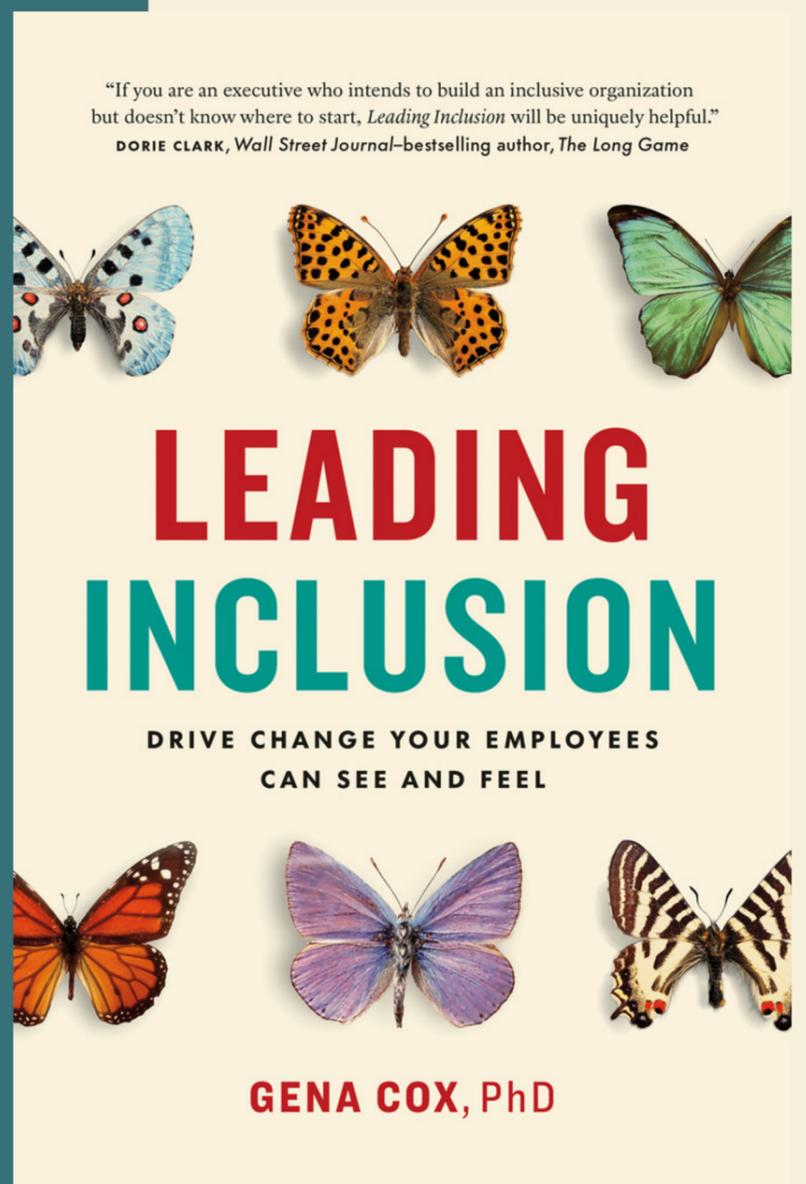


# 25 Ways

Anyone  
Can Help Build  
a Culture of  
Respect  
at Work

Based on research from Gena  
Cox and ideas from her book



**Inclusion depends on how employees interact with one another as they do their work.**

**Inclusion IS employee experience!**

**Respect is the employee experience outcome all employees seek, especially those from under-represented groups.**

**Respect can power inclusion.**



# Respect is a big deal!

**RESPECT concerns whether one person values another person's social worth and humanity.**

- It is a **precondition for trust**, the currency of effective interpersonal interactions.
- It influences **employee engagement and retention**.
- It can **buffer against burnout** during challenging times.



However, the power of respect is often  
**overlooked and undervalued.**

Yet, the reality is that

**anyone can help build a  
culture of respect at  
work!**

That is the point of this ebook.



This e-book uses my **Respect to Connect Model** to present 25 behaviors that help build a culture of inclusion by fostering workplace respect.

**RESPECT**



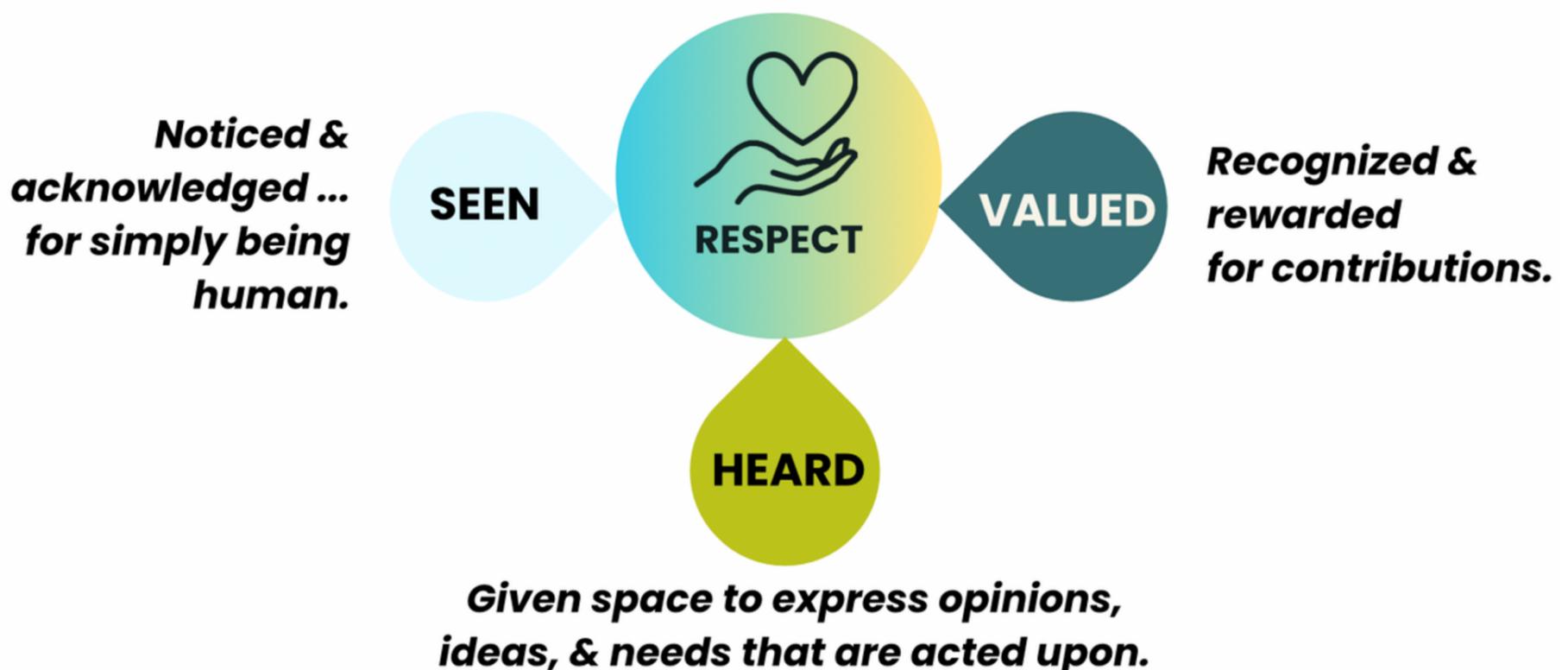
**CONNECT**



# RESPECT defined:

Employees feel respected when  
they feel  
**Seen, Heard, and Valued.**

At its core, **respect** begins with truly seeing the humanity in each person we encounter, regardless of their role, background, or differences from us. This means moving beyond surface-level civility to honor the intrinsic worth of every individual.



REDI Model from the book "Leading Inclusion". Copyright (c) 2022-2023 by Gena Cox. All



# 01

## Know your audience.

While writing *Leading Inclusion*, I remembered writing coach AJ Harper's advice: "... a book is not about something; a book is for someone." Writers and other creatives know their work will have the desired impact only when tailored to "the audience."

--->>> **At work, we have an audience, too.** That audience is our colleagues, leaders, clients, and business partners.

It's respectful to match your speech and actions to the audience. Doing so helps colleagues feel **Seen**.

To build respect at work, **try these behaviors**, especially if you are a manager:

- Honor personal boundaries until a comfortable rapport has been established.
- Use the professional or business title a person prefers when addressing them.
- Speak positively about colleagues and avoid gossiping or spreading rumors.
- Avoid demeaning, condescending, inappropriate, or profane language.
- Maintain confidentiality and protect private information.

**A Magic Question:** Here's a powerful question you can consider or ask others to help with this challenge: *"Is there anything I should Start or Stop Doing that could enhance the quality of our interactions?"*



# 02

# Be consistent.

One day, after I gave a talk, a woman asked how to work effectively with a colleague whose demeanor when dealing with her would change when other colleagues were present. She said this with tears in her eyes because these inconsistent behaviors made her wonder if this colleague would have her back when she needed support.

It's respectful to be consistent in how you interact with colleagues. Doing so helps colleagues feel **Seen**.

To build respect at work, **try these behaviors**, especially if you are a manager:

- Treat colleagues with the same consideration when others are present as you do when interacting with them individually.
- Maintain positive eye contact and an open, welcoming demeanor.
- Provide colleagues with equal access to information and your time.
- Greet all colleagues warmly and with enthusiasm so there is no perception of differential treatment.
- Consider everyone's ideas and opinions with an open mind.

**A Magic Question:** Here's a powerful question you can consider or ask others to help with this challenge: *"What should I Start or Stop Doing that could enhance my interactions with you compared to how I interact with others?"*



# 03

## Listen to the folk who have the answers.

I once worked at a company that was acquiring another. Mailroom workers noticed inefficiencies in the daily exchange of packages between the two merging companies. However, based on their past experiences, they felt that management would ignore their suggestions to improve the process, so they gave up sharing their ideas and resigned themselves to mocking the situation instead.

It's respectful to listen to and act upon colleagues' ideas. Doing so helps colleagues feel **Heard**.

To build respect at work, **try these behaviors**, especially if you are a manager:

- Listen attentively without interrupting when colleagues are speaking.
- Acknowledge and recognize colleagues' contributions and achievements.
- Give proper credit to colleagues for their ideas and work products.
- Include all relevant colleagues in essential meetings, discussions, and decisions.
- Respond promptly and thoroughly to emails, messages, and requests.

**A Magic Question:** Here's a powerful question you can consider or ask others to help with this challenge: *"What should I Start or Stop Doing that could make it easier for your ideas to be heard?"*



# 04

## Be gentle with others' time.

Michael had a habit of ignoring Jackie's emails when she was asking for information from him. On the other hand, he would harass Jackie when she could not respond quickly to **his** emails. Making one-way or unreciprocated demands on a colleague's time is a common disrespect problem at work. Treating colleagues' time as an irreplaceable asset is respectful and helps colleagues feel **Valued**.

To build respect at work, **try these behaviors**, especially if you are a manager:

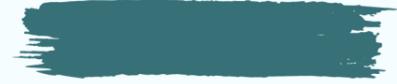
- Arrive on time, come prepared, and give your full attention to meetings and appointments.
- If you schedule a meeting, be sure to attend - arrive first, if possible.
- Follow the agenda to ensure meetings achieve their intended purpose.
- Ask, "What do you think you can do?" rather than assuming that someone you are asking for help will be able to do everything you desire.
- Minimize the number of emails and chat messages you send.

**A Magic Question:** Here's a powerful question you can consider or ask others to help with this challenge: *"What should I Start or Stop Doing that could make better use of our time?"*



# 05

## Help others thrive.



Most employees want to do a good job and appreciate their contributions being recognized and rewarded by their colleagues. Don't miss opportunities to offer that support in simple ways. Sometimes, a "thank you" is all that is needed, but there are many other ways to support a colleague..

Sometimes, we are reluctant to do so because we have been conditioned to think that making another person look good will lessen our value to others. However, if you want colleagues to feel **Valued**, help, or at least do not hinder their development efforts. There are a multitude of ways to recognize and reward each person uniquely.

To build respect at work, **try these behaviors**, especially if you are a manager:

- Provide constructive feedback to help colleagues enhance their skills.
- Be receptive to feedback from others that might enhance your own effectiveness.
- Recognize and praise colleagues' excellent work publicly.
- Share information, opportunities, and resources openly with all colleagues.
- Include colleagues in situations that can offer career-enhancing visibility.

**A Magic Question:** Here's a powerful question you can consider or ask others to help with this challenge: "What should I Start or Stop Doing that could support my colleagues' work progress and growth?"





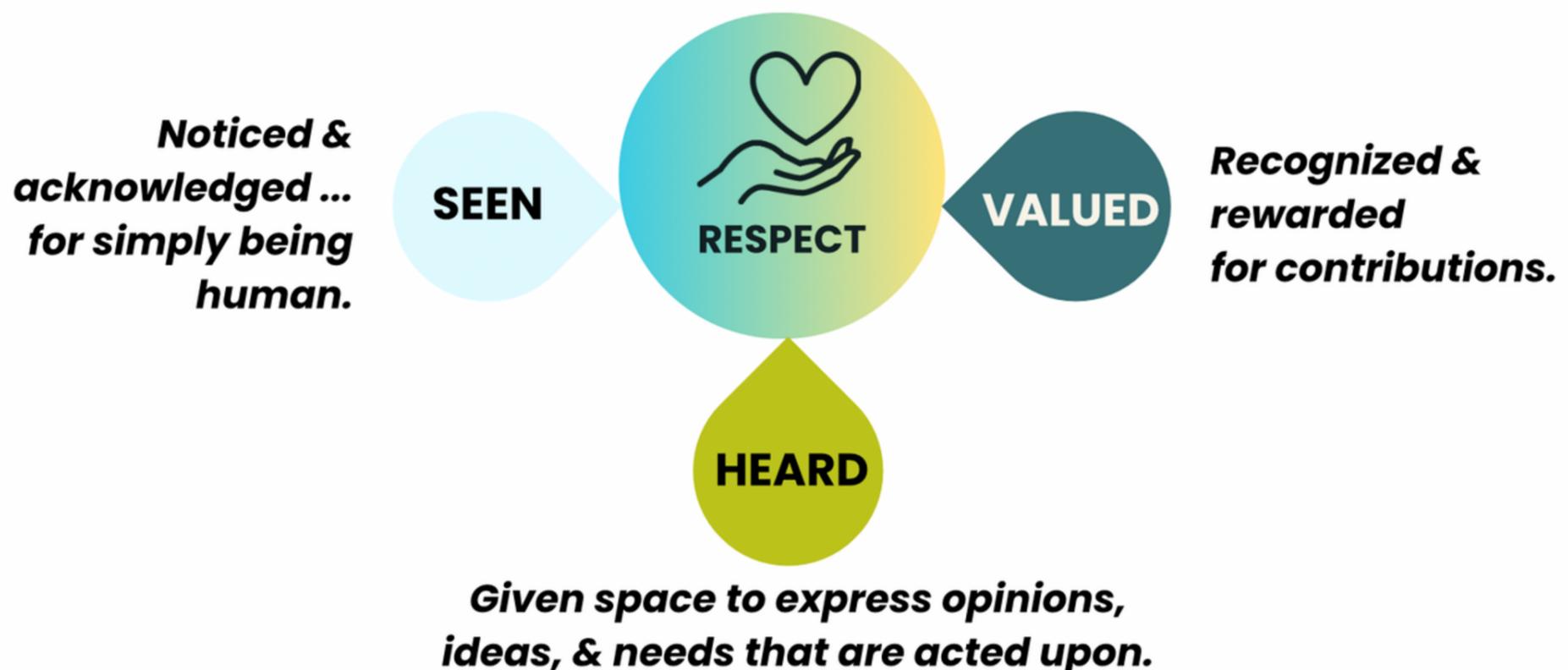
# Putting It All Together: 25 Ways to Build a Culture of Respect at Work

1. Honor personal boundaries until a comfortable rapport has been established.
2. Use the professional or business title a person prefers when addressing them.
3. Speak positively about colleagues and avoid gossiping or spreading rumors.
4. Avoid demeaning, condescending, inappropriate, or profane language.
5. Maintain confidentiality and protect private information.
6. Treat colleagues with the same consideration when others are present as you do when interacting with them individually.
7. Maintain positive eye contact and an open, welcoming demeanor.
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11. Listen attentively without interrupting when colleagues are speaking.
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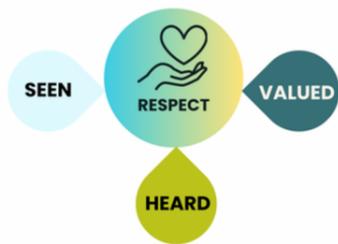
Here's the **Respect to Connect - R2C Model** again for easy reference as you answer the coaching questions on the following pages.

## RESPECT TO CONNECT MODEL



REDI Model from the book "Leading Inclusion". Copyright (c) 2022-2023 by Gena Cox. All rights reserved.





# Time for action - Others.

**Thinking about your colleagues, is there anyone with whom you feel an opportunity to forge a stronger connection using the R2C Model?**

Blank white space for writing a response to the first question.

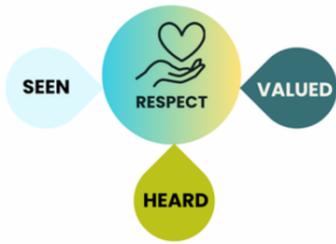
Which aspect of the model will you focus on enhancing with this person? **See? Hear? or Value?**

Blank white space for writing a response to the second question.

What is one thing you **WILL DO** to help that person feel **Seen, Heard, and Valued? When will you do it?**

Blank white space for writing a response to the third question.





# Time for action - Self.

**Thinking about yourself, is there anyone from whom you want more respect?** Write that person's name in the box below.

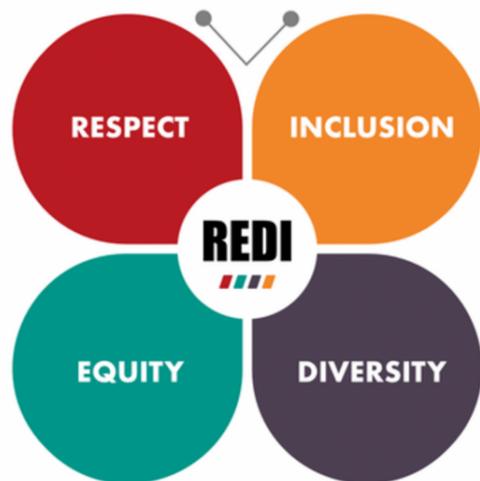
Which aspect of the model would you like to see improve in your interactions with this person **See? Hear? or Value?**

What is one thing you would like that person to do to help you feel **Seen, heard, and Valued? How could you share your feelings with that person?** When will you do it? [TIP: Use my **Bold Discussions guide** to help you.]

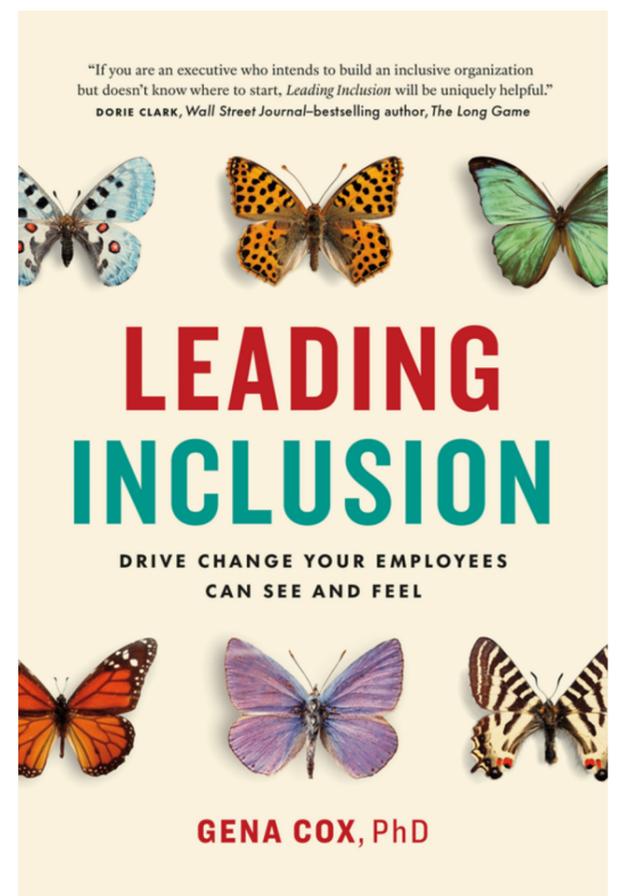


Respect is one of my fundamental personal values and integral to my work. The concept is integrated into my book in the form of the REDI model shown below. Read more in the book.

## THE R.E.D.I. MODEL An alternative to "DEI"



REDI Model from the book "Leading Inclusion".  
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# A few more resources

(Click the images below to open the links)



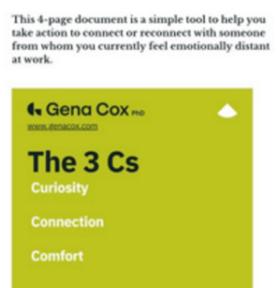
**Linkedin "Leader Curations" Newsletter**



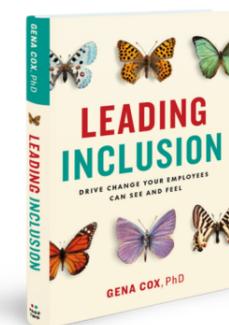
**Fast Company POV article: Leaders should prioritize this one thing to make inclusion stick**



**HBR POV article: 5 Strategies to Infuse D&I into Your Organization (with David Lenczfeld)**



**Bold Discussions Script**



**Book: Leading Inclusion**

