Using intentional engagement to advance equity, inclusion, and belonging in the water data community

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State Water Resources Control Board

CALIFORNIA Water Boards

Data For Lunch Speaker Series – Apr. 5, 2022

Land, Territory, and Water Acknowledgement

Nearly 200 tribal nations are located within the modern borders of California - more than any other state in the United States.

The State Water Board recognizes each tribe's unique sovereign status, culture, history, environmental and water concerns and each tribes' historic knowledge and experience managing California's water resources. These sovereign people have been stewards of this land since time immemorial.

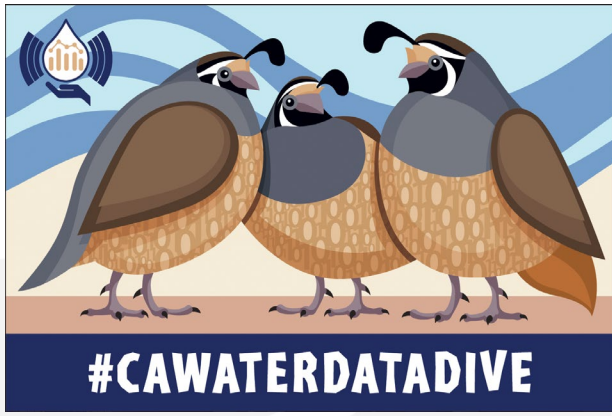
Learn more about the land you are on: https://native-land.ca/

About Me

I have…

- Taken trainings on:
  - Meeting facilitation
  - Mentoring & coaching
  - Science communication
  - Racial equity, implicit bias
  - Emotional intelligence
  - Tribal history, culture, engagement
- Planned and facilitated both small and large meetings and events
- Adopted a growth mindset

Recent Engagement & Equity Efforts



- California Water Data Science Symposium & Water Data Challenge (Planning Lead)
- Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment (Program Coordinator and Project Lead)
  - Safe to Eat Workgroup (Co-chair)
  - Statewide Tribal Engagement (OIMA Tribal Coordinator)
- Freshwater Harmful Algal Bloom Data Modernization (Former Technical Lead)
- CA Water Quality Monitoring Council Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Workgroup (Member)

Recent Water Board Resolutions

Water Boards Racial Equity Resolution (2021)

Condemned racism, xenophobia, bigotry, and racial injustice and strengthened commitment to racial equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and anti-racism

Water Boards Open Data Resolution (2018)

Adopted principles of open data as a core value and directed programs and activities to implement strategic action to improve data accessibility and associated innovation

Today's Journey

Topic	Time
Grounding on Equity Principles	~ 10 min
Putting Principles into Practice	~ 15 min
Facilitated Discussion	~ 15 min
Additional Q&A, Discussion	~ 30 min

Photo by Jake Blucker on Unsplash

Positionality & Intersectionality

Positionality

How differences in social position and power shape identities and access in society

Intersectionality

The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups

Let's Acknowledge Privilege & Power Dynamics

Individuals:

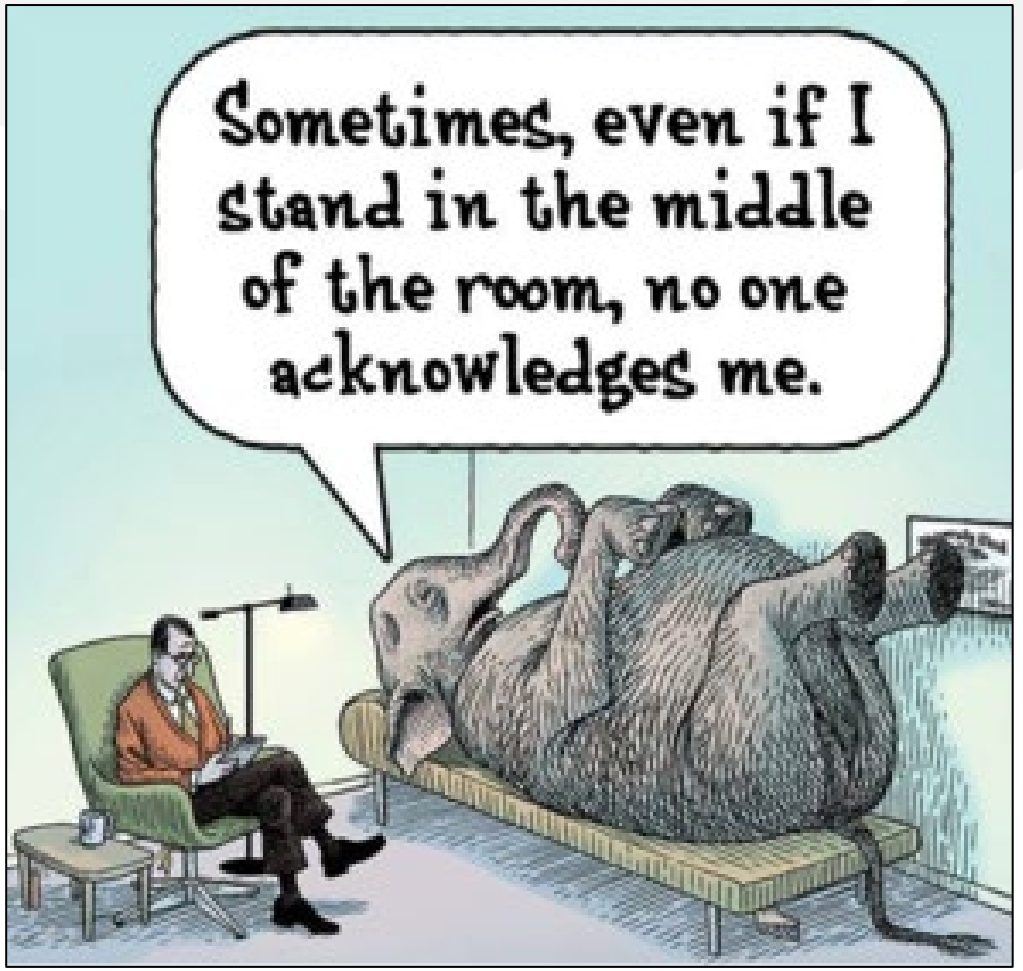
- Race
- Gender
- Ability
- Affiliations
- Titles
- Degrees

Institutions/Systems:

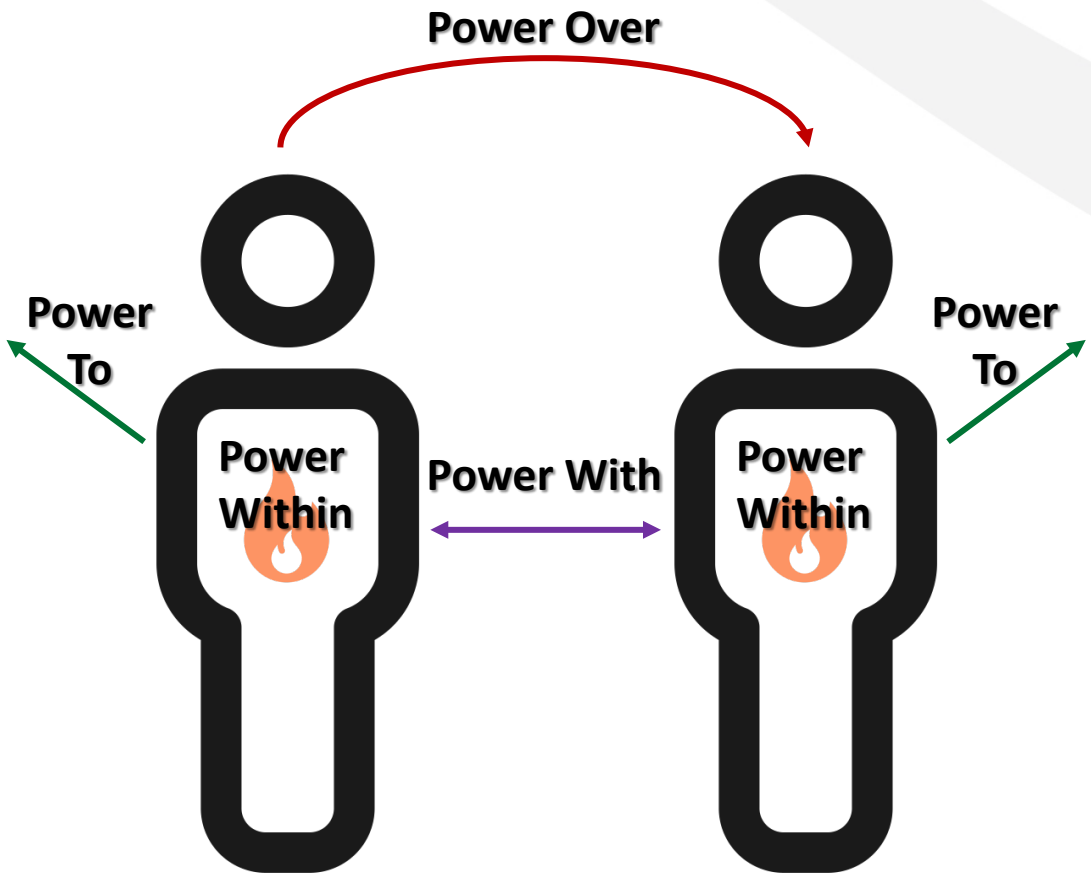
- Authority for Governance and Sovereignty
- Institutional Power
- Historical Agents of Oppression

Example: red lining

Generational burdens and benefits



Types of Power



Power over operates to privilege certain people while marginalizing others.

Power with has to do with finding common ground among different interests in order to build collective strength.

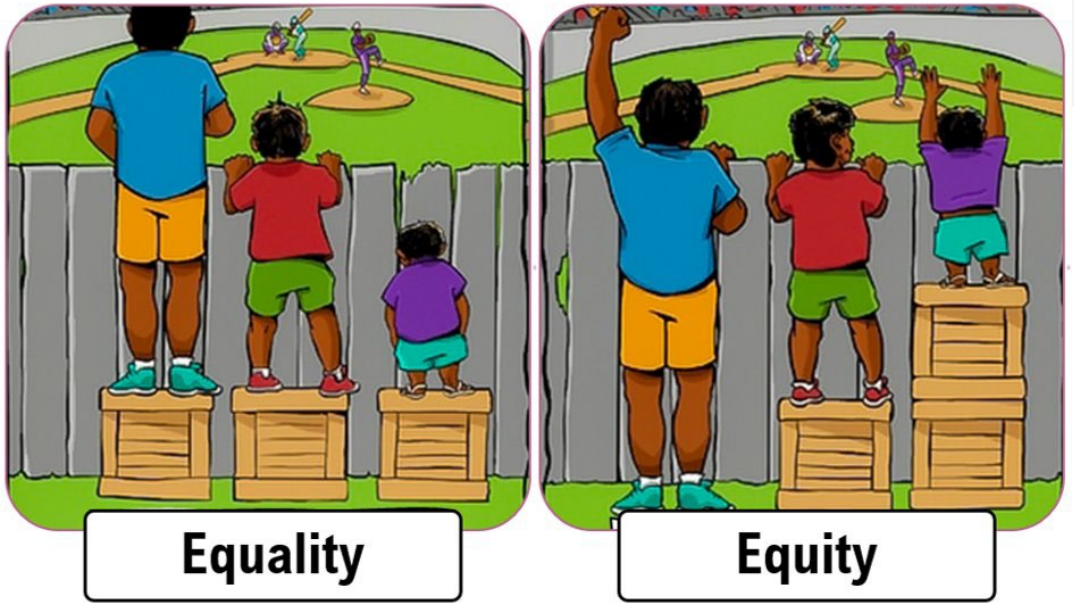
Power to refers to the unique potential of every person to shape his or her life and world.

Power within has to do with a person's sense of self-worth and self-knowledge.

	POWER OVER	POWER WITH
PERSPECTIVE	Centered in scarcity Organizations are machines	Centered in abundance Organizations are social systems
PRIORITIES	Divide and conquer Rules & Procedure (*How*) Compliance & Competition	Strive to unite Principles & Mission (*Why*) Commitment & Co-creation
ACTIONS	Extrinsic Rewards Finding Blame Dwelling on weaknesses	Intrinsic Motivation Fixing Process Leveraging strengths
	Hoarding data & information	Sharing data & information
RELATIONSHIPS	Centered in fear & skepticism Apathy	Centered in trust & confidence Empathy
DECISION-MAKING	Exclusion & Efficiency	Inclusion & Effectiveness
	Zero-sum (Win-Lose)	Synergistic (Win-Win)
LEARNING	Few can teach, some learn	Everyone can teach, everyone learns
OTHER DISTINCTIONS	Supervision/Direction in Silos	Engage/Dialogue within Systems
	Inform/Tell	Inspire/Stay Curious/Ask Questions

Table adapted from Tom Terez, Workplace Solutions. Inc

Equity



DIVERSITY ASKS

WHO

— IS IN — THE ROOM

?

EQUITY ASKS

WHO IS

— TRYING TO — GET IN THE ROOM BUT CAN'T

?

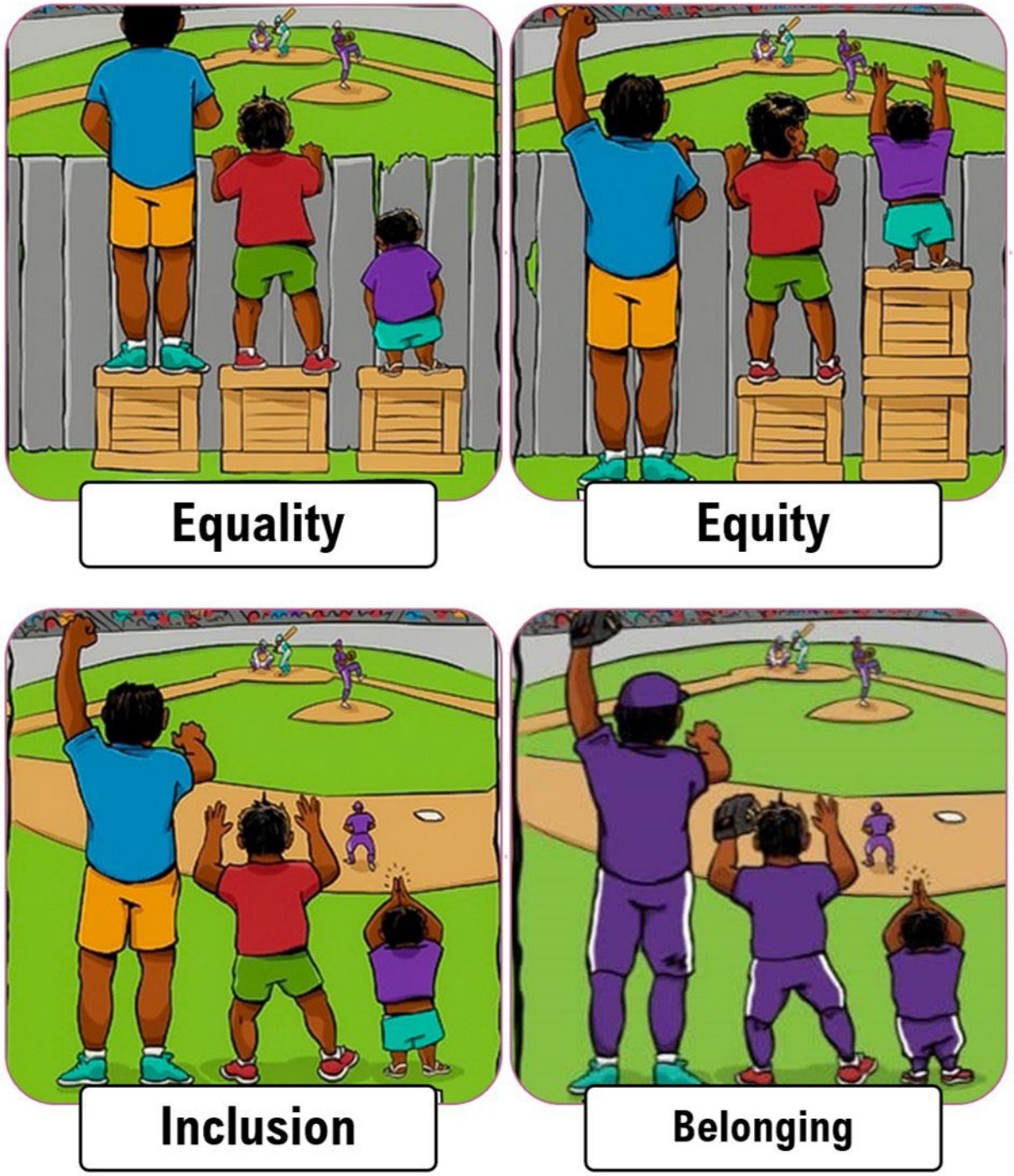
INCLUSION ASKS

— HAVE — EVERYONE'S IDEAS BEEN HEARD

?

Belonging

- Diversity, equity & inclusion are the starting point
- ***Belonging should be the goal***
- Belonging → truly engaged, effective, innovative, and successful teams, organizations & communities!



Principles to Operationalize Equity

Our Principles
Be Intentional
Be Inclusive
Be Flexible
Make Space for: Vulnerability Difficult and Uncomfortable Conversations Failing Forward

Be Intentional

- What is our purpose?
- What have we learned? What worked? What didn't?
- Are we clear on scope, boundaries, what people can expect?
- How will we meet expectations?
- Who has been included in the past? Who was missing? Why?
- What can we do to be more inclusive & help people fell that they belong?
- What does success look like now How do we get there from here?

Be Inclusive

- Who was included in the past? Who was missing? Why?
- Who are our critics? How can we learn from their feedback? Can we partner?
- What barriers exist that prevent folks from participating at all or engaging fully? How can we reduce or remove those barriers?
- Which voices, perspectives, issues, experiences can we center?

Water Data Science Symposium 2019

Community Advisory Committee & Panel

Water Data Science Symposium 2020

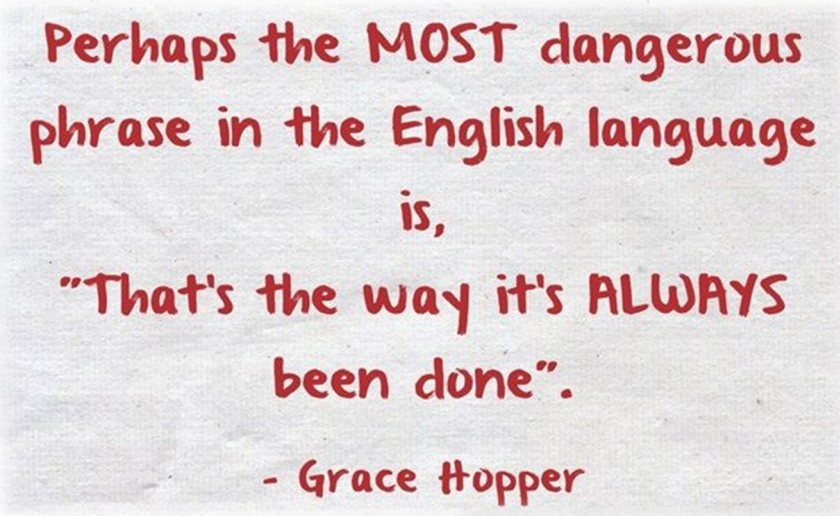
Co-development of Tribal Film Screening & Panel

Water Data Science Symposium 2021

Water Data Science Symposium & Water Data Challenge 2022

Be Flexible

- Which boundaries or timelines are firm? *Are they really?*
- Which boundaries or timelines are are flexible?
- What is the minimum we need to achieve for success? What is our wish list? What is the moonshot?
- Can we change the time/date/format to accommodate and welcome more people/schedules?



How can the process evolve?

Deadline → Time frame

In person → Virtual

Business hours → Evenings

Min. Breaks → Optimal Breaks

Make Space for…

- Vulnerability
- Difficult and Uncomfortable Conversations
- Failing Forward

Vulnerability …Leads to Innovation!

Vulnerability

- Uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure
- Our most accurate measure of courage
- The birthplace of innovation, creativity and change

> **Vulnerability is the absolute heartbeat of innovation and creativity. There can be zero innovation without vulnerability.**
>
> **- Brené Brown**

Innovation

- Comes as the result of dealing with doubt and being willing to face hard conversations
- Requires us to:
  - Be vulnerable & brave
  - Accept certainty of failure
  - Learn how to pick ourselves back up and keep going
  - Create courageous spaces so we can be fully seen

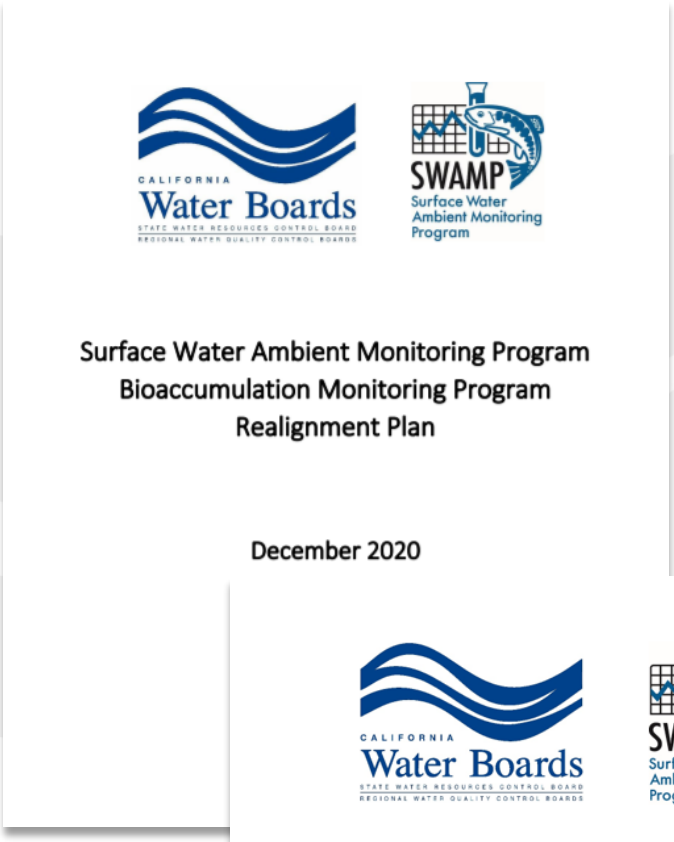
Vulnerability

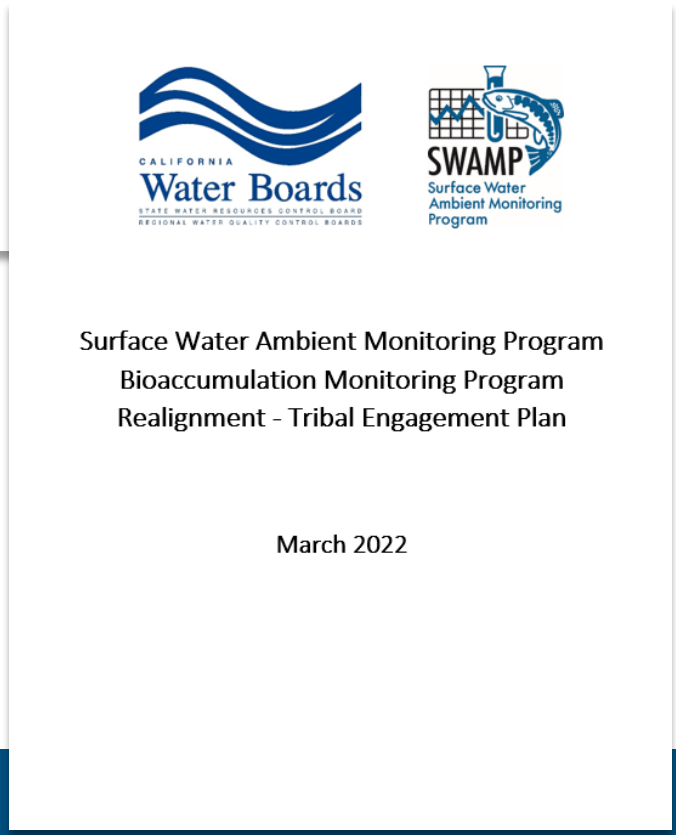
- Publication and discussion of opportunities for improvement
- Invitation for constructive criticism
- New process & partners

Innovation

Meet Bardo - your friendly bioaccumulation buddy!

- New insights & solutions
- New Program direction
- New (useful!) resources
- More equity, inclusion & belonging





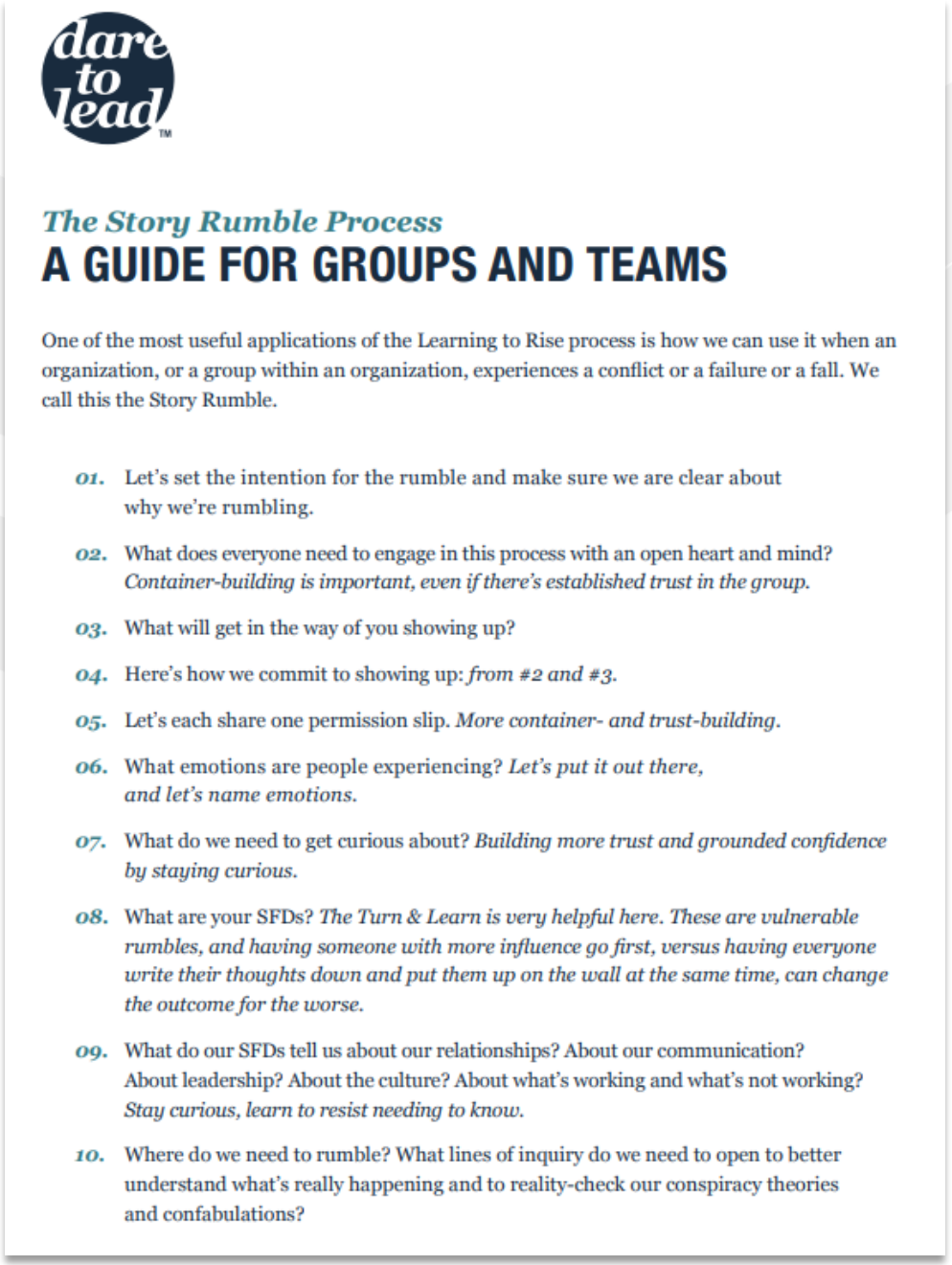
Difficult and Uncomfortable Conversations

- Take practice & work
- Vulnerability, trust & respect are key!
- We need to know and agree on the *how*
  - What is OK?
  - What is not OK?
- Avoiding them doesn't make the issues go away

Difficult and Uncomfortable Conversations

Some Examples…

- Symposium Keynotes & Panels
- Realignment Meetings & Discussions
- Conversations with colleagues



dare to lead™

The Story Rumble Process

A GUIDE FOR GROUPS AND TEAMS

One of the most useful applications of the Learning to Rise process is how we can use it when an organization, or a group within an organization, experiences a conflict or a failure or a fall. We call this the Story Rumble.

01. Let's set the intention for the rumble and make sure we are clear about why we're rumbling.
02. What does everyone need to engage in this process with an open heart and mind? *Container-building is important, even if there's established trust in the group.*
03. What will get in the way of you showing up?
04. Here's how we commit to showing up: *from #2 and #3.*
05. Let's each share one permission slip. *More container- and trust-building.*
06. What emotions are people experiencing? *Let's put it out there, and let's name emotions.*
07. What do we need to get curious about? *Building more trust and grounded confidence by staying curious.*
08. What are your SFDs? *The Turn & Learn is very helpful here. These are vulnerable rumbles, and having someone with more influence go first, versus having everyone write their thoughts down and put them up on the wall at the same time, can change the outcome for the worse.*
09. What do our SFDs tell us about our relationships? About our communication? About leadership? About the culture? About what's working and what's not working? *Stay curious, learn to resist needing to know.*
10. Where do we need to rumble? What lines of inquiry do we need to open to better understand what's really happening and to reality-check our conspiracy theories and confabulations?

Brené Brown Dare to Lead | The Rumble Process

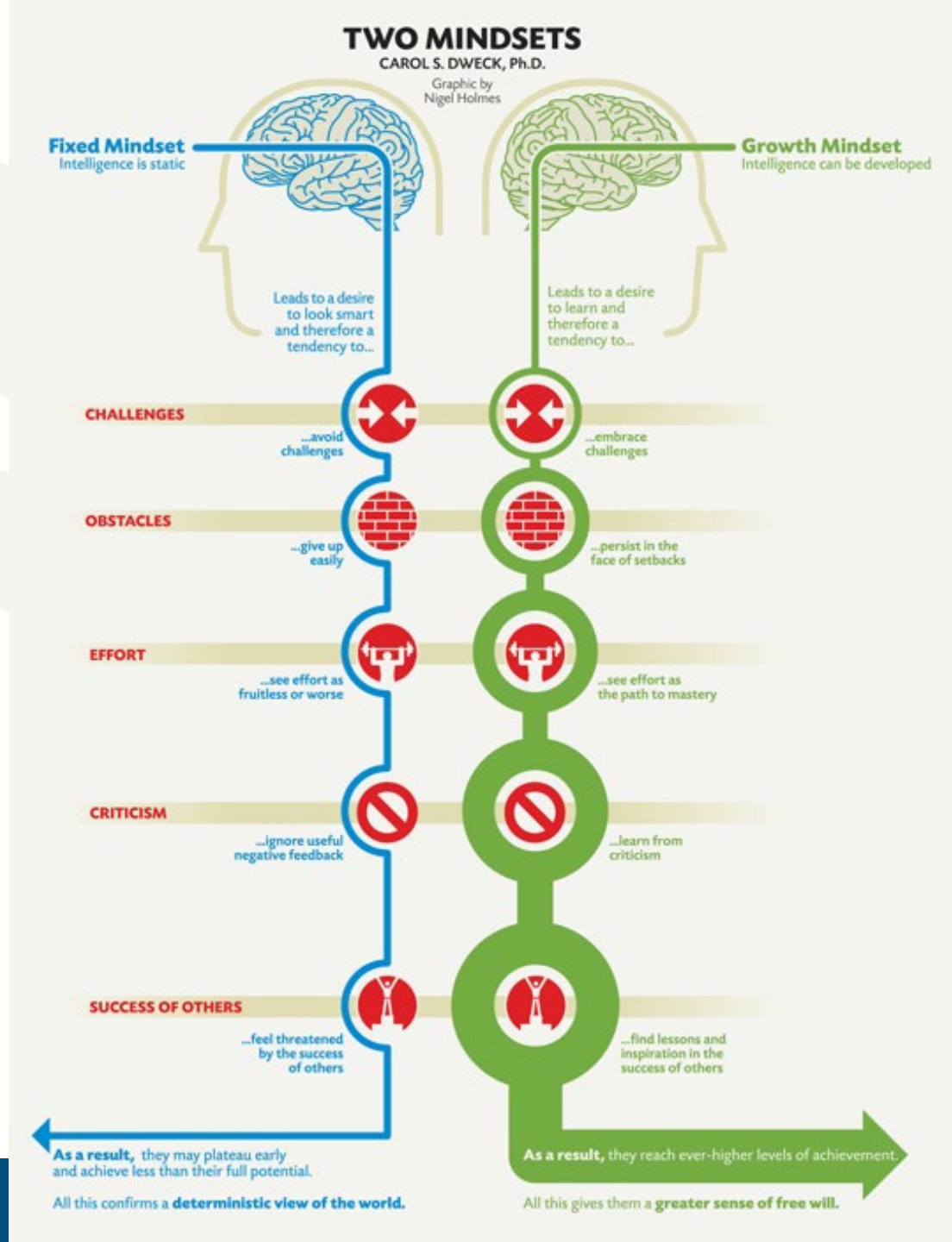
Failing Forward with a Growth Mindset

Fixed Mindset

- Basic abilities, intelligence, talents cannot be improved (even *with* hard work)

Growth Mindset

- Basic abilities, intelligence, talents can be developed through effort, good teaching, and persistence



When we fail, we think…

Fixed Mindset

- **A Failure = Catastrophe**
- That was too hard, we knew we wouldn't be able to do it
- We shouldn't have even tried
- Feedback and criticism is personal
- We tried and failed – so the idea is a failure

Growth Mindset

- **A Failure = Opportunity**
- That was tough – **what can we learn** from that experience?
- How can we **grow & evolve?**
- Feedback is constructive
- *That* didn't work – how might we **iterate** on that idea?
- How might we **change** to better prepare for next time?

Before we try, we think…

- Has our vision for success changed?
- How can we learn from past efforts?
- Who can give us constructive feedback?
- Where are our opportunities to grow?
- Is more support needed? Where? For whom?
- How might we center around listening and learning?

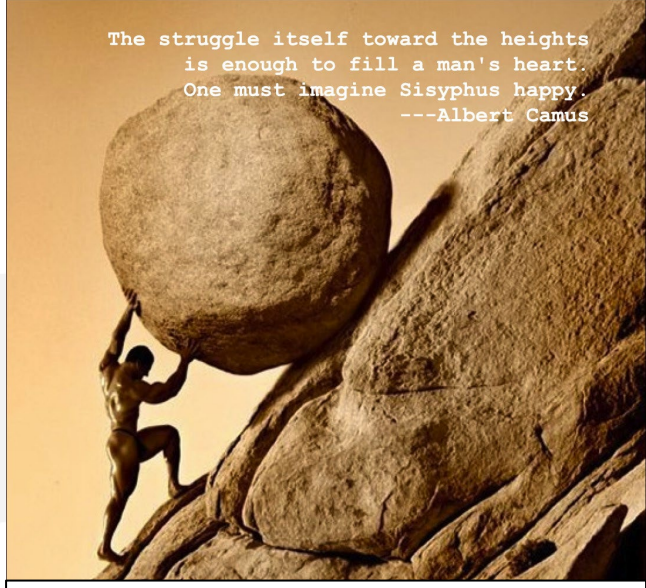
- This might be hard, but it will be worth it!
- We've got this!

Principles to Operationalize Equity

Our Principles ...have led to...	Engagement with IMPACT
Be Intentional	Clear(er) purpose and expectations
Be Inclusive	Diverse perspectives and ideas
Be Flexible	Easier onramps for engagement
Make Space for: Vulnerability Difficult & Uncomfortable Conversations Failing Forward	Courage Trust Meaningful Conversations & Insights Learning & Innovation

Let's Acknowledge Hard Truths

- Many of us are working on complex, nuanced, interconnected issues.
- This work
  - Is difficult – and there's a lot to do
  - Cannot be done alone – team members, partnerships, and communities of practice are essential!
  - Will likely require more funding, resources, time than you think
  - Is easier to do in non-regulatory spaces



Sysiphus was condemned by the gods to roll a boulder to the peak of a mountain, only to have it roll back down once he has accomplished the task…This ceaseless cycle is much like our own lives…We must seek contentment not in where things begin or end. **We must realize contentment as the things we do.**

Let’s Choose Hope!

We all have the power to contribute - every person, program, institution, and system - we just need to find our thread.

The more of us that work on these issues, the more likely (and quickly!) we are to change culture and achieve objectives around equity, justice, inclusion, and belonging.

Thank you!

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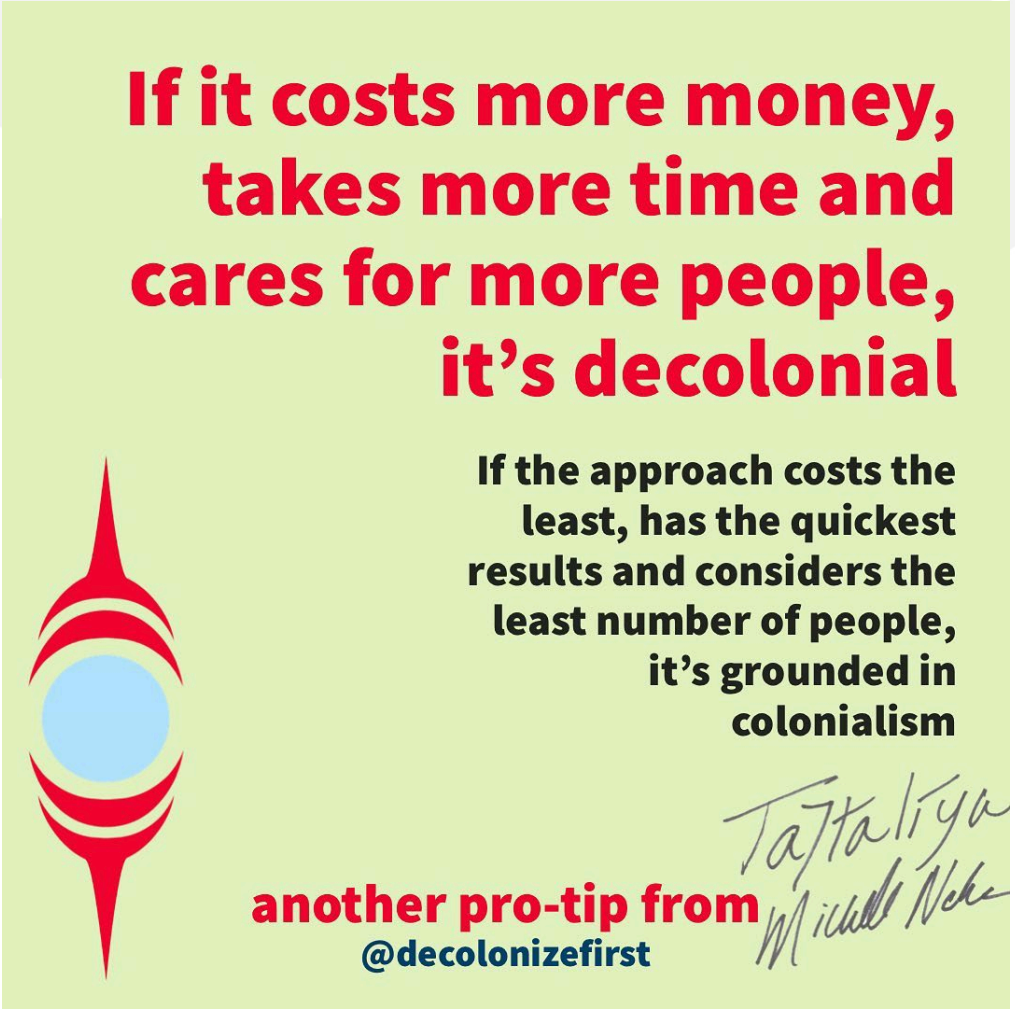
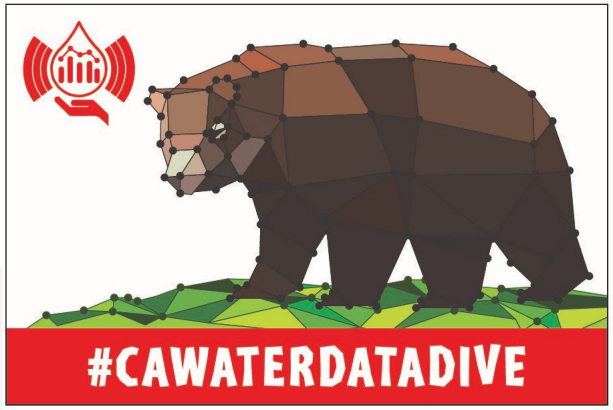
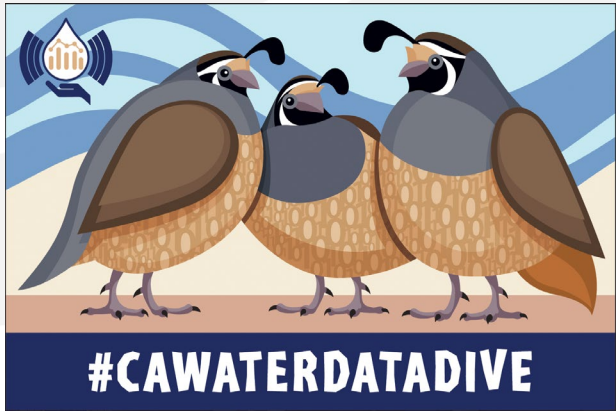
Pronouns: she/her/hers

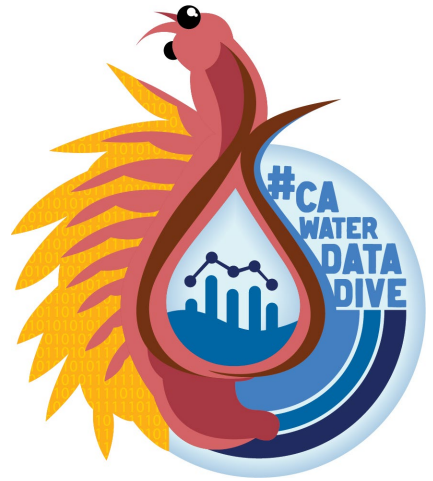


Recent Engagement & Equity Efforts - Links

- Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment
- Safe to Eat Workgroup
- Freshwater Harmful Algal Bloom Data Modernization
- California Water Data Science Symposium
- Water Boards' Tribal Water Data Initiatives
- CA Water Quality Monitoring Council Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Workgroup







Resources – Meeting Facilitation

- Water Boards College of Water Informatics
  - Data Tool Kit - Data Engagement Handbook
- NOAA resources
  - Facilitation Basics for Coastal Managers
  - Introduction to Planning and Facilitating Effective Meetings
  - How to Facilitate a Virtual Meeting
  - Meeting Engagement Tools
  - Dealing with Disruptive Behaviors in Meetings
- The Art of Gathering, Priya Parker

Resources – Equity and Leadership

- Water Boards Racial Equity
- Brené Brown
  - Brené with Aiko Bethea on Inclusivity at Work: The Heart of Hard Conversations (Podcast, Nov 2020)
  - Brené with Aiko Bethea on Creating Transformative Cultures (Podcast, Feb 2021)
  - Dare to Lead (2018); Dare to Lead Hub
- DTSC Training on Tribal Cultural Awareness and California Native American History (March 2021, 2 hours)
- Developing a Growth Mindset with Carol Dweck (2014, 10 min)