

Ian Nelson:

Again, this is something which you should be very aware of. I'd like to start with a quotation from a very well-known, United Kingdom prime minister, who was also a businessman, he was also a soldier, but he was prime minister, and once he was asked about his team and he said, "I always have people around me, some of whom I dislike, and some of whom I disagree with", so he engineered difference, many of us get it by default. And it's a balancing act using diversity but also respecting it.

The dangers of treating people differently, which you have to as people are all different, but there are aspects of our life where you should be very aware people need to be treated the same. And the first of those is understand the law of your country where you work in relation to equality and diversity.

In the United Kingdom, where I live, we have a law which makes it a crime to, in fact, discriminate against anybody on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation. So it's quite specific and you can read the legislation in this country and know exactly what you can do and what you can't do and when you're crossing the line in terms of discrimination. Because discrimination can be either direct or indirect, and you could have harassment, you could have victimisation and worse.

Second thing I'd like to look at is beyond the law there are what I call principles of fairness, and I've worked with many groups in many parts of the world helping them to become a team, and one of the things I always ask them is, "What are the principles that you would like to work by in this group which we're now putting together?" And there are four things which constantly come up in terms of how people wish to be treated the same.

They want applied to them the same criteria of payment. They want applied to them the same criteria of promotion, in other words opportunities for promotion must be open and clear. They must have accorded to them the same opportunities to perform, opportunities to be seen to be able to do the work. And they also want to be accorded the same opportunities to learn.

Now, very often many managers would recognise the first one, payment, maybe not so clear about people want the same criteria applied for promotion, but also people want opportunities to perform, which very often remains hidden, and people want the same opportunities to learn, which also very often remain hidden.

And, thirdly, people have expectations that all will be treated with the same good manners and decency, and I think that maybe you will be surprised, or maybe you wouldn't be surprised, that just what some people think they can get away with in the workplace.