

If you accidentally step on someone's foot, do you debate whether or not it hurt?

Has anyone ever called you out for something oppressive that you said? Sometimes when we are confronted with an interaction where our intentions don't line up with our impact, it can be difficult to take responsibility for pain we didn't mean to cause. Here are some tips on how you can effectively communicate across difference during this type of situation:

Seek first for understanding, so you can be understood.

It is natural to feel the need to defend one's perspective/intentions in a situation like this, however it is important to make sure that you validate the feelings of others while also expressing your own.

Ask questions to clarify and to make sure you understand the feedback. If needed, ask for examples and stories that illustrate the feedback and summarize and reflect what you hear to make sure reciprocal understanding and sharing occurs.

You don't have to agree with everything someone says to receive feedback effectively. Mutual trust and respect can only be built when both parties are willing to suspend judgment and learn about how their actions impact others.

**Whether or not we understand the power of our words, we still use them....
So what kind of impact do you want to make?**

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