

TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONAL VALUES: REVISITED

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AS AN EMERGING ANTI-RACIST/ANTI-OPPRESSIVE INSTITUTION, Crossroads has been working to establish and articulate the principled place on which we stand. This process allows us to define emerging anti-racist *Transforming Values* we introduced nearly two years ago*. It also provides the opportunity to reflect on and identify the ‘traditional’ white institutional values we all struggle to shed – especially when remembering that the all-too-familiar values were established when institutions were legally mandated to be racially segregated.

Values shaping white institutions & creating discomfort/dysfunction, a by-product of the embedded oppression and misuse of power.	Transforming Values, often in conflict with traditional white institutional values; cultivate terrain for anti-racist accountability to germinate.
Either/Or Thinking: Right/wrong, black/white, male/female, etc. Forces out diversity; complies with rigid ways of being. Power consolidated & maintained with select few ‘right, good, white, male’ against which all else is measured. Creates myth that it is efficient for everyone to be the same.	Both/And thinking with a bias toward action: Acknowledges that multiple realities/myriad ways to ‘do’ institutional life exist. Purpose: work through differences to find solutions that move toward anti-racist goals. Bias toward action means not allowing conflict to paralyze us into indecision and immobility.
Scarcity Worldview: Budgets reflect finite resources & become excuse for limiting activities. Creates environment rife with ‘knee-jerk’ reaction of “No – we don’t have enough money for that.” “No” becomes automatic answer to innovation, anti-oppression and liberation. Cannot be mission-focused when default setting is ‘No’.	Abundant worldview that uses resources responsibly: If we operate from premise of “We have an abundance of power, how do we want to use that power?” then questions about resources begin to shift. What we understand to be resources begins to change, and how we use resources is transformed.
Secrecy Mode: Information is power; when it is distributed on a “needs-to-know” basis, power is also unequally distributed. Secrecy controls power; it is almost always destructive - leads to dishonesty and triangulation. Secrecy destroys trust. Confidentiality gets confused with secrecy; “confidential” decisions are often in reality carried out in secret as a way to maintain the power status quo.	Transparent communication & decision making that guards personal integrity: Inclusive processes take longer to come to consensus, but once a decision is made, implementation is quicker. Confidentiality (not secrecy) is important to transparent communication, allowing individuals to make mistakes and recover from them without being scapegoated or demonized by the institution.
Individual Action: Isolates and sets people up to compete with one another. Compartmentalized activities increase competition, creating a redundancy of activities -- similar functions cannot be combined/shared. When focusing internally on competing for resources, mission and relationships with the world outside the institution are lost. Individual achievement nurtured by white culture undermines ability to work for a larger whole.	Cooperation & Collaboration that nurture individual creativity: Maintaining a spirit of co-operation & collaboration bound by a collective perspective/commitment to the analysis of racism allows institutions to stand in the midst of diversity with integrity and respect. Individual creativity happens in the parameters of an accountable, responsible relationship with the rest of the community.

IN SUMMARY

THE POWER ANALYSIS OF RACISM MAKES CLEAR the fundamental dynamic of institutional racism: that institutions are not, and have never been, accountable to People of Color. What is needed are new values that are outward oriented with an overarching bias toward effectiveness. The need for these values begins to emerge when institutions reach a critical mass of members who are claiming an anti-racist identity where there is a growing awareness of the need to be accountable to anti-racist People of Color. *Transforming Values* create an institutional environment that makes accountability to People of Color and other socially oppressed groups possible.