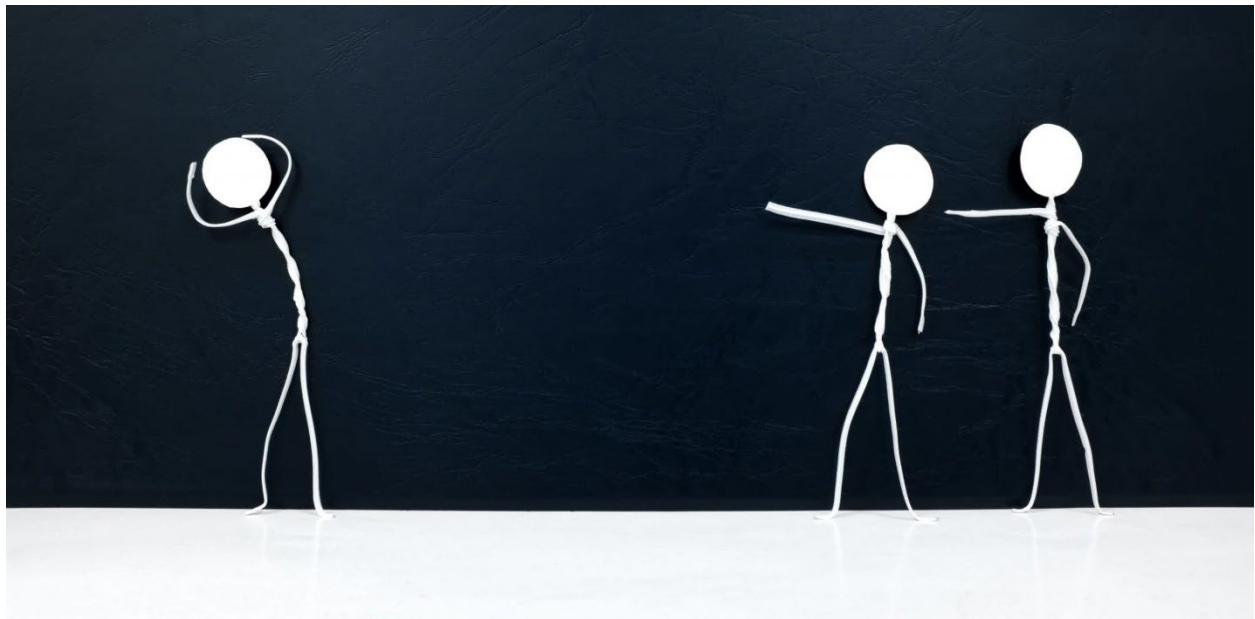


Building a Community of Care: Calling Others In, Instead of Calling Them Out



We have all seen it. People calling others out. It looks like publicly shaming and humiliating others based on what they look like, how they identify, who they love, and who they agree or disagree with, or for any other reason, big or small, even a mistake. It looks like the attaching of labels without nuance. It is attacking another's humanity rather than disagreeing about a topic or belief. It also looks like people dog piling on, criticizing someone merely because someone else did, without any context or information and without doing any kind of research into the issue. Ultimately people feel, alienated, fearful of speaking up, and well, cancelled.

Calling out is characterized by the presumption of guilt, without considering facts or nuance; essentialism, the way in which criticism of bad behavior becomes to criticism of a bad person; pseudo-intellectualism (proclamation of one's moral high ground; unforgivability, the idea that no apology is good enough, and finally contamination, or guilt by association.

Calling out can also take a more civilized form. Calling out can take the form of interrupting another to prevent further harm. It could look like saying "that comment is really offensive," or "you might want to think you comment through a bit more and speak about it later." Unlike above, where the purpose ultimately to humiliate and dehumanize the person, calling out in this context is to hit the "pause" button and let someone know that their words/actions are unacceptable.

Calling someone in, on the other hand gives us the opportunity to explore, develop understanding, and make meaning together. It allows for imagining the perspectives, possibilities and encourages reflection, not reaction. It most likely will be an uncomfortable conversation, but it is only in our discomfort that we grow. Calling someone in, is calling someone out, but done privately with love and respect. It could look like "I'm curious, what was your intention when you said that?" or "how might

your assumptions be influencing your beliefs?” Where calling out assumes the worst, calling in presumes positive intent, and involves a conversation, compassion and context.

Communicating with the intent of being inclusive, takes practice. It will take daily practice, trial and error, but over time it becomes natural and automatic. To practice these potentially tough conversations, consider B.U.I.L.D.:

Benevolence: Approach them with respect and kindness. Have their best interest in mind while holding them accountable.

Understanding: Practice deep listening facts of the situation, as well as the feelings and values of the individual.

Interacting: Engage with nonjudgmental curiosity

Learning: Acknowledge that mistakes happen. Help them evolve their thinking by providing different reference points, perspectives and experiences.

Delivery: Say what needs to be said to the right person, at the right time and right place, respectfully, accurately, and clearly.

The act of calling someone in, is not the end. Rather, it is the opportunity to enrich our community of care, concern, and commitment.