

The Bias-Free Language Guide – Gone But Not Forgotten



I often wonder what type of person wakes up in the morning wondering, "What will offend me today?" Well, I found out this week.

The Bias-Free Language Guide was written and edited by Sylvia Foster, Szu-Hui Lee, Joelle Ruby Ryan, Sean Moundas and the Women's Commission members in the 1990s who drafted the "Guide to Non-Sexist Language." Although written a couple of years ago, this ridiculous piece of drivel was posted on the University of New Hampshire's website, but, fortunately, was just removed because it was not the policy of the UNH. (I'm glad I kept a copy of this nonsense.)

According to the authors, the Guide was "to serve as a starting point about terms related to age, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, gender, ability, sexual orientation and more" and "to encourage thoughtful expression in terms that are sensitive to the diverse identities and experiences in our community."

Apparently, the stereotypical phrase "going Dutch" instead of "splitting the bill" was derived from a negative assumption. Honestly, it always sounded like a smart idea to me, and I never once in my 63 years ever thought badly about the Dutch people because of it.

However, what probably irked me the most about the B-FLG, and what troubled UNH President Mark Huddleston, was that it

considered the word "American" to be "problematic." The "preferred ethnic identifier" was "U.S. citizen" or "resident of the U.S." According to the Guide, "North Americans often use 'American' which usually, depending on the context, failed to recognize South America." This made absolutely no sense.

I have no idea where the authors of this political correctness BS went to school, but, wherever it was, they never took a geography class. North America is made up of 23 countries. South America is made up of 12 countries.

When I've met people from South America, never once has anyone said he was "South American." He identified himself, without exception, as "Bolivian," "Uruguayan," "Colombian," or "Brazilian." (And, yes, I'm using the male pronoun.)

What's laughable is that the authors weren't even consistent in their rationale. When speaking about people from "Africa," they preferred the specific name of the country on the continent of Africa be used because "Africa" is a continent of many countries and citizens prefer to identify with their country of origin, such as Ethiopian or Nigerian." The B-FLG didn't say a person should be called "a resident of Senegal" or "a Uganda citizen." A person should be called "Senegalese" or "Ugandan."

So you can call a person from Kenya (one of the 54 independent states in Africa) a "Kenyan" but you can't call a person from the United States of America an "American."

Would these geographically-challenged people like to change the names of American Express, American Broadcasting Company, American Financial Group, American Greetings, etc. too?

The B-FLG may be removed from the UNH website, but I'll bet it's not forgotten. Liberals LOVE to identify and categorize people. All these little language nuances will eventually trickle down into our modern day politically correct vocabulary. I've had many conversations with my left-leaning

friends and labels like “my black friend,” or “my gay friend” will regularly come up in a conversation when their friend’s color or sexual orientation is totally irrelevant. Here’s a perfect example of what I mean. A conversation I actually had with a far left acquaintance of mine (I’ve left out the actual names):

Me: “[My husband] told me Judge so and so is going to officiate at Jim and Judy’s wedding. [My husband] said he’s a very good judge.

Acquaintance: “Yes, that’s right. He’s gay.”

Me: “I didn’t know that.” (My thought at the time: What has being gay got to do with him officiating at the wedding or being a good judge?)

Acquaintance: “Didn’t [your husband] tell you?”

Me: “Why would he?”

Apparently, Judge so and so was “out” (a term approved by the B-FLG) but what had his being “gay” have to do with officiating at the wedding? My husband couldn’t care less if the man was gay or straight, black or white, tall or short, rich or poor, so why would he tell me any of that when discussing whether the man was a good judge or not? Whether we have gay friends or not (with the exception of one or two that are “out”), I couldn’t tell you. I have never once in my entire life asked anyone whether they have sex with men or women. I don’t want to know. I don’t presume anything.

The B-FLG may be off the UNH’s website, but I’m betting it will pop up at another one of our educational institutions some time soon.

I don’t get it, but if you do, God bless you.