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### **Perspective.**



My daughter and I made this visual aid for me to use when talking about "diversity" and "inclusion" (not "diversity and inclusion"...two things, not one).

The punch line is we all have different perspectives, depending on our backgrounds and experiences. If everyone in the organization has the same perspective, the organization suffers because it can't see anything other than the "red stripes" or the "yellow square" or whatever.

We need organizations which have people who can see the green triangles on the other side. That's "**diversity**"...*it's not about political correctness; it's about mission effectiveness.* "**Inclusion**" is about the leader behavior to ensure the green triangle **people know their perspectives are valid and valued**, despite the fact most others in the organization can only see the yellow square. Obviously, there's a lot more to this...but that's the idea.

I'm bothered by the events in Minneapolis and what it means about our society. And our Air Force is a reflection of our society, so, by extension, this is an Air Force issue.

We'd be naive to think issues of institutional racism and unconscious bias don't affect us. We can't ignore it. We have to face it. And to face it, we have to talk about it.

Not argue...talk. We have to listen to other perspectives and accept them as valid, but perhaps incomplete...just like ours. If all I see is the yellow square because that's the perspective I have, it doesn't mean there isn't an equally valid green triangle there. I just can't see it. But until I understand the totality of the cube...beyond that which I can see...I won't be as effective for our nation as I could be.

Like all, I am limited in my perspective. I'm a middle-aged white man who grew up in a middle class family in a predominantly white area. I have been in "the majority" in almost every organization I've ever been in. I don't fully understand...but I'm trying...and I accept there is a green triangle there which I just can't see.

In my last assignment, I had a long commute so I listened to a lot of podcasts. One I really found illuminating was a series on the podcast "**Scene on Radio**" called "**Seeing White**" which deals with issues of institutional racism in America. I didn't agree with all of it. I was angered by some of it. I was ashamed by much of it. But I learned from all of it.

If you're disquieted by what's going on in Minneapolis and across America...if you have an opinion on Colin Kaepernick one way or another...give it a listen.

In AFSOC, we're calling on our leadership teams to lead. Part of that is having the courage to address the difficult issues affecting our force, even when...especially when...it's uncomfortable.

If you see individual racism...bigotry...in our Air Force, call it out.

If you see institutional racism in our Air Force, call it out.

Our EO and IG offices are ready to assist.

And we're listening.

Tell us about the green triangles we can't see.

Finally, the profession of arms in the United States has a jealously guarded reputation for being an apolitical institution.

We mustn't allow our civil discourse on politically-charged issues to turn into political discourse.

At the same time, we mustn't allow the politically-charged nature of the issues to dissuade us from professional discourse.

It's a fine line, but we're good enough and professional enough to be able to walk it.



Scene on Radio is a Peabody-nominated podcast from the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University (CDS) that dives deeply into issues central to American society, exploring who we were and who we are.