

Having a seat at the table is analogous to having a voice and decision-making authority in organizations and governmental entities. At a larger, more structural level, having a seat at the table translates to having an impact upon policy and governance.

When African Americans and underrepresented ethnic minoritized individuals have such a seat, it is usually deemed a "first" and sometimes the "only" in a sea of whiteness.

Seated at the Table is my reflection on what we are capable of as senior level leaders in organizations who desire systemic and structural cultural transformation.

As an African American woman, I feel it is particularly poignant that I have such a seat and that I accept as a critical aspect of holding such a position the responsibility to pull others along in our journey towards inclusivity and equity for all people, particularly those who are marginalized and have historically been left out of such discussions and decisions.

Throughout this book I provide data and statistics that are shockingly real and which underscore works such as this as exceptionally relevant in today's racialized society.

It is my hope that readers walk away from this book with a sense of urgency and agency as they tackle the malignant -isms that permeate society at large, and subsequently the organizations that have in sum profited from the oppression and denigration of racial and ethnically minoritized groups (Brewer, 2021; Thomas, 2019).

No system or institution in the United States, including corporations, is free from the impact of such -isms on their operations, hiring practices, decision-making, evaluation processes, governance procedures, community outreach, team performance, etc. I hope to arm readers with the tools they need to effectively mitigate the impact of such -isms at all levels throughout an organization or enterprise.



Dr. Ayanna Cummings is passionate about eradicating the malignant diseases of racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, and other ills which plague our society. She has over 21 years of experience as a diversity consultant, researcher, sourcer, specialist, and trainer. In her current role as Director of Diversity + Inclusion with Compass Group National Accounts, Ayanna serves as a change agent for cultural transformation.

Ayanna serves as a Postdoctoral Scholar at Georgia Institute of Technology, a position through which her scientific research seeks to examine the plight of, issues affecting, and identification of solutions relevant to African Americans and other diverse and marginalized groups. Her research findings give her unique expertise in diversity, equity, & inclusion training and consulting strategies and cultural change methods. As a volunteer leader, she serves as Chair of the Economic Empowerment Committee of the Urban League of Greater Atlanta Young Professionals, and as VP of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion with the NMBAA Seattle Chapter. Ayanna was named to the 2021 100 Under 50 in Corporate America Diversity Executives by Diversity MBA Magazine. She is a graduate of Hampton University where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology in 2000 and was inducted in the Forty Under 40 Honor Society in 2018, and Clark Atlanta University where she earned the MBA degree Magne Cum Laude in Marketing in 2007. She also attended City University of New York Graduate Center, Baruch College where she was a MAGNET Presidential Fellowship recipient and earned the PhD, MS, and MPhil degrees in Industrial/Organizational Psychology in 2017 and 2014, respectively, and obtained the M.Ed. in Educational Leadership from Concordia University Portland in 2012, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude.

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