



**“An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.”**

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

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To integrate, one must initiate. Dr. King reminds us that significant change requires personal responsibility. From my perspective, change happens on an individual, local level; it requires a paradigm shift in the way we see ourselves, others, and ultimately the world around us. These changes require a willingness to acknowledge that what we know and understand may not reflect the reality of others. They require us to critically call into question the essence of who we are and avoid limiting the language of our world because of passive learning and unconditional acceptance. This means that we need to reexamine our roles as affiliates of organized psychology and as mental health providers.

In my last column I addressed the need for us to embrace students and early career psychologists as a part of our future. We must not forget about multiculturalism and social justice as another component in that equation. We all need to ask the question: “Is my house welcoming to others?” We can exchange “house” for association, practice, community mental health agency, or university and training institutions. Do we want to include dimensions of diversity in our “house” simply because it is what we are “supposed” to do? Or do we really want to include dimensions of diversity because it is a part of who we are and a part of our survival as a field and as human beings? If the former is our answer, we will fall short. If the latter is our answer, we will create culturally responsive systems that include internal advocates of change. This means that we must begin to appreciate that sometimes it is better to understand, than to be understood.

To understand implies that we are being active in our efforts to seek knowledge and embrace difference. It means that we reexamine our mindset so that we can develop the skill set needed to create systems of integration rather than desegregation. Our skill set must include social and community advocacy on behalf of our clients and our members, and a willingness to create opportunities that situate people where they are, rather than where we think they should be.

We can no longer afford to sit back and wait for the multicultural changes to inculcate us with the knowledge, skills, and responsiveness needed to create change. We need to take individual and organizational steps to ensure that we are integrating every facet of our world in a way that welcomes the diversity around us while simultaneously changing the very fabric of our own personal lives. As an association, and as leaders throughout the state, we have to ensure that our house is a multicultural house that welcomes diversity. It is our responsibility to do so.

They say “As California goes, so goes the nation.” CPA needs to continue being proactive in this area if we are going to set the tone for the rest of the nation. We must act locally as individuals in order to prepare CPA to be the multicultural association we can, and should, be.



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