



## Cultivating Justice

### A Quest Towards Racial Equity

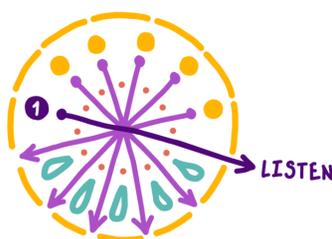
#### Week 1

Welcome to **Week 1 of Cultivating Justice: A Quest Toward Racial Equity**. We are so excited to share with you materials and resources created by and for people in the Cedar Valley to promote racial justice and activate change in our communities. Each week of the Quest has a specific purpose and these newsletters will help guide you on your journey.



#### Welcome

Watch this [short video by Provost José Herrera](#) as he welcomes you to the Quest and **discusses** the importance and power of listening.



#### Mission

This week's mission is to listen to the stories and experiences of people in our communities and to consider the role of listening in promoting racial justice. Visit the [Listen](#) page on the Quest website to hear, watch, read, or view others' stories. This week, people share their stories and perspectives through poetry, storytelling, artwork, podcasts, documentary, and performance.

#### Tip

You have permission to move through this experience slowly and deeply. We recommend that you prioritize the items highlighted in this newsletter and then explore additional resources on the website based on your own interests, needs, or as time allows. The resources will remain available for you on the website after the completion of this Quest.

#### Contemplate

To get in the listening spirit, contemplate the following quotation on generous listening found in On [Being's Better Conversations: A Starter Guide](#):

"Listening is an everyday art and virtue, but it's an art we have lost and must learn anew. Listening is more than being quiet while others have their say. It is about presence as much as receiving; it is about connection more than observing. Real listening is powered by curiosity. It involves vulnerability—a willingness to be surprised, to let go of assumptions and take in ambiguity. It is never in 'gotcha' mode. The generous listener wants to understand the humanity behind the words of the other and patiently summons one's own best self and one's own most generous words and questions."

#### Community Assignment

Yaw Kyeremateng, a UNI alumnus and 2013 Homecoming King, performs the slam poem "[Accent](#)" in which he offers the audience a glimpse into his life as a Ghanaian-born person living in the United States. Kyeremateng explores reactions to his West African accent, code-switching, and the dissonance of existing in the space between his Ghanaian ancestral roots and his Americanized speech. Email Yaw Kyeremateng at [yawpoetry@gmail.com](mailto:yawpoetry@gmail.com) to hire him to perform. *\*The original performance has been edited for mature language.*

#### Reflect & Discuss

- As you listened to Yaw Kyeremateng's story, what moved you? Are there particular moments from the performance that have stayed with you? What emotions did his poetry spark for you? What can you learn from those feelings? What type of action does Kyeremateng's poetry inspire you to take?
- Want to learn more about code-switching? Reflect on [The Cost of Code-Switching](#) published in the Harvard Business Review. Discuss ways that you have experienced the cost of code-switching or witnessed others pay the cost of code-switching.
- What is the role of listening in cultivating justice in our communities?
- Dedicate time this week to contemplating your own identity as well as your own role in organizing activism in your own community. Complete this [Organizing Activism: Inner Work Worksheet](#) provided by Passion Planner.

Office of the Provost

University of Northern Iowa  
jim.wohlpart@uni.edu / 319-273-2517

[provost.uni.edu](http://provost.uni.edu)

