

Inclusive - Unless it's you

by BRIAN LOCKHART

Inclusive ? it's a word being thrown around a lot lately.

Everything must be inclusive. You must include everybody in everything ? or must you?

As usual, it's a small group of people demanding everyone else follow their rules, and for some reason, everyone follows along because objecting will have you labelled with one of many fashionable words that are tossed around if someone doesn't follow the herd led by a handful of vocal people.

The problem with inclusivity is when you cancel an event or something similar because a small number of people won't or can't take part, you eliminate the right of the majority to have their experience.

Of course, you should be inclusive as much as you can. I've never been part of any group or organization that would deliberately exclude other people. Most things I've been involved with have an 'all welcome' policy. However, if a person doesn't feel comfortable with us, they have the option of not joining ? they don't have the option of forcing us to change our ways.

There are too many examples of so-called 'inclusivity' where the majority is punished.

A friend of mine posted on Facebook, how she had baked cupcakes for her son's school class to help celebrate his birthday and make the day special.

She was very careful and mindful of other students in the class and made sure her cupcakes would be nut-free, in case someone had an allergy, as well as a few other things she took precautions with. When she brought the cupcakes to the school, she gave some to the school staff who appreciated the effort and thought it was a thoughtful thing to do.

Unfortunately, the teacher would not allow the offending cupcakes in the class. The reason? She thought one student wouldn't be allowed to take part, so the recess party would not be inclusive.

While the rest of the staff rolled their eyes, they were also too afraid to say something, because of course if they did, the teacher would admonish them.

So the rest of the class, the majority, couldn't be part of something, because one kid might not take part.

He wouldn't be forced to participate, but of course, that didn't matter.

I spoke to another friend of mine this past weekend, who has been running a girls' club group for several years. The group takes part in most local parades, except I noticed this year, they weren't in the Christmas parade.

I asked my friend why her group was not involved.

She told me the higher-ups in the organization decided none of the clubs should participate because not everyone celebrates Christmas.

I asked her if anyone in her group would be offended. She said, 'No, they're 10 years old, they all celebrate Christmas.'

So a group of young girls was disappointed because some seriously politically correct people decided to cancel their fun, for a

non-existent reason.

The thing with inclusivity is, it only works when you point fingers at someone else.

A couple of years ago I did a photo shoot with a local organization for an advertising brochure. The brochure featured actual members of the team.

When showing them the photos, one woman, who for some reason always throws a monkey wrench into things, announced that the brochure was not diverse enough and was not inclusive.

I assured her it was indeed inclusive because the photos included actual members of the organization

?Not good enough,? she said. We need more inclusiveness.

One man, a member of the committee, who is not known for keeping his opinions to himself, said, ?Aren't you a vice-president at the <insert religion, ethnic name> Association?

She said she was.

He replied, ?Well, I guess you are a member of a group, in fact, vice-president, who are not inclusive.?

?That's different,? she said.

The man replied, ?No, it's not. The name of your association itself, says you only want people from your religion and ethnic background. That's not inclusive. I guess you'll either have to resign or change the name of your group and start letting other people in.?

The guy made his point, and the brochure went ahead as planned.

If you want to be inclusive and include other people in your activities, great. The more the merrier.

But when you have other people demanding you stop your activities because someone else doesn't want to take part, you've taken your political correctness to an absurd level, and the majority should not be punished for a misguided way of thinking.