

Give-Away Books for Session 1 – January 29, 2020:

1. [Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education](#), by Danielle Allen (University of Chicago Press, 2004)

We think this book speaks to the theme of the 2020 Series—the importance of building relationships in our diverse multicultural workplaces. The author, Danielle Allen, writes about it in the **context of democracy**:

She says the advice that we got from our parents, “Don’t talk to Strangers,” has not served us well in our multicultural world resulting in “interracial distrust, personal and political alienation, and a profound distrust of others.” She believes democracy relies on truthful talk among strangers.

Allen draws on the ideas of “**political friendship**,” “**relationships that bind us together**,” and “**sacrifice**” as tools that can help us become more trustworthy to others, and overcome the fossilized distrust among us!

2. [Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future](#), by Margaret Wheatley (Berrett-Koehler, 2009)

Meg Wheatley writes: “I believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again...Simple, truthful conversation where we each have a chance to speak, we each feel heard, and we each listen well.”

She adds: “Human conversation is the most ancient and easiest way to cultivate the conditions for change—personal change, community and organizational change, planetary change.”

This is a book about Turning to One Another, with Conversation Starters, so that we can start talking to each other about what we care about, and we need to talk with people we have labeled the “enemy”.

3. [The Inner Work of Racial Justice: Healing Ourselves and Transforming Our Communities Through Mindfulness](#), by Rhonda Magee (Tarcher Perigee, 2019)

The author says the work of “racial justice” begins with ourselves. Conflict and division push us to close ranks, find the safety of our “tribe”, and to blame others.

Practicing “embodied mindfulness” —paying attention to our thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations—in an open and non-judgmental way—increases our emotional **resilience**, helps us to recognize our unconscious bias, and gives us space to become less reactive and to choose how we respond to injustice.

Through mindfulness practices, the author believes we develop the ability to view others with compassion and live in community with people of vastly different backgrounds and viewpoints.

[In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Day, and Black History Month in February](#)

4. [The Souls of Black Folk](#), by W. E. B. Du Bois (Dover Thrift Editions, 1994)

This landmark book is a founding work in the literature of Black protest. W.E.B. Dubois (1868-1963) played a key role in developing the strategy and program that dominated early 20th-century Black protest in America.

First published in 1903, Du Bois eloquently affirms that it is beneath the dignity of a human being to beg for those rights that belong inherently to all mankind. He also charged that the strategy of accommodation to white supremacy, advanced by Booker T. Washington, who was the most influential Black leader of that time, would only serve to perpetuate Black oppression.

This book is essential reading for African-American history, and understanding the struggle for civil rights in America.