

# Eliminating Deficit Ideology and Language

Train Your Thoughts, Watch Your Words,  
Align Your Actions

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## Vital Speak

**PEOPLE ARE OPTING OUT OF VITAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY BECAUSE THEY FEAR LOOKING WRONG, SAYING SOMETHING WRONG, OR BEING WRONG. CHOOSING OUR OWN COMFORT OVER HARD CONVERSATIONS IS THE EPITOME OF PRIVILEGE, AND IT CORRODES TRUST AND MOVES US AWAY FROM MEANINGFUL AND LASTING CHANGE.**

.....BRENE BROWN (DARE TO LEAD).....

## Location Lingo

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- Historic King Edward Hilton Garden Inn Hotel
- Repurpose negative history to appear positive
- 1861 Confederate House
- Destroyed in Civil War
- Second of two buildings rebuilt 2007–2009
- Then and now guests
  - Whites unless...
  - Sovereign Committee sellouts
- Perpetuated inferiority association with Black and Brown versus superiority with Whites trek from slavery (12 million) to mass incarceration (8 million)

## Who I Am and Who I Am Not/ To Be or Not to Be

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- Paired introductions
  - Are/not
    - » Race/ethnicity/gender
    - » Other key descriptors
  - Selfie w/partner
- Your turn
- My turn
  - Not minority but global majority
  - Not African American/mixed race or ¼ white from paternal grandmother but Black and proud
  - 23 years in education learning experience vs. expertise (proving self, arrogance) after 3-year high school graduate, earning education degrees
  - Passionate, vocal, fearless/courageous equity advocate

## Word and Thought Theory

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- **Deficit theory** suggests that poor people are poor because of their own moral and intellectual deficiencies (Gorski, 2008).
- **Deficit model** is a term used to describe the system's tendency to focus on a student's weaknesses (e.g., "learning disability", "cognitive impairment", "emotional-behavioral disorder") rather than a student's strengths (Wasburn, 2017).

## Word and Thought Theory Continued

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- The racialized **deficit discourse** blames poor urban youth and youth of color for school problems, constructs them as objects in need of control and correction, and misrepresents their families and communities (Pitzer, 2014).
- **Deficit discourse** allowed teachers to talk about urban students in class- and race-coded ways, without fear of being called out on racist or classist views. Deficit views were very allowed in this sense, and they materialized themselves and were maintained through school practices around behavior and control (Gorski, 2010).

## Word and Thought Theory Continued

- In order to have the kind of relationship that **interrupted deficit ideas and practices**, teachers needed access to an alternative (non-deficit) framework.
- Teachers **disrupted deficit discourse** in using combinations of the following strategies:
  - More effectively teaching marginalized students by positioning themselves on the “same plane” as students,
  - Seeking to understand (versus dismiss) students’ behavior and concerns.
  - Having high academic expectations for students.
  - Allowing students to get to know them; and making an effort to get to know students.

(Pitzer, 2014)

## Traditional vs. Technical Rhetoric: White vs. Black/Brown

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>White</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Purity, innocence, virginity</li><li>– Brides wore blue before white, sapphires before diamonds</li><li>– Cleanliness</li><li>– Angelic</li><li>– Easter Bunny</li><li>– <b>Absence of color</b></li><li>– <b>White House (+/-)</b></li><li>– <b>White Power</b></li></ul></li><li>• <b>Black</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Dark, evil</li><li>– Black Market</li><li>– Black cat</li></ul></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Black</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Black Friday</li><li>– One drop</li><li>– Racism within race/families</li><li>– <b>Inclusive of all colors</b></li><li>– <b>Black Pride</b></li></ul></li><li>• <b>Brown</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Dirt, feces, lynching soil</li><li>– <b>Color, hair, language, culture, wholesomeness, friendliness, stability, reliability, peace</b></li><li>– <b>Brown Derby</b></li></ul></li><li>• <b>Your turn</b></li></ul> |
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## Professional Prose

- Education Theory Buzz Words
  - Evidence-based, research-based, CCR, research-practice partnership
  - Your turn
- Kids-Onus on Kids
  - Low SES, SWD, ED, disadvantaged, at-risk, struggling students, underperforming, broken homes, single-parent families, products of divorce
  - Your turn
- Action vs. Words: Personal and Systemic Onus on Adults
  - Equity Summit and Pre-summit Activities
  - Reciprocal Mentoring
    - » Dual value
    - » Does not promote superiority and inferiority complexes
  - Your turn

## Speak Shift

**YOUR WORDS**

**MATTER**

	INSTEAD OF...	TRY
	Be quiet.	Can you use a softer voice?
	What a mess!	It looks like you had fun! How can we clean up?
	Do you need help?	I'm here to help if you need me.
	I explained how to do this yesterday.	Maybe I can show you another way.
	Do I need to separate you?	Could you use a break?
	Stop crying.	It's okay to cry.
	Do you have any questions?	What questions do you have?
	You're OK.	How are you feeling?
	It's not that hard.	You can do hard things.
	We don't talk like that.	Please use kind words.

## Dead Silence

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- Called this for a reason
- Stop silencing kids, adults, truth
  - Readiness/comfort
  - Continual sacrifice of kids and humans
- Silence signals agreement with perpetrator/offense
- Speak up
  - Children, humans, animals, for right, against wrong
  - Who I am to who I also am...

## Give Me Five; Write It Down, Take a Picture!

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1. Who I Also Am Story homework
2. Who people/colleagues/students are homework
  - Have this dialogue, then write it
  - Request that others write their own
3. Exchange contact info
  - Someone you don't know well
  - Periodically check in as accountability partners
    - » Training your thoughts
    - » Watching your words
    - » Aligning your actions
4. Group and choice shots at photo booth at break
5. Lunch!

## References

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