

Who WOKE Me Up?

I am not what someone might call a “keep up with what’s happening” kind of guy. That could be good, or not. Nevertheless, there is one matter of societal change that WOKE me up. As I understand the growing term, it does not have reference to those who woke up and have become enlightened about what is going on. For decades individuals have used the phrase “the light came on.” It is a prevalent term so as to be accompanied by an emoji or graphic to display an individual with a lightbulb shining above the head, as in “I see the light.”

However an individual may define WOKE it just might be a good idea to see what WOKE is in action. Terms used in the WOKE movement do not carry the same definition as is common to the hearer over, let’s say, fifty (maybe less). These terms have been described as the “Unholy Trinity of diversity, equity, and inclusion.” For example: In an article from USA Today, the topic discusses what an employer may face when interviewing members of the class of 2022 for job openings: “A recent study by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) spotlighted “Equity & Inclusion” as one of eight competencies’ employers are most actively searching for in candidates. Increasingly, we are hearing from recruiters and potential employers looking for resources to help them improve their processes for recruiting, hiring and supporting a diverse candidate pool” (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion).

Webster defines “diversity” as “Differences, dissimilitude, unlikeness,” and is therefore value neutral, i.e., the word does not inherently attach a moral value. WOKE’s definition “is anything non-normative. They define normative as that which is white, Christian, masculine, heterosexual, or cisgender. So, one which is not these things is said to be ‘diverse,’ regardless of context.”

Words exist with shared definitions so individuals can communicate (as the sentence itself proves). It is, therefore, important that a standard of definitions be equally understood by the principles communicating. Otherwise, the communication experience ends with the parties sailing off into the night not knowing where they have been, or where they are going.

The use of personal definitions is not new. Individuals may use phrases, like, “That’s what it means to me;” “That’s not what it means to me;” “It seems to me;” “I think it means.” Either way, when parties are engaged in a discussion, especially one that has moral consequences, make sure each party is hearing what the other is saying. Ross Triplett, Sr.