

Objectives

- Identify the challenges and personal implications of merging differing Christian perspectives based on values, culture, and experiences towards one overarching goal.
- Articulate some of the many challenges faced by a roadmap of living in poverty and the difficulty of unraveling those intersections that complicate future success.
- Describe the success of empowering human potential and the gift of unconditional relationship it brings.

Disclaimer

We have no connection to the organization, Open Table, other than what we have described in this presentation. We were not compensated in any way to present about this particular organization.

Northside Baptist Church

- Corsicana, Texas
 - Population 25,000
 - Rural Community
- Church
 - Spoken desire to make a “greater impact” in community
 - Other poverty-related ministries at church
 - “When Helping Hurts”

PCHAS

- Presbyterian Children Homes and Services
 - Child and Family Program
 - Established June 2000
 - Uses Social Work Generalist Intervention Model and Planned Change Process

Open Table Background

- History
 - 2005-Encounter with Ernie
 - 2007-Non-profit status
 - Now-16 States and Washington, DC



Open Table Family Model

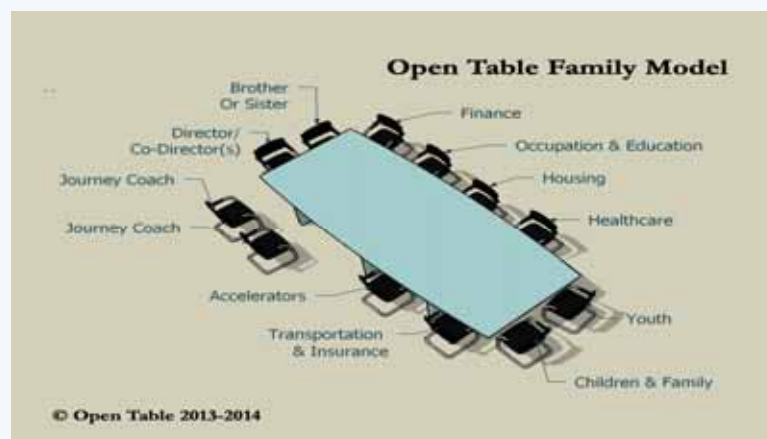


Table Members



Our Sisters



Group Process

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing



Differing Values

- The Values of Middle Class & Poverty
- Ruby Payne's Hidden Rules Among Classes

HIDDEN RULES	Poverty Class	Middle Class	Wealthy Class
DRIVING FORCES	Survival, Relationships & Entertainment	Work, Achievement, Material Security	Financial, Political, Social Connections
FOOD	Did you get enough?	Did you like it?	Was it presented well?
POWER	Linked to Personal Respect, Can't stop bad things from happening	Power and respect are separate, power in information and institutions	Power in expertise, connections, stability; influences policy and direction
DESTINY	Believes in Fate Cannot do much to mitigate chance	Believes in choice Can change the future with good choices now	Noblesse oblige
TIME	The present is most important Decisions for the moment	Future most important Decisions made against future ramifications	Traditions and history most important, decisions made partially on basis of tradition/decorum
MONEY	To be used - spent	To be managed	To be conserved and invested
EDUCATION	Valued as abstract, not a reality	Crucial for climbing success ladder and making money	Necessary tradition for making and maintaining connections
PERSONALITY	Is for entertainment Sense of humor highly valued	Is for acquisition and stability Achievement is highly valued	Is for connections, financial, political, and social connections are highly valued
CLOTHING	Valued for individual style and expression of personality	Valued for its quality and acceptance into norm of middle class, label is important	Valued for its artistic sense and expression, designer is important
WORLD VIEW	Sees world in terms of local setting	Sees world in terms of national setting	Sees world in terms of international view
HUMOR	About people	About situations	About social faux pas
LANGUAGE	Casual register Language is about survival	Formal register Language is about negotiation	Formal register Language is about networking

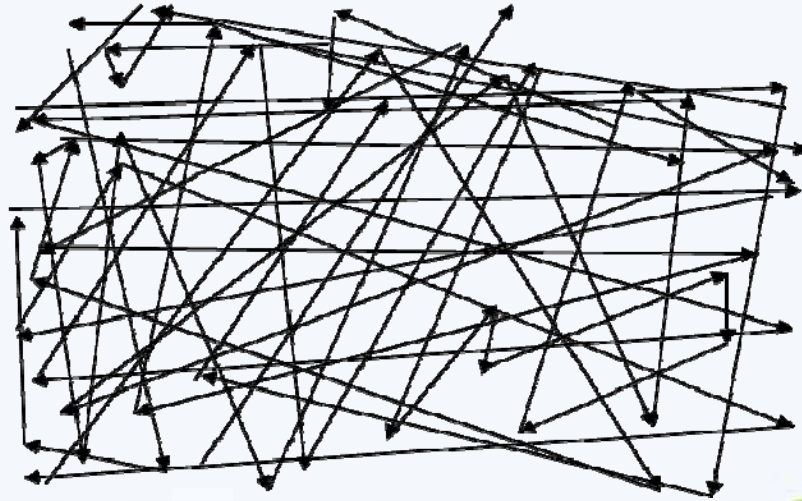
Differences in Culture

- Church
 - "Like you "B", I was a little discouraged that they spent most of their time this past week focused on the Revival at their Church. I am not saying that is a bad thing but maybe we need to work more on prioritizing and time management." - Table Member "S"
 - "When they were at VBS all week instead of applying for jobs, none of us said a word but many of us were thinking it and went home frustrated. Where is the balance?" – Table Member "B"
- Family Structure
 - Mother Figure vs. Sister vs. Aunt vs. Mom

Different Experiences

- Survival Mode vs Planning and Preparedness
 - "One thing I mentioned to D is that the girls seem to be in a pattern of living very reactionary lives, not having the luxury to think about what they really Want or are able to do. Maybe that's a part of living forever in poverty?" – Table Member "B"
 - "I also think when we compare them to our children who have grown up with nurture, stability, positive parenting as well as continuing support in their adulthood, we are judging them. They have been afforded none of these and although they are grown they have little foundation or support." – Table Member "P"

Differing Experiences



Building Relationships

- Growing in relationship with one another
 - Social events
 - Celebrations
 - Laughing and Crying Together



Building Relationships

- We all have issues...or do we?
 - "I keep thinking what would I say and do if Ieshia and Kianna were my grown daughters. What I think Ieshia and Kianna have lacked is good life skill training and decision-making." -Table Member "D"



Building Relationships

- Money vs. Relationship in Changing Poverty

Building Relationships

- "We're all in this together."
 - "I am looking at this from my own struggles with low self esteem not from a poverty standpoint. I have failed a class before, I managed to get through College and receive my degree but because I didn't have a high GPA I was afraid to even interview for a job. I haven't always been treated well in my working environments and I know what it feels like to be fired, I have been fired and laid off more than once. I have had supervisors tell me I was stupid, I have had mistakes that I made put before my entire work group as examples of what not to do. I may not have lived in poverty but I know what it is like to be beaten down and I know what it is like to feel like a failure and I don't want that for Ieshia or Kianna." Table Member "S"

Building Relationships

What is Success?

- "I really love Ieshia and Kianna and I feel their hurts so deeply but I also want to help them achieve their goals as I know everyone else does as well." Table Member "S"
- Events since Open Table:

Implications for Social Work and the Church

- Training of Volunteers is critical
- Educate congregants about complexity of poverty
- Provide opportunities to build relationships with different groups of people
- Self-Care is important
- Be truth-filled and grace-filled