

BELONGING AND JOY

What is Belonging?

Social belonging and connection are part of the very foundations of human existence. And yet, according to [this article](#) from the Harvard Business Review on fostering Belonging in the workplace, nearly 40% of people in this country feel isolated at work, leading to less enthusiasm and engagement, and more toxic and hostile work environments. It goes on to state that *“individuals coping with left-out feelings can prevent them by gaining perspective from others, mentoring those in a similar condition, and thinking of strategies for improving the situation.”* People must be given the freedom to embrace their true selves, while leaders should actively promote individual authenticity. It falls upon each of us to foster an inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels they belong. Leaders who prioritize connection and openly share vulnerabilities promote psychological safety, fostering a greater sense of comfort among employees (especially those that are often overlooked) to share their experiences with belonging and feelings of uncertainty. When we feel that we truly belong in a work environment, we are more likely to both ask for help and take risks, leading to more innovative, productive, and creative results on stage.

In this one-sheet, K+K wanted to focus on Belonging and how to foster it on tour and in the theatrical space, especially on a production centered around Black Community, Comradery, Excellence, and above all, Joy.

Belonging is JOY!

There are three types of Joy that we often reference. These are Pleasure, Passion, and Purpose, three things that we strive to bring into the theatre every night. Joy is produced in response to certain neurochemicals, such as dopamine, that are produced in the brain during stimulating activities. In the brain, Joy lives in the *prefrontal cortex*, where our executive functions are formulated, and also where we find our focus, creativity, and personality.

Joy vs Happiness

Joy is an inner feeling. Happiness is an outward expression. Joy endures hardship and trials and connects with meaning and purpose. A person pursues happiness but chooses joy.

Intersectionality of Privilege

What Is Privilege?

Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because they belong to it, rather than anything they have done or failed to do.

What Is Intersectionality?

Intersectionality is the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

How Do We View Black Privilege and Cultivate Belonging Through an EDIA Lens?

Using Our Voices

The Black community has a powerful voice that should be heard unapologetically. Our voices encourage those less fortunate to continue to be curious as they strive for excellence.

Avoiding Shame

Shame has no place within the Black experience. It is corrosive and often stops people from seeking additional information or believing in change. Instead, one should look at their self-pride, unique perspective, and evolving mindset.

Passing the Baton!

Create opportunities for others who want to learn or experience Broadway. Share the various career paths available such as producing, management, crew, hair & makeup. Encourage the youth and the elderly to cultivate their love of the arts by increasing their exposure.

Organizations for Black Allyship and Community in the Theatre Industry

Black Theatre United is an organization helmed by some of the leading Black voices in our industry. “As members of the Black theatre community, we stand together to help protect Black people, Black theatre, and Black lives of all shapes and orientations in communities across the country. Our voices are united to educate, empower, and inspire through excellence and activism in the pursuit of justice and equality. We will tell our stories, preserve our history, and ensure the legacy of Black theatre as American culture. Join us.” <https://www.blacktheatreunited.com/>

Black Theatre Coalition’s mission statement is: To remove the “illusion of inclusion” in the American Theatre, by building a sustainable ethical roadmap that will increase employment opportunities for Black theatre professionals. Our vision is to reshape the working ecosystem for those who have been marginalized by systemically racist and biased ideology. Black Theatre Coalition was founded by T. Oliver Reid and Warren Adams during the Summer of 2019. They identified the disparity between the growing inclusivity onstage, versus the almost non-existence of Black professionals off stage. They strive towards dismantling the systemically racist and biased ideology in the theatrical job space. <https://blacktheatrecoalition.org/>

Black Theatre Matters *Black Theatre Matters* covers trending topics in the theatre featuring experts across the art form. It is designed to be a liberal arts resource dedicated to supporting, documenting, and celebrating the achievements of Black theatre artists throughout the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. <https://blacktheatrematters.org/>

We encourage our community to advocate and insist on a working culture that promotes belonging and joy, to continue to do the thing we love to do in a nurturing, diverse and creative environment!