I want to present the "Deep Diversity" model of Shakil Choudry. It is an approach to overcoming racism as well as other forms of prejudice.

But I start with a piece by Doug Muder "Of course I'm a racist" in UU World, Fall 2017.

The racism of my home and neighbourhood wasn't the hot, boiling-over kind they make movies about, but a room-temperature racism that fit behind a facade of Midwestern niceness: enforcing segregation by law as they still did in the South, was too heavy-handed, but God must have had His reasons for making us different. Those who hated other races were misguided, but wariness and suspicion were just common sense.. . .

To me, racism hasn't been one big thing that could be rejected all at once. Rather, it has been like burrs that have to be picked off my clothing and out of my hair one by one, and that keep showing up in cuffs and collars long after I think I've found the last of them. . . .

Racism isn't like a bacterial infection that falls to an intense course of antibiotics and is never seen again. Racism is a chronic condition like hypertension or diabetes. Given proper attention, it need not be debilitating. But once you find it in yourself, don't expect that you will ever be rid of it.

From *Deep Diversity: Overcoming Us vs. Them* by Shakil Choudhury.   2015

Racism is part of our human experience. To change it, we first have to accept its reality, understand it and learn some new habits. It is not enough to be non-racist. For real transformation to occur, one has to actively challenge discrimination in all its forms. One has to be *anti-racist.*

Four Research reports and stories:

1. A university student, Nina, sits patiently in the waiting area of a nondescript office. Two other students, one black and one white, are also waiting to be called in. After a few moments the black student notices his cell phone is missing and heads to the adjacent hallway to retrieve it.   On his way out, he accidentally bumps the white student's leg. No words are exchanged, but once the black student has left the waiting room, the white student mutters: "Clumsy nigger."

Nina is in the office to be part of a Canada-US study conducted by researchers from York University, UBC and Yale University. The black and white students are actors and the focus of the study is on Nina's and others' response.

There were three groups of subjects. One group saw this exchange happen on a video (Watchers). A second group only read about it (Readers). A third group (Experiencers), like Nina, actually experienced the interaction directly.

Unsurprisingly, when asked to imagine themselves in this situation, the Readers and Watchers indicated that they would be outraged. When asked which student they would choose to work with in a follow-up activity, more than 80 percent of the Watchers and 75 per cent of the Readers said they would choose the black student as a partner.

These results should not be surprising.. they took place in 2009 at a university setting in Toronto, one of the world's most multicultural cities.

What about the Experiencers such as Nina. Of those who experienced the racist event first-hand, *NO ONE* intervened or said anything. Nor, when interviewed later, did anyone report being upset by the comment. And disturbingly, over 70 percent chose the white student rather than the black student as a partner for a later assignment!

The researchers conclude that *how we feel directly influences how we act.* Our emotions are invisible and controlling. Whether we're aware of them or not, they significantly influence our choices and behaviours.

2: Pleased with having selected a new pair of eyeglasses from a trusted shop, a consultant realizes he needs an updated prescription. The owner of the eyewear store recommends a local optometrist who does eye tests. She hands over a business card. The consultant goes home and looks at the plain, unimpressive business card. He reads the name: Abdeiso Kiyanfar. and then he hesitates, suddenly uncertain about the recommendation. An image arises of an older, unskilled "foreign" man in a musty , disorganized office. The consultant set the card down, and the better part of a day passes before he recognizes how unfairly he's behaving towards the optometrist. This was a referral, after all. He pushes aside his hesitation and phones to make an appointment.

This story about a hesitation — and unstated manifestation of prejudice—is based on a true event, and it has some interesting plot twists. First of all the consultant in the story is a seasoned veteran in diversity and anti-racism issues. Second, his ethnicity is South Asian—he's a brown guy. And . . . It is the author of the book. He shares the story because it illustrates how vulnerable we all are to prejudice, racism, and bias. This story hold some deep lessons about discrimination and inclusion. He is certain that if the plain, unimpressive business card had said Adam Wright or Ellen Goldstein, he would not have hesitated. His hesitation is the issue - - imagine if he was a hiring manager reviewing resumes and hesitated in the same way because a non-white name evoked a negative response. Or if he was a landlord renting and apartment and was turned off by foreign sounding names. We all threaten fairness when such unconscious reluctance or preferences guide our decision-making processes.

As humans, we all have biases we are not aware of that play out on a daily basis.

3. In a suburban setting, a man sits quietly watching a video. The images on the screen are of a mundane, repetitive nature: a man drinking a glass of water. The only variation is that the person shown drinking the water occasionally changes from a white man to a black man, to an East Asian or South Asian one. During this unremarkable experience, something unusual starts to happen. Unbeknownst to the watcher, his brain responds differently to each image that he observes. An EEG machine monitoring his brain activity indicates to the researchers in the U of Toronto Scarborough lab that he has greater empathy for those who share his racial background. When he watches a person of his own race, the motor-cortex area of his brain lights up as it would if he were doing the task himself. But when the person on the screen is of a different race, there is hardly a blip in the register. In fact, when some participants observed someone of a different race having a drink of water, their brains registered as little activity as when they watched a blank screen.

We have greater empathy—more care and concern—for those who are most like ourselves. Our relationship to those most like ourselves, our "tribe" is the third pillar of Deep Diversity. Belonging to a group is not only a key driver of human behaviour it also helps form our sense of self—who we are. Furthermore, favouritism towards the dominant racial/ethnic tribe results in discrimination that becomes systemic in nature.

4. Emotions, Bias, Tribes. Any element of this trio offers a formidable challenge to nurturing diversity and inclusion in society. But it gets even more complicated. The unconscious influence of these three psychological dimensions fuses with the legacies of history, politics, colonization, and economics, creating —and perpetuating— imbalanced power structures in society. The result is the entrenchment of historically high-status (more power_ and low-status (less power) groups based on social identities such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability and religion.

Group status and power can sometimes be obscured in societies like those of Canada or the U.S. Here, fairness and equality are highly valued, and overt forms of discrimination, especially on the basis of race are no longer acceptable in mainstream society. Yet subtle, less visible forms of bias are still pervasive across institutions. They are intimately linked to the way power in society is divided along racial lines.

For example, few white people are likely to know that their names give them an invisible advantage in the job market. But in fact those with white sounding names are 40 to 50 percent more likely to receive a callback for a job interview than applicants with black- or Asian-sounding names. White skin will get you better health care and decreased likelihood of being a victim of police shooting.

Even in egalitarian, democratic societies, power needs to be named, challenged, and equalized to create greater fairness between racial groups.

To nurture inclusion, diversity and equity, we have to become aware of unconscious behavioural patterns. We have to become more aware of circumstances where such default tendencies do not serve our relationship with others, especially those we perceive to be different than ourselves.

Drawing on the four pillars of Deep Diversity we can become more conscious in our interactions with others to maximize the possibility of inclusive and fair interactions.

Bias: Accept the fact that all of us have implicit biases. Such biases are normal neurological processes that are both helpful (to filter and prioritize input) and harmful (stereotypes, favouritism). As individuals, we must be on the lookout for how our biases manifest and catch ourselves in the act.

Tribes: Notice the social identities and groups in our context, from those that have the greatest rank and power to those that have the least. As individuals, we must become aware of belonging to dominant or non-dominant groups, and notice the subtle and not-so-subtle ways in which people interact with each other based on these social identities. Notice the people or groups on the margins, and see if there are patterns that keep people on the outside based on social identity (race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability and so on). Also, notice the positive interactions and the behaviour of people who are trying to build bridges across differences, in both subtle and systemic ways. Incorporate these behaviours into our repertoire and build on them.

Power: Notice how rank and power dynamics manifest in our personal, professional, or community lives. Notice how many dominant groups and non-dominant groups we as individuals belong to. Take an inventory of both our social and personal power. How do rank and power play out in our workplaces? What are individuals, leaders, and organizations doing that demonstrate the positive use of rank and power, in ways that increase a sense of community, inclusion, and diversity. Incorporate these practices and be a role model for others. Also notice how people use power negatively or badly, and try to avoid those practices. Discuss with others how we personally use power in our personal or professional lives, examining both our strengths and weaknesses.

Emotions: Develop deeper levels of self-awareness—what we are individually feeling on a moment-to-moment basis. This awareness gives us greater choice in what to do, say, and think. All our interactions with other people are emotional to a greater or lesser degree, in either positive or negative ways. Emotions play an especially powerful role in our interactions with members of other groups—the less familiarity we have with out-group members, the greater our anxiety, fear, and use of stereotypes. Attempting to uncover bias or explore rank and power issues is truly emotion-filled terrain. To enhance diversity and inclusion, it is essential to developing the self-awareness and self-regulation techniques for handling how we feel.

As an example, Shakel Choudhury, the author tells the following story about his marriage to Annahid. Because of a mix of four cultural and three religious traditions of their families, they decided to do a multistep process of "tying the knot." One of the steps was a civil service at city hall.

The administrator, a white woman who looked fifty-something and spoke with a Scottish brogue, was helping them get through the paperwork. Upon completion of the important forms, she turned to Annahid, smiled warmly, and shook her hand and said emphatically, "Congratulations, You're now officially married".

And then without missing a beat, she turned to Shakel and asked in a most genuine, easeful manner, "Do you shake hands?" He replied, "Yes." And she said, "well, congratulations" and shook his hand with the same warmth and kindness as she had don with Annahid.

As a bureaucrat who deals with the careful registration of names, she likely did some qick mental calculus. First, guessing that my name might be Muslim in origin, and second, knowing that some Muslim men don't shake hands with women. Instead of feeling thrown off by this knowledge, she confronted the uncertainty head-on by asking me a straightforward question.

The administrator's actions and attitude demonstrated what it mean to learn a new cultural habit. Somewhere along the way, she had decided it was important to unlearn a long-ingrained habit (assuming shaking hands was “normal” for everyone) and learn a new practice. She made a choice to become conscious of something that most people take for granted.

That subtle but extremely important step is what the bulk of the Deep Diversity framework is about: changing habits.

Pentatonix cover of John Lenon’s *Imagine*