



Did I have the courage to raise the question of panel balance? Do you think you could have if you were on the panel?

**The feeling, that as long as I am a person of good will, that should be sufficient to bring about change**

It is a good start, but that may not be enough. Dr Anjam Khan recently gave a presentation to our faculty at Newcastle University, which with a single presentation slide showed me how even I, a person of good will, can have surprising unconscious biases that even override my prior experience, simply because of what we become accustomed to seeing as the norm.

Anjam showed the names of a few individuals who worked at various jobs.

Please, take a moment now to imagine what Sam the construction worker and Lesley the secretary might look like.

After asking us to imagine what these individuals looked like, Anjam showed a picture of Samantha a female construction worker and Lesley a male secretary. He then asked us if we were surprised by the individuals shown in those roles.

I was, even though I myself worked as a secretary prior to becoming a neuroscientist.

Anjam's demonstration was simple and powerful. Our brains often take shortcuts in ways we may be unaware of, which is why change is so difficult to sustain. This means that even in persons of good will, if we do not actively work to identify and remediate biases, these can and will unfortunately silently creep back in. Our university EDI teams are wonderful, but they cannot do it alone.

Dr Martin Luther King Jr.—who was awarded with an honorary doctorate from Newcastle University—after being arrested for a protest march in Birmingham in 1963 wrote a letter from his jail cell to white moderates in which he said: *“Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.”*.

None of us can be bystanders if change is to happen, and, equally importantly, for change to sustain.

**Should we view EDI initiatives as separate from our jobs?**

Not necessarily. We do not need to segregate EDI initiatives from our roles, whatever those may be. If our job is ultimately to help people, patients, staff, students, the world, then you might agree that EDI is part of the role.

We all can be EDI champions each and every day, as a natural part of what we do. All that is needed is for us to change our perspective somewhat and to become more comfortable asking questions about inclusivity and diversity.

**However, being willing is only part of the solution: We also need the right tools to empower us to feel like Unique EDI Champions**

To achieve sustainable change will also depend on having a better set of tools.

When we ask questions on fairness, inclusion and diversity, we might realize we do not have enough information or data

to know how balanced a grouping might be, or what we might expect it to be in order for us to do even better.

Even if we have the data and are pleased with the process we have taken, are we sharing these transparently with the world—so that we can hold ourselves and others to a higher standard?

What tools do we need to empower us to feel like EDI champions?

There are several ongoing projects that the university is working on to develop tools and to assess their usefulness. These will roll out as they become available, and the teams working on them will no doubt thank you in advance for participating in and informing the process.

We hope that you ultimately find the tools helpful, put them to good use and make them even better. To get updates and join or start a discussion on social media use the hashtag [\*#UniqueEDIChampion\*](#).

The first important step is deciding not to be a bystander. We are all needed.

Welcome Unique EDI Champion!

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