

**“Building Intercultural Relationships”: An interactive dialogue on navigating belonging and identity (Oct. 30th, 2025)**

- How to respond to the voice that tells you to turn the dial down on who you are?
  - Find people who let you be authentic.
  - Sometimes there's pressure to mould into a team in a professional context.
  - Sometimes you feel you have to make yourself small.
  - Learn from each other, some people will want you to make them uncomfortable (it's human).
  - Difficult to be vulnerable.
  - Feel like you need to learn the norms of the environment you're in.
  - Sometimes making yourself smaller in your own community (so the first step to building intercultural relationships is to be authentic with your own identity)
- For whom is it easier to belong?
  - In some places, appearances are still judged.
  - Do you say your ethnicity or nationality when people ask where you're from?
  - It requires a lot of listening.
  - Outsiders can bring good things, like the Living Together project.
  - Sometimes you can be robbed of your choice of what part of yourself to express.
  - Know yourself, but also be aware of the power of the system (if it's not you, that can be freeing).
  - When you work on yourself you can change the system too.
  - Falling in between different communities (and in Geneva you find a lot of people who feel the same).
  - Find those people who resonate with that (can also find them in other cultures who don't share your background).
  - Build more open communities.
- Training and practice are key for navigating cultures, similar to conflict mediation training.
- There are cultural considerations as to taboos and so on.
- In theory people want to go to that place of discomfort as a place to grow together, but in practice it is a lot more challenging.
- It is important to maintain critical thinking.

- How to build peace within ourselves and our smaller communities in order to build peace outwards (don't just think of the big institutional actions for conflict resolutions).
  - When you mediate, it goes beyond inner peace too. Requires more communication. Both are important and both can happen at the same time.
- If you as a mediator recognize that people are not feeling heard, especially of different cultures, can you think of times in your life when you felt unheard, especially in a different cultural setting?
  - Once you get in touch with that, you can work on those issues better.
- How to open up to vulnerability?
- Geneva's culture itself was the last topic of discussion.
  - We challenge Geneva by being who we are, so we can change the field too

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