

Books to be a more inclusive leader (Forbes List)

“To be truly inclusive, you must better understand yourself, your hidden biases, and the struggles that every type of person who could join your team might face”(Laura Garnet).

1. Diversity in the Workplace: Eye-Opening Interviews to Jumpstart Conversations about Identity, Privilege, and Bias by Bärí A. Williams

Unfortunately, workplace discrimination is still fairly rampant. In her book, Williams shares 25 eye-opening interviews with people who have experienced and fought against inequality; diving into race, gender, sexuality, age, ability, religion, culture, and more. As a leader, these personal accounts are important for you to read, as they will help you better understand the challenges that some of your team members face on a regular basis.

2. How to Be an Inclusive Leader: Your Role in Creating Cultures of Belonging Where Everyone Can Thrive by Jennifer Brown

Talent pool diversity is increasing across many fields. And as recruiting and hiring practices slowly but surely start to keep up, leadership must do the same. Individuals in roles of authority must understand how to make *everyone* feel like they belong. Brown introduces the audience to the [Inclusive Leader Continuum](#), which consists of four stages: unaware, aware, active, and advocate. Find out where you fall on the continuum and how you can keep progressing forward.

3. Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People by Mahzarin R. Banaji

If you think you're free of biases, you're probably wrong. The fact is, you can be a good, moral human being and still have underlying and subconscious bias. From the moment you enter into the world, you're exposed to endless cultural and societal attitudes, which results in hidden biases (or blind spots). These biases affect how we interact with others, including how we lead. Banaji will help you identify your own biases and how to overcome them.

4. Diversity, Inc.: The Failed Promise of a Billion-Dollar Business by Pamela Newkirk

Just because an organization invests money or creates a department dedicated to it doesn't mean there are tangible outcomes. Award-winning journalist Newkirk explores the efficacy of multiple diversity and inclusion initiatives. Turns out, the majority of results aren't so hot. However, she does include some success stories that leaders can learn from in an effort to back up those big words and fancy titles with meaningful actions and positive change.

5. White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism by Robin DiAngelo

Here's an inarguable truth: White people (like me) have a certain privilege just because we're white. This doesn't mean that we don't struggle in other ways, but it does mean that we benefit from advantages that people of color aren't privy to. Yet, it can be very hard for white people to acknowledge this. It's "more comfortable" to push aside whiteness, to pretend it doesn't play a part. But here's the thing: It does. When white people claim to not be part of the problem, that just further contributes to injustice. An antiracist educator, DiAngelo explores the phenomenon of white fragility and challenges people of my race to finally admit we're part of the problem and figure out how to be a part of the solution, instead.

6. So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo

Many of us have been conditioned to avoid discussing race, to embrace color blindness all together. But to affect real change, we must have these conversations. We must get uncomfortable. Otherwise, things will stay exactly the way they are, and that's unacceptable. After reading this book, you'll feel more comfortable having open, honest conversations about subject matter such as race, racism, intersectionality, affirmative action, and more. It still won't be easy, but you can absolutely do it. And remember: Making mistakes is okay. Staying silent is not.

7. How To Be An Antiracist by Ibram Kendi

It's not enough to say you aren't racist. It's not even enough to *not* be racist. If we sit back, convinced that being an unbiased individual (or so we think) is "doing our part," change won't come. But it must! People of color deserve so much better, and if white people don't put substantial effort into making this happen, the cycle will continue as it has for the past 450 years. Kendi provides a comprehensive history of ethics, science, law, and history as well as tangible steps you can take to contribute to a just and equitable society (and workplace).

8. Inclusify: The Power of Uniqueness and Belonging to Build Innovative Teams by Stefanie K. Johnson

According to Johnson, all humans have two basic wants: A sense of belonging, and the ability to be our unique selves at the same time. In other words, we want to be able to express the qualities and quirks that make us who we are, and we want those around us to embrace them for it. This type of culture is a

must if you want your team to be effective, happy, and high-performing. With Johnson's handbook, you'll learn how to achieve and maintain that state.

9. Subtle Acts of Exclusion: How to Understand, Identify, and Stop Microaggressions by Tiffany Jana and Michael Baran

While some acts of discrimination are more overt, others are disguised. This doesn't make them any better, though. These smaller, less noticeable actions known as "microaggressions" can be just as harmful to the individuals they target, if not more. In this book, Jana and Baran equip you with the tools you'll need to identify these microaggressions, which they refer to as subtle acts of exclusion (SAEs), and how to confront them in an open-minded and constructive manner.

10. We Can't Talk about That at Work!: How to Talk about Race, Religion, Politics, and Other Polarizing Topics by Mary-Frances Winters

Bringing up taboo topics in the workplace can cause utter discomfort and disarray. But if we don't talk about them, people will continue to feel like they can't be their true selves. Plus, avoiding the topic also means avoiding positive change. Just think about the unacceptable discomfort some of your staff may experience each day, as they try to navigate organizational injustice and microaggressions from their colleagues. Yet, as much as these conversations should occur, they need to be done the right way. In her book, Winters helps explain how to structure the conversations, communicate effectively, and navigate damaging conflict.

11. Erasing Institutional Bias: How to Create Systemic Change for Organizational Inclusion by Ashley Diaz Mejias and Tiffany Jana

Change may be tough for individuals, but overhauling an entire institution? Well, that might seem impossible. But it's not, and the hard work must be done. Jana and Mejias provide actionable ways you can challenge the systemic issues in your organization and how to overcome workplace bias. These skills are absolutely essential if you want to [be a successful advocate](#) for your team.