

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION RESOURCES

developed in partnership by North American Interfraternity Conference and Association of Fraternal Leadership & Values (AFLV)

# Intent vs. Impact

“

*Just because your intentions are good doesn't mean that you aren't impacting people negatively. We can always mean well, but if we don't slow down to consider how our words, decisions and behaviors impact those around us, we run the risk of serious harm. Make the impact just as important as your intentions and see how your relationships begin to change.”*

—Vienna Pharaon

## DEFINE

**Intent:** a usually clearly formulated or planned intention; the act or fact of intending: purpose especially; the state of mind with which an act is done: volition

**Impact:** the force of impression of one thing on another: a significant or major effect

## SELF-REFLECTION ACTIVITY



**WATCH VIDEO:** *Impact vs. Intent* by Nyanga Uuka  
(RUN TIME: 2 MINUTES, 7 SECONDS)

After watching the video,

- Think to yourself, what's an example of this where you were the impacted party?
- When have you unintentionally caused harm to someone?
- How did that impact you?

## GROUP ACTIVITY

Watch the video as a group. When you are finished, answer the questions below as a group.



**WATCH VIDEO:** *What Kind of Asian Are You?*  
(RUN TIME: 2 MINUTES, 19 SECONDS)

- What do you think of her reaction to his question?
- Why do you think she reacted the way she did?
- What do you think his intention was in asking her “where she is from”?
- Do you think he meant her harm or insult her?
- What did he mean by “your English is perfect” following the question “where are you from?”

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## COMMITMENT

1. Educate yourself on your own hidden biases
2. Educate others in your organization
3. Collect relevant data that shows hidden biases
4. Evaluate the "subtle messages" within your organization
5. Hold each other accountable and have leaders do the same



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### LISTEN

[Leadership Today Podcast: Intent versus Impact](#)

### READ

["But I didn't mean it!" Why it's so hard to prioritize impacts over intents.](#)

### WATCH

[Intention ≠ Impact](#)

## EDUCATE

Even well-intentioned people will often make statements they intend (or perceive) to be supportive or complimentary, but end up becoming problematic.

Understanding intent and impact is the cornerstone to initiating/sustaining successful and meaningful conversations. Just because we didn't mean to hurt someone, doesn't mean it doesn't do that.

## ACTION



### What should we/I START DOING?

List ideas/items:

- Things that are not being done but should be done
- Things to begin doing to get better results
- Things worth trying or experimenting for better results



### What should we/I STOP DOING?

List ideas/items:

- Things that are not working or helping
- Things that impede or are not practical
- Not delivering desired results
- We or others dislike



### What should we/I CONTINUE DOING?

List ideas/items:

- Things that are working well
- Things that we want to keep
- Worth continuing to see if they're worthwhile
- We like or need