

My Fork in the Road: Where do I go from here?

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This journey of mine began in July of 1998 when I attended my first training for the Leadership in Diversity Internship. I was not aware of how much my life would change as a result. I had always thought myself to be someone who was well aware of world issues and particularly sensitive to the social injustices in our society. What happened throughout the training portion of the internship was an opening of my eyes to things I did not see in our society, but more importantly what I did not see in myself.

Throughout the time since, I have become much more aware of what I do, what I say, what I see, how I work and relate with others, and how others work and relate with me. This awareness did not come easy, but when it came, I felt much pain in realizing how much I did not see before. I became much more sensitive as to how others treated me and how much that treatment was a reflection of what our society expects should be an appropriate response to my conduct.

I have come to the realization that most of my life I have done things to please others and not worry so much about whether or not I was pleased in the process. For most of my life, I have done what is expected. What has amazed me most is the reaction I get when I do things that people could not expect of me. I have become keenly aware of the consequences of not following "the rules." I have realized that by abiding by those rules, I have lost a sense of my true self.

What does freedom mean to me? What is the importance of truly being free? Can I ever really experience it? Where do I go from here after what I've been learning about myself and others? These are life-long questions that I have been asking myself recently. I haven't been able to answer them yet because I am on my journey. I don't know where my journey will take me or when it will end, or if it ever will. All I know right now is that I am taking one step at a time in this very emotional process.

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