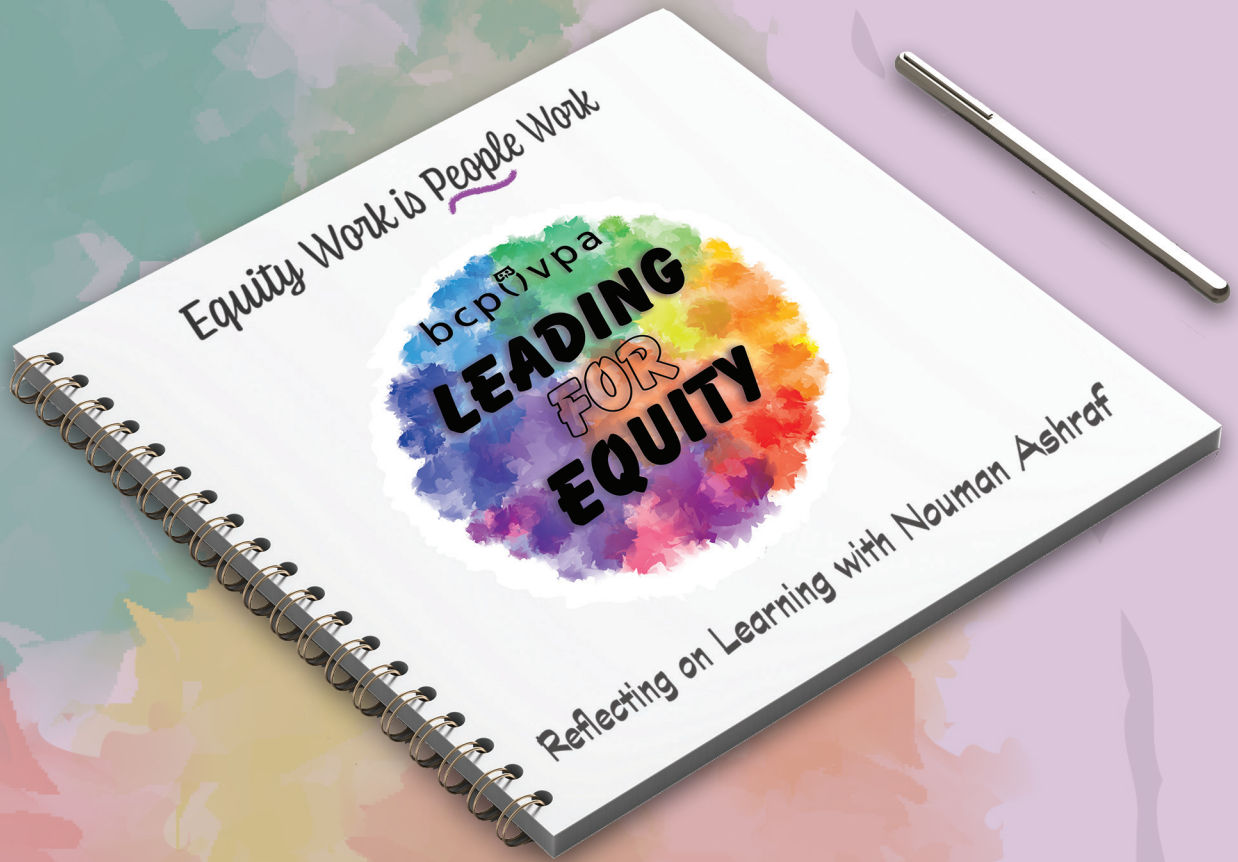




The BCPVPA's 2021-2022 Leading for Equity series has deepened our focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion, and helped spark the journey of embedding new ways of being into our identities.

On the following pages, we hear from staff, members, and workshop presenters with thoughts about the intent, impact, and learning of the Leading for Equity series, and the process of change that we are experiencing and embracing.

Equity work is ongoing work and, as we learned from Nouman Ashraf, equity work is people work.



If language fluency is based in attachment, Nouman Ashraf has taught us that equity is based in connection, relationship, and love. He is shifting the frame from guilt and shame, to commitment and engagement.

The work of leadership is equity: it is people work. If you have a commitment to the growth of others, you need to care about them. This is our duty of care as Principals and Vice-Principals. As leaders in our schools, we have privilege, and we need to use that privilege in the service of others.

In our hands we have an impact on the culture of our school. Nouman says, “I don’t care what is written on your walls; I care about what is happening in your halls,” and, “the behaviour you walk past is the culture we enable.” So: who do we need to be as leaders to create equitable environments? Nouman brings to life a model of understanding how identity frames our contribution.

Andrea McComb
*Director of Professional
Learning & Development*
BCPVPA

***“I don’t care what is
written on your walls;
I care about what is
happening in
your halls.”***

Identity:

Who am I? What is my story?

Identities are complex. Identities are not static, because they are linked to our experience and context. There are many intersectional and overlapping vectors of identity that help define who we are in relation to our experience. Leadership is about knowing how you have come to be where you are; it is about owning your story. We are all continually learning, so growth is about owning our mistakes and owning our learning story.

Aspiration:

Who do I need to be, to lead this work?

To lead across difference, Nouman shares a quote,

“Leadership is about the courage, capacity, curiosity and commitment to work with, learn from and give voice to the ‘other’”.

Gianpiero Petriglieri

We can be leaders who value curiosity, and accept the growth edges of imperfection, and leaders who are open to the perspectives and lived experiences of others. Leaders who can let go of the need to defend their ‘good personhood’, while listening deeply for impact. Leaders who position themselves to listen to the experience of another, instead of concerning ourselves with the nature of their own intent.

Capacity:

**What capacities do I need
to activate for impact?**

Nouman talks of the need for leaders to be healers. This entails moving from Eurocentric, decisive action to listening and holding space for the ‘other’. We can be leaders who understand how safety is created and are curious about how safety is experienced by others. Leaders who can set aside problem-solving actions to create conditions for others to be themselves openly and unapologetically in community.

Opportunity:

**What opportunities are
right under my nose?**

Nouman outlines three things the pandemic has illustrated:

- 1.** Privilege and equity are real.
- 2.** The good old days were not so good for some.
- 3.** When it comes to building back better, muscle memory is not a good thing.

To build back better with a deeper sense of equity, we design *with* not *for* those we lead.

Contribution:

**How do I move from allyship
to accomplice?**

Jully Black was quoted as saying, “We’re looking for accomplices, not allies.”

Speak up in the meeting, echo the voice of ‘the other’. Do not wait until after the meeting and check-in; support the thinking, the ideas, and the voices in the room. Accomplices ask, “What do you need to get that done?” Do not allow opportunities to pass by.

School culture can move inspiration to impact. Nouman makes a distinction between the terms 'cultural fluency' and 'cultural competency.' As we all strive to become more competent, we make mistakes, so it is not a matter of being competent or incompetent. He prefers the term 'cultural fluency.' He likens cultural fluency to language fluency which begins with attachment. Cultural fluency begins with love for those you lead.

Cultural fluency requires skills, understanding, and awareness. We learn to do better and be better through experience. Like attachment, cultural fluency begins with observing, inquiring, and engaging. To begin that journey, we must embrace discomfort, move beyond tolerance, and design from a place of love, not guilt.

Nouman talks about how cultivating our cultural fluency can grow our impact. By developing our awareness of our biases and privileges, we can choose to lean into discomfort. As an example of leaning into the discomfort where learning lives, Nouman quotes Abraham Lincoln as saying, "I do not like that man. I must get to know him better."

The distinction Nouman made between comfort and safety helped frame the mindset of emancipatory leadership. He described discomfort as a part of learning, growth, and change; and, he described safety as the freedom to speak, question, discuss, and evaluate without fear of negative consequences. Growth and change happen in safe spaces, out of our comfort zones.

***Cultural fluency
begins with love for
those you lead.***

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