



A WEEK IN *Learning*

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CHALLENGING THE "SINGLE STORY": BUILDING TRUST AND CONNECTION THROUGH UNDERSTANDING

Recommended by Christina Lowry, Operations Specialist, Organizational Development



Although Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk, *The Danger of a Single Story*, was recorded 15 years ago, its message still resonates with me today. In this talk, Adichie explores the negative effects of the "Single Story," which she defines as an overly simplistic and generalized perception of a person or place. She provides examples of how the "Single Story" has negatively impacted

not only those she has encountered but also her own thoughts and actions.

Adichie argues that "Single stories often originate from simple misunderstandings or a lack of knowledge...they can rob people of their dignity and highlight our differences rather than our similarities." This made me think about the people we serve in our community. The "Single Stories" portrayed in the media and movies about those facing economic challenges often reduce homelessness to a single issue, when in fact it is a complicated situation caused by many factors. These are the misconceptions that Goodwill team members strive to change every day.

Recognizing the various stories that shape a person's life builds connection and trust, leading to stronger working relationships and better interactions with those we serve. As Adichie emphasizes towards the end of her TED Talk, "It is impossible to engage with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person." Embracing this perspective helps us understand and support each other more effectively.

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