Chapter Ten
Synthesizing the Learning: A New Diversity/Intercultural Competence Model for Change

If we are ever going to change how we view, treat, and inspire people, the change will need to start with people who have leadership roles. And their personal transformation will morph through their respective organizational venues, inspiring the hearts and souls of others to change as well. In our self-transformation, we become a living symbol of change—metaphors that bring about metamorphosis (Chatterjee, 1998, as cited in Quinn, 2004). People who are around us become attracted to our energy in such a manner that they begin to empower themselves—actions that lead to emergent organizing—a change in the system that no one “leads” in the traditional sense (2004).

Let there be no doubt in people’s minds; we need a change. Our global society is continually morphing, yet the manner in which we interact with one another has continued to deteriorate.

Throughout the years, as I studied and taught leadership, I became a fan of Dr. Robert Quinn and have required his book, Deep Change, as mandatory reading for each of my leadership classes. Dr. Quinn moves the concept of evoking true leadership beyond the concept and construct of “doing” something and pushes the reader to understand that in order to seriously evoke change in our world, we should learn to “be” different. I was blessed to have Dr. Quinn as an instructor in my doctoral program—one of the fundamental experiences I had that never left me.

I believe that if we are to move beyond programmatic initiatives that are designed to evoke “managing” diversity or “gaining” intercultural competence in our world, we have to look to the leaders in
our society to begin that change. However, this will require them to be personally challenged at levels they may initially find very uncomfortable.

Deep change within oneself infers a spiritual connection where one can connect with one’s purpose (Quinn, 1996). But to do so, people should not be afraid to look at their past—their historical self, and their perspectives of humanity, community, and their oneness with their source.

The failure to personally align before one remotely attempts to step into a venue of authentic leadership where one values humanity is clearly asking for either death by stagnation or death by incompetence. One only has to cite the Enron, WorldCom, and other similar organizations in our world to understand the potential magnitude of outcome. It will take years for our economy and the people who worked for those and similarly situated organizations to recover from the ineptness of the individuals who led those organizations (Robinson-Easley, 2012).

Throughout this book, I loosely define what constitutes an organizational environment. You see, the issues do not just reside within a traditional business context. Across many organizational contexts—traditional organizations, government, communities, countries, and any other form where people are collectively engaged in work and interactions, people are tired of feeling marginalized.

When assessing the value of my propositions, we need to look at the fragile patterns of life. For many who face feeling “less than,” these fragile patterns of life are situated within the ongoing process of cultural conversations (Gergen and Thatchenkery, 1996); conversations, belief systems, and historical context that cause significant pain because they are so deeply institutionalized in the realms of racism, which means they are also deeply rooted (Easley, 2010).

People are fundamentally spiritual entities; a distinct presence in this world who clearly have the potential to be the cause of their own actions. Self-development via self-analysis is the catalyst for moving toward change. And, as Dr. Quinn posits (2004), contrary to our assumptions about how leaders create change, deep change at the organizational level is not managed or controlled. It spreads like a contagious disease in a nonlinear fashion. Consequently, to lead transformation is to become a leader of a social movement—which is desperately needed in today’s global environment.