

Transformation - what can

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I do?



TRANSFORMATION: WHAT CAN I DO?

Transformation is something everybody should do - it's not up to someone else.

This section gives you some ideas on what you can do, as an individual, to empower yourself - and to manage your way through the challenges of transformation.

... in my personal life

- ★ Acknowledge our country's history and the context in which we live. Try and internalise the messages in this booklet. Discuss them with your colleagues, friends and family.
- ★ Always try to understand the other person's perspective. Put yourself in their shoes and imagine their fears, frustrations, hopes and dreams.
- ★ Involve yourself actively in the building of a successful and sustainable company and country. Organisations don't transform, people do. By getting involved you will empower yourself and get out of a victim mentality. This can be by getting involved in your church's development projects, a crèche or sports club in your community, participating in Nedbank's Local Heroes programme, or any project where you are building a better life for other people.
- ★ If people use language in your home or office which is racially or culturally offensive, let them know politely that it is offensive to you and ask them not to do this anymore in your space. Language is a powerful way of reinforcing or shifting perceptions, so make use of positive and constructive language.
- ★ Everybody wants a successful and sustainable future for themselves, their children and grandchildren. Maintain a balanced view on the positives and negatives in South Africa and acknowledge that everybody is aiming for an abundant and successful future.

... in my business life

There are lots of ways to advance transformation in a sustainable way; there is no 'one size fits all' approach. Each context may be different so you should apply your judgement as to what will work best. The ideas below are mainly for managers. Look at ways in which you can influence transformation in Nedbank. Look at ways in which you can grow yourself and encourage others you work with to grow too.

- ★ Expand your span of control by 'unbundling' existing roles.
- ★ Expand your span of control by creating new positions.
- ★ Create fast-track rotational programmes for high potential employees.
- ★ Build a pool of successors.
- ★ Appoint a clear successor as '2 IC' with defined deliverables and timelines.
- ★ Negotiate early retirement.
- ★ Volunteer for a secondment to public sector organisations.
- ★ Deploy experienced colleagues into training roles.
- ★ Make use of Nedbank's internal skills development programmes for your staff.



Drop the mask



This is a group exercise. For the best results, try and include a diversity of people in the group: Blacks, Whites, Coloureds, Asians and Indians.

Have a whiteboard ready and write down each person's response to

the following questions: **What does it mean to be White? What does it mean to be Black? And so on...**

NB! Don't forget the golden rules of brainstorming – censor nothing and anything goes!

Interestingly, we took this question to the streets of Sandton. Here are some of the responses we got:

42-year old White Businessman

Q: What does it mean to be White?

A: Frankly, I don't know what you're talking about!

Q: Aren't you White?

A: Ya, but I come from an Italian heritage. I'm Italian, not White.

Q: Well then, what does it mean to be Italian?

A: Pasta, good food, love of wine (becoming agitated). This is getting ridiculous!

Themes: Conflicted feelings about being White. Claims Italian heritage but is unable to indicate more than superficial understanding of ethnic meaning. Expresses annoyance at the question.

26-year old student doing a business internship

Q: What does it mean to be White?

A: Is this a trick question? ... I've never thought about it... Well, I know that Black people see us as being racist and stuff. I wish people would just forget about race differences and see one another as human beings. People are people and we should be proud to be South Africans.

Themes: Never thinks about being White. Defensive about prejudicial associations with Whiteness. Desires to eliminate or dilute racial differences.

65-year old White man (retired restaurant owner)

Q: What does it mean to be White?

A: That's a stupid question!

Q: Why?

A: You people are always blaming us for stereotyping and here you are doing the same to us (Interviewer is a 27-year old Black female).

Q: When you say 'us', whom are you referring to?

A: I'm referring to South Africans who aren't 'African'. We are

all different from one another. I'm from English descent but there are Germans, Italians and Jews. I get angry at Black people for always blaming us... When my grandparents came to this country, they worked very hard to provide a good living for their kids. My wife and I raised three kids and I worked every day of my life to provide for them. No one gave me any help! I get angry at Black people now days for always whining... They just have to learn to work hard. Because life is hard... BEE can't change that fact!

Themes: Believes in stereotypes. Expresses resentment with being categorized. Expresses belief that anyone can be successful if they work hard. Believes Blacks are lazy. Anger towards BEE.

34-year old White male Stockbroker

Q: What does it mean to be White?

A: I don't know (laughing)... I've never thought about it.

Q: Are you White?

A: Yes (seems amused)

Q: Why haven't you thought about it?

A: Because it's not important anymore.

Q: Why not?

A: It doesn't enter my mind because it doesn't affect me. Besides we are all individuals. Colour isn't important.

Themes: Never thought about being White.

29-year old Coloured female Personal Assistant

Q: What does it mean to be White?

A: I'm not White, I'm Coloured!

Q: Are you upset with me?

A: No... it's just that I'm light, so people always think I'm White.

Q: Well, what does it mean to be White?

A: Do you really want to know?... OK, it means you're always right. It means you never have to explain yourself or apologize. Being White means never having to say you're sorry. It means you think you're better than us. (Interviewer is a 29-year old White female).

Themes: Strong reaction to being mistaken for being White. Claims that being White makes people feel superior.

39-year old Black male Sales Assistant

Q: What does it mean to be White?

A: Is this a test or something? I never thought I would be asked a question like that. Do you really want to know?

Q: Can you tell me what you really think?

A: OK. If you're White, you're right. If you're Black, you're stupid.

Q: What does that mean?

A: White people act like they have all the answers and a Black man's word is less than a White man's word. When White customers come into our shop and they see me, I am invisible to them. They avoid me. Or they will rather talk to a White sales assistant. Or if I explain something to a customer they will check out the information with a White sales assistant. When I mention this to my White manager, he says I am seeing things that are not there. That's what being White means. It means having the authority to tell me what's really happening even though I know that it's not.

Themes: Being White means you view Blacks as less competent and capable. Whites have the power to define reality. You can deceive yourself into believing you're not prejudiced.

21-year old Asian male student

Q: What does it mean to be White?

A: We were just discussing that during class last week.

Q: What was your conclusion?

A: Well, it has to do with White privilege.

Q: Are White people aware of their White privilege?

A: No, they're oblivious to it.

Themes: Being White means having unearned privileges and being oblivious to the advantages of being White.

What can we learn from these responses?

White respondents would rather not think about their Whiteness, are uncomfortable or react negatively to being labeled 'White'. They deny its importance in affecting their lives and the lives of fellow South Africans.

Black, Coloured and Asian respondents believe that Whites are oblivious to their own privileges and prejudices.

34-year old Black businessman

Q: What does it mean to be Black?

A: It means having access to opportunity, for many of us, for the first time ever.

Q: Do you resent the fact that opportunity is something new?

A: Yes and no. Yes because millions of black South Africans suffered under apartheid, and no because it's such an exciting time to be alive.

Q: Would you say racism is dead?

A: I wish I could say yes, but these recent xenophobic attacks show me that it's not.

Themes: Reluctant to live in the past. Cognisant of SA's current xenophobia as an expression of racism.

25-year old White female designer

Q: What does it mean to be Black?

A: Why are you asking me that? I'm white.



Q: Would you say that race still applies in SA?

A: Yes, but only to the extent that our backgrounds and personal upbringings shape us as individuals.

Q: Would you say racism is dead?

A: I wish I could say yes, but these recent xenophobic attacks show me that it's not.

Q: So race still divides us?

A: I guess so. But I think poverty is an important factor in SA. The fact is there are way too many people in SA who are poor. If we could overcome poverty, we could overcome racism.

Themes: Acknowledges the role poverty plays in fueling racism. Expresses a need to move beyond stereotypical definitions of race.

50-year old Black domestic worker

Q: What does it mean to be Black?

A: It means hard times and struggle.

Q: Is the struggle the same as it was before '94?

A: No it is not the same. Before '94, we was not having any rights and the white people kept us away. In those years, it was hard. My children grew up far away from me. In fact, I did not even raise my children. This is how it was in those years.

Q: Are you angry with white people?

A: No, I am not angry. I remember I would listen to my radio, to the news from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I cried for those mothers. For those children. But this new South Africa is better.

Q: If you could change something today, what would it be?

A: I would make jobs. I wish our President he could make more jobs. That is all.

Themes: Expresses regret at the human loss through apartheid. Sees unemployment as a continuation of the struggle.

39-year old Coloured male business owner

Q: What does it mean to be Black?

A: That question is not relevant to me.

Q: Is that because race isn't important to you?

A: No, because I'm coloured.

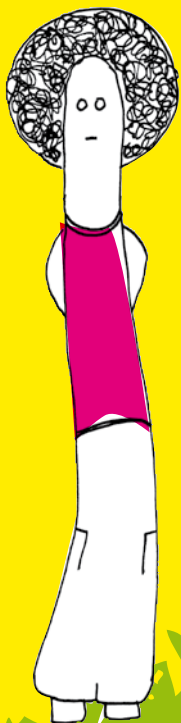
Q: So what does being Coloured mean to you?

A: It can never be just one thing. It's many things - language, culture, heritage.

Q: But aren't these things you mention, common to all of us?

A: Yes, but we all experience them differently.

Themes: Registers a need for cultural diversity. Open to dialogue around transformation.

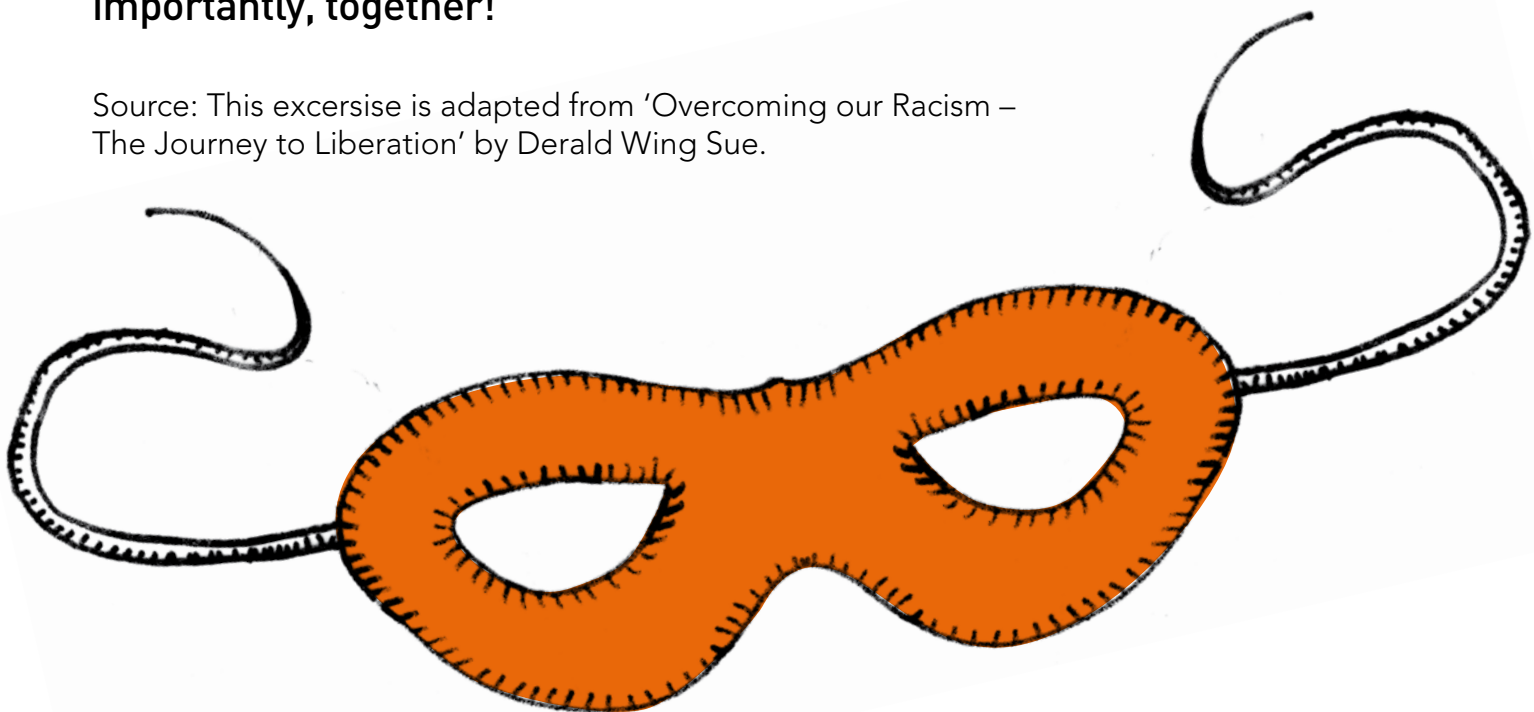


The more you un-mask, the better...

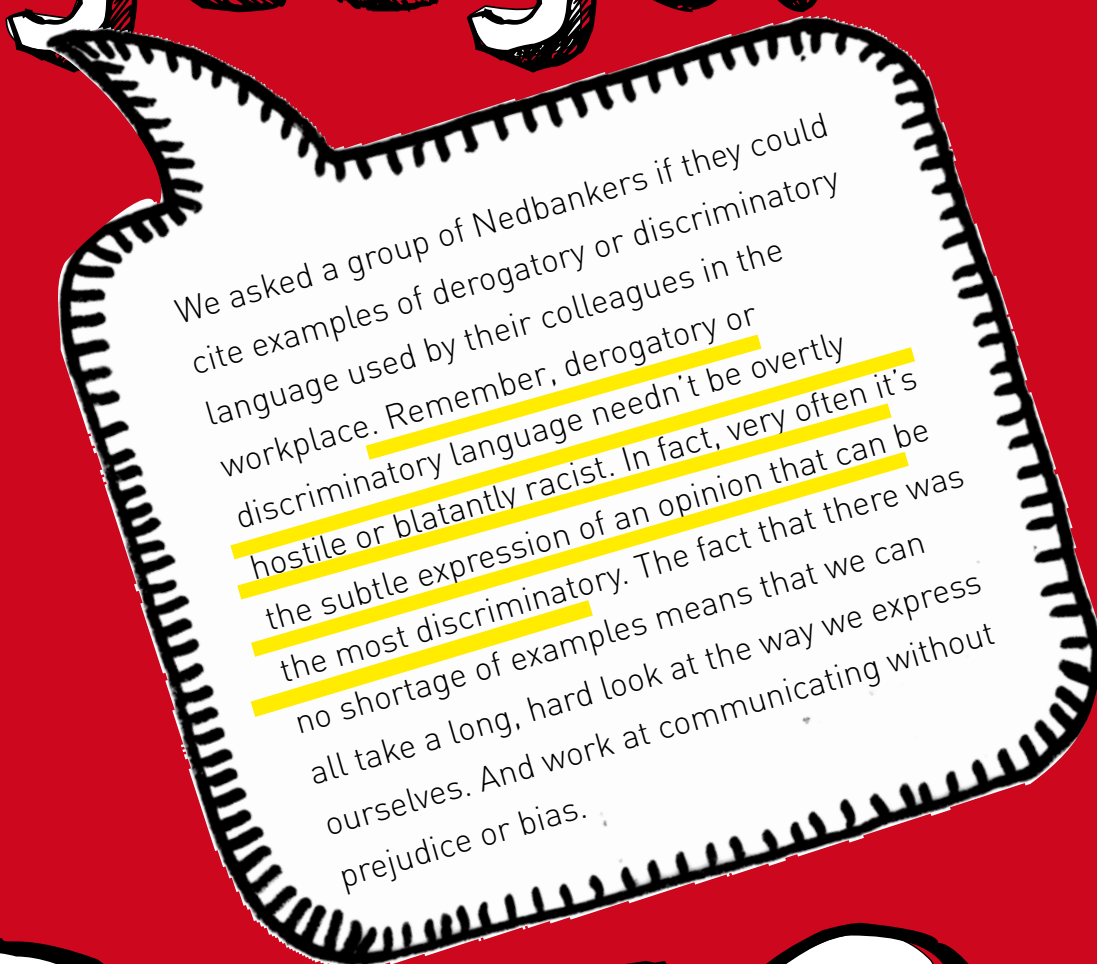
What this exercise teaches us is that while we may consider ourselves to be non-discriminatory, unconscious biases may well influence our behaviour towards others.

So take the time to examine your inner beliefs, your values and your perceptions of others. Drop the mask and let's face transformation... actively, constructively and most importantly, together!

Source: This exercise is adapted from 'Overcoming our Racism – The Journey to Liberation' by Derald Wing Sue.



Mind your language!



We asked a group of Nedbankers if they could cite examples of derogatory or discriminatory language used by their colleagues in the workplace. Remember, derogatory or discriminatory language needn't be overtly hostile or blatantly racist. In fact, very often it's the subtle expression of an opinion that can be the most discriminatory. The fact that there was no shortage of examples means that we can all take a long, hard look at the way we express ourselves. And work at communicating without prejudice or bias.



'What did you expect, this is Africa, after all!'

Themes: Associates poor performance/delivery with Africa; negative perception of Africa; disassociation with Africa.

'You people knew there were problems with our country's infrastructure'.

Themes: Assumes that every Black person is somehow responsible for South Africa's infrastructural shortfalls (eg Eskom); sets up divisions.

'What is it about Indians – why do they love bling so much?'



Themes: Judgmental; assumes all Indians are materialistic; stereotyping



'She's such a coconut!'

Themes: Labelling; furthering racist discourse.

'I'm not being racialistic but this country has really gone to the dogs.'

Themes: Defensive; implies that black government is inferior; sets up division.

'Why do Blacks always have to talk so loudly?'

Themes: Generalising and Stereotyping



OK, it's your turn! Think back this last week. Try and recall any derogatory or discriminatory commentary you came across at Nedbank. Write them down, as well as their underlying themes. Remember, the path to reconstruction is constructive deconstruction!

USEFUL WEBSITES AND LINKS

South Africa's History

South African history - <http://www.sahistory.org.za>

The Freedom Charter - www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/charter.html

Nelson Mandela's statement at the Rivonia Trial - www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/rivonia.html

Thabo Mbeki - I am an African - at the unveiling of South Africa's Constitution in May 1996 - www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki/1996sp960508.html

Steve Biko Memorial Lecture, 2007, by Thabo Mbeki - www.news.uct.ac.za/downloads/news.uct.ac.za/lectures/stevebiko/thabombeki.pdf

Steve Biko Foundation - www.sbf.org.za

The Apartheid Museum - www.apartheidmuseum.org

The Constitutional Court - <http://constitutionalcourt.org.za>

South African Government Communication & Information Service - www.gcis.gov.za

South African Government Online - www.info.gov.za

Statistics South Africa - www.statssa.gov.za

Financial Mail - <http://www.free.financialmail.co.za>

FM on Affirmative Action - <http://free.financialmail.co.za/08/0404/cover/coverstory/.htm>

Business Day - www.businessday.co.za

South Africa - The Good News - <http://www.sagoodnews.co.za>

Not so trivial pursuit answers

1. Humankind
2. Slavery
3. The Great Trek / Die Groot Trek
4. Gold
5. Scorched Earth
6. The Union of South Africa
7. The South African Native National Congress (later known as the African National Congress)
8. Anton Lembede; Walter Sisulu; Nelson Mandela; Robert Sobukwe
9. The Freedom Charter
10. Initially 8%, later 13%
11. The National Party
12. The Women's March
13. The Treason Trial
14. The Pass Laws
15. Umkhonto we Sizwe - the Spear of the Nation
16. Life
17. Eastern Cape
18. Enforced use of Afrikaans in schools
19. 1990
20. Nelson Mandela



Keep in touch!

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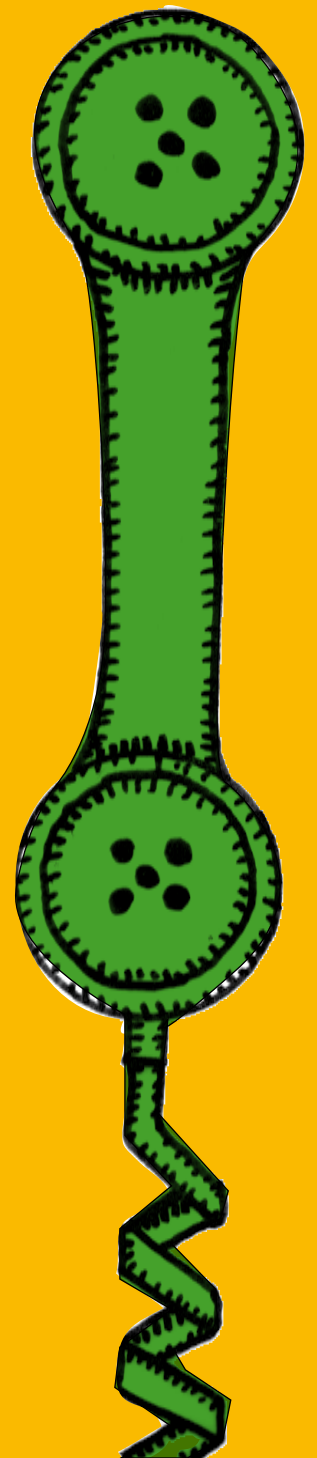
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