

# Authenticity in the Academy

Workshop by: Brandi Neal

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

# Introduction & Overview of Workshop

- **Communication styles inventory & discussion (10 minutes)**
- **Personal experiences (5 minutes)**
- **Black women's style of communicating through tones, gestures, and language (10 minutes)**
- **TedTalk & Communication Activity (30 minutes)**
- **Discussion/Questions & Comments (10 minutes)**
- **Close with 3 ways to speak video (5 minutes)**

# Communication Styles Inventory

- Would anyone like to share their results?
- Do you agree or disagree with your results?
- As a Black woman in predominantly White spaces, are any of the characteristics listed under your category seen as negative or stereotyped? If so, which ones?
- How can we as Black women make certain characteristics positive while staying true to ourselves and our identity?
- Example: Prefers to work alone can be seen as being “stuck up”, “rude”, “unfriendly”, “that Black woman with an attitude”, or even being “hard to work with”. On the other hand, working alone can be made positive by viewing it as 1) hard-working 2) independent 3) motivated, disciplined, and self-accountable.

# Personal Experiences

- **Talk about a time where your style of communication was seen as inferior.**
- **What was said?**
- **How did you handle the situation?**

# Communicating Through Gestures

- Hand gestures/ non-verbal communication
- Sometimes misunderstood and seen as hostile
- Clap vs Clap on syllables
- **Example of Clap:** You did a great job on your presentation at AERA.
- **Example of Clap on syllables:** Let me tell you what John did in today's staff meeting.
- **Example of Clap on syllables:** That talk on Black women communication was phenomenal.

# Communicating Through Tone

- Sound of your voice including the non-verbal cues
- Pacing + volume + emphasis + pauses = TONE
- Influence the overall way a listener hears the message
- Adds meaning, emotion, and attitude
- Example: Let me tell you what John did in today's staff meeting.



# Communicating Through Language

- AAVE
- AAE
- Slang
- Ebonics
- “Non-standard” English
  
- Example: John didn’t tell me nothing about today’s staff meeting.

Get Comfortable  
With Being  
Uncomfortable  
By: Luuvie Ajayi







# Communication Activity

- Greet each other 3 different ways
- Role play based on scenarios chosen
- Your identity and communication style is based on which card you choose at random

# Communication Activity (Meaning of Cards)

- Queen of Spades: Authentic self
- Queen of Diamonds: White woman in power
- Queen of Hearts: Woman of color (other than African American)
- Queen of Clubs: Black woman who Code-switches depending on environment
- King of Spades: Authentic self
- King of Diamonds: White man in power
- King of Hearts: Woman of color (other than African American)
- King of Clubs: Black woman who code-switches depending on environment


# Communication Activity (Meaning of Cards)

- Jack of Spades: Authentic self
- Jack of Diamonds: White woman in power
- Jack of Hearts: Woman of color (other than African American)
- Jack of Clubs: Black woman who Code-switches depending on environment
- Ace of Spades: Authentic self
- Ace of Diamonds: White man in power
- Ace of Hearts: Woman of color (other than African American)
- Ace of Clubs: Black woman who code-switches depending on environment

- What were your 3 ways of greeting each other?
- Why is it important as leaders to learn how to communicate across cultures?
- Based on your “identity” that you picked did you feel you were compromising your authentic self?
- How does being in predominantly White spaces effect your communication as a Black woman, if at all?
- Do you find yourself code-switching in the academy? If so, why? Are you staying true to your authentic self when you code-switch?
- What are some strategies you have found effective when communicating while still being your authentic self?
- While role-playing did you notice your communication style emerge?

# Communication Activity Discussion

Questions,  
Comments,  
&  
Closing Video



Now you may think that's too hood, that's not cool

Thank You !

**Brandi Neal**

**University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**

**Bneal4@Illinois.edu**