where does diversity of thinking, culture, background affect our decision making process?

Quote:

"The series of notes that we broadcast brands us in a way, and establishes our identity".

Discussion:

How and why can this be both a good and bad factor when it comes to diversity?

Quote:

"You've probably hear the old expression that's often used to describe someone who is acting differently, we say to them "They're changing their tune." It is up to us to decide if we want to go through life playing the same notes over and over or if we want to seek out ways to improve the tonal quality of our internal melody"

Discussion:

Where and how to stereotypes and preconceived perceptions affect how people hear "your melody"?

Quote:

"If we happen to lose the thread and notes of our personal song-- we might discover that others find communicating with us to an unpleasant experience" "Sometimes team members out of synch with the team's internal rhythm throws the entire team off balance"

Discussion:

How do we align common team's goals and yet maximize of diversity of input?

Quote:

"For me, the desire to be willing to learn from others and not to judge them was the FIRST NOTE, the sounding chord -- of my personal song" Do you believe this is the first note of most people's song?

Discussion:

How do we as an organization embrace the diversity of opinion to learn more from others before the judge them?

