THE COMPLEXITIES OF EQUITY

NAVIGATING SHADES OF GRAY IN SCHOOLS AND ORGANIZATIONS

LATISH C. REED

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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from The Complexities of Equity.

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How This Book Is Structured

This book examines how to address issues of marginalization in educational settings. However, the concepts in this book can be applied across all kinds of organizations, large or small, business or otherwise. It is a teaching tool examining how people and organizations have succeeded and failed when confronting marginalization and how those lessons can be applied to K-12 schools. Many of the topics and examples come from those schools. Others come from the world of business. A wide range of topics are discussed, and the many examples demonstrate the ongoing struggle to obtain equity for everyone across all professions. Readers are encouraged to reflect deeply on their own dispositions and practices by scrutinizing them through the lens of these real-life scenarios. This book leans heavily on examples from recent and historical world and national events, my own experiences, and specific examples related to addressing inequities within the school context.

Typically, a deductive approach is used to solve most problems. People start by identifying solutions to address the problem. As they implement the solutions, they encounter new challenges trying to address the initial problem. Ultimately, they must address these new challenges while still focusing on the initial problem. This book takes a more inductive approach. First, you acknowledge the difficulties you may encounter as you address a problem. You explore those difficulties and why they are hard. Once you understand the potential difficulties, you act using the EEC framework. Because of this, I have organized each of the chapters in an inductive fashion: first, I will acknowledge the problems that each chapter seeks to explore, then I will use the framework to discuss potential solutions.

FOUNDATION

The introduction and chapters 1 and 2 are the foundation for understanding the Equity Empowerment Continuum, which is the primary tool for understanding equity action and inaction in this book. People naturally want to know what to do about inequity without understanding the dynamics behind the actions they choose to take. However, the introduction explains why such a tool is needed to empower individuals and groups to pursue equitable outcomes in the face of resistance. Chapter 2 introduces the foundational pieces of that decision-making. Chapter 1 introduces and explores your ICE-T (identity, context, experiences, and the timing factor), which describes and informs your capacity to execute actions in equitable ways.

PHASES

Chapters 3–6 explain the four phases of the Equity Empowerment Continuum. These phases are fluid and changeable based on how you want to empower yourself to make more equitable decisions within your context. Your actions within each phase contribute to the overall outcome for your organization.

IDENTIFIERS

Each phase is defined by real-life historical and contemporary examples that illustrate the phase's most salient features, whether they arise as behaviors, actions, or beliefs. These examples are primarily drawn from the world of K-12 education but also include examples from the broader culture. While the main audience for this book is educators, many other professionals will be able to apply this content to their field, just as educators will be able to learn from the examples in business and popular culture. The identifiers do not define who you are as a person but can help you identify areas where your actions could be contradictory to your intent. These reflective features are meant to move you along the EEC.

PHASE VIGNETTES

At the close of each phase chapter, the reader is provided with a vignette that features the phase's identifiers. These vignettes feature fictitious individuals and situations, but they are based on real people and events. At the close of the vignette, an analysis is offered to explain how the individual and their team can push through to improve their approach to equity.

PROBING QUESTIONS

Questions throughout the book prompt readers to reflect on their own attitudes and actions regarding equity and empowerment. Practical questions strategically peppered throughout encourage readers to engage actively with the material, fostering a more profound exploration of their personal and professional spheres within the context of equity and empowerment.

END-OF-CHAPTER QUESTIONS

At the end of each chapter, the reader is asked a series of questions that can be answered individually or with a team.