

Let's be lefties for a
day



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The world we live in is very diverse, with the diversity in nature, climates, natural resources, history, etc. That diversity has a great impact on people living in different parts of the world, therefore there are different standards of what considered normal in the particular society. It consists of various people, most of which are considered “ normal” - people who have similar backgrounds, no significant physical or psychological differences or disabilities. That is what the mainstream society comprised of and, therefore, readily embraces. However, there are also many people that differ from others in some way - either because of disabilities or of some outstanding abilities. Some disabilities are permanent, other could be only temporal, e. g., immigrants might have difficulties speaking language of their new country, and they would have other cultural differences which will be overcome in time. Often times these differences are becoming a reason of being discriminated in some way. Some differences people learn to overcome; other peculiarities make life significantly more difficult. And there are times when it is not a diversity in itself that puts a person in the position of being discriminated and disadvantaged. Often it is the case of institutional discrimination, caused by stereotypes and institutional organization. The disadvantages may be caused by physical, cultural, ethnic, or gender differences. However, if these diversities are recognized, taken into consideration and thought through, it might turn out that many disadvantages can be used for the benefit. The experiment of being a “ lefty” was very educational and made me think a lot. Undoubtedly, any trivial task became very difficult to perform. It seemed that the whole world turned up-side-down. Whatever I had to do, it took a long time; it was not performed as perfectly and it was also frustrating and drowning emotionally.

I felt pity for those, who does not have some natural abilities, but have to live in the world, created and adjusted to suit conveniences of the majority of those, who is “ normal”. However, as I struggled through the initial stages of the experiment I came to realization that as I persevere, I became a little more confident in being “ lefty”. It is not the world around me that changed; it is my skills, determination and attitude that had to be adjusted. I even had to use my imagination and creativity to find solutions to the challenges presented by life, which made me change outlook on different things. I can assume, if I would be forced to change my habits permanently, it would take time, practice and support from those around me, but I would adjust to the situation. Many people that are different from the mainstream have adjusted to the world they live in. However, when someone first placed in the unfamiliar circumstances, it might take effort on their part, oversight, affirmation and training. That is the challenge managers and business professionals are often faced with. Acknowledging employees’ diversity puts administration in the position of having to help those, who are discriminated in some way, intentionally or unintentionally, thus helping them to be more productive and job satisfied. At the same time, understanding those differences helps solving interpersonal conflicts. Close oversight, encouragement and team building is vital in overcoming challenges posed by ethnic, cultural, or gender, etc differences. Creating positive working environment helps to ensure that people will work together towards achieving business objectives and goals, and they will be doing it more effectively and creative. Building positive workplace atmosphere, using individuals’ strengths and potential, adjusting corporate culture are priorities of the managers. Those issues might be very complex. However, having

them worked on might be a decisive factor in the success or failure of a company. On the larger scale, acknowledging cultural differences could be an important step in furthering business. In our era of globalization many businesses are seeking to establish partnership abroad. Understanding the differences may be crucial in some instances, and lack of understanding may be a cause of frustration, miscommunication and failure. However, if taken into consideration, the cultural diversity may help in furthering good relations and avoiding conflicts. Besides language differences, there might be differences in the approach to work, e. g., the working schedule in different countries might vary. The customers from different countries and backgrounds might have different expectations of the services they request. People coming from different cultural and ethnical backgrounds also act different in conflict situations. Without knowledge about those differences it is easy to offend, albeit unknowingly, prospective business partners, and it might be a crucial factor in the success or failure of business negotiations, or how fast the parties would come to the agreement. That is why it is so important to make an effort to learn about diversity of people in the workplace, acknowledge the differences and learn to appreciate them. Managers and administration have a great task of learning about those and passing this knowledge to the employees, helping them to build on the diversity rather than having it as a source of conflicts and struggle. This knowledge also might influence business strategy of the company overall.

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