



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

****Please note: This is a rough transcription of this audio podcast. This transcript is not edited for spelling, grammar, or punctuation.****

Participants:

Shari Miles-Cohen

Diane Forbes Berthoud

[Audio Length: 0:59:31]

RECORDING BEGINS

Introduction:

This is *Communication Matters, The NCA Podcast*.

Shari Miles-Cohen:

Hello, I'm Dr. Shari Miles-Cohen, the newly appointed Executive Director of the National Communication Association. I'm your host on *Communication Matters, the NCA Podcast*, and I look forward to connecting with you on the podcast and through all of NCA's work. Thank you for joining us for today's episode.

Today, I'm excited to discuss the connections between Communication and Psychology with Diane Forbes Berthoud. As some brief background on me, prior to joining NCA, I was the Senior Director of the Human Rights Team at the American Psychological Association, and I also have a Ph.D. in Personality Psychology from Howard University.

Now a little bit about Diane. Dr. Diane Forbes Berthoud is the University of Maryland-Baltimore's first Chief Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer and Vice President. At UMB, Diane is working to strengthen the university's commitment to EDI and to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of UMB's EDI initiatives at every level of the institution. Prior to joining the staff at UMB, Forbes Berthoud held leadership positions at the University of California-San Diego and was a founding member of the RISE San Diego Urban Leadership Fellows Program, a partnership with the University of San Diego to advance leadership and workforce development and civic engagement. Diane holds a Ph.D. in Organizational Communication and Social Psychology from Howard University. HU?

Diane Forbes Berthoud:

You know.

Shari Miles-Cohen:

Hi, Diane, and welcome to the podcast. It's great to have you here.



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

Diane Forbes Berthoud:

Hello, Shari. Thank you so much. It's a pleasure to be here and to be a part of this. And congratulations on your new appointment as Executive Director of NCA. Very proud of you.

Shari Miles-Cohen:

Thanks, Diane. So I just wanted to start off by sort of connecting the two disciplines and thinking about the history of communication and psychology. There are some prominent scholars such as Harold Lasswell, George Miller, Orlando Taylor who sort of straddled both disciplines. Are there particular scholars or theorists who resonate in your work with the history of the two disciplines?

Diane Forbes Berthoud:

Thank you, Shari, again for the opportunity and a big pleasure to be here. I feel honored to be a part of this effort and to share with my colleagues and friends in both disciplines actually through this recording. What I think I'd like to share are the theories and the intersections that I have seen and, if you will, utilized in my own scholarship and research and in my practice. And some of that starts in and through my relationships at Howard University where I like to say I grew up intellectually and academically and developed as a scholar. And my experience was that in our program, as we had the organizational communication or which is called informally Org Comm division or component of our department which at the time was human communication studies and then became after I left, communication and culture. We did a lot of work in and around African retentions, understanding critical theory in organizations, doing group work, and work on leadership. And there was a whole section and the whole area on media and mass communication. What I found was I was able to learn quite a bit about verbal, nonverbal communication and in Org Comm, quite a bit about organizational culture and networks. And we did some great work and learned a lot about feminist communication and feminist organizing and so forth.

What I found psychology to be and to be able to do was to help me understand more deeply the psychology of gender, the psychology of race, identity development and formation, and those kinds of pieces that we ended up reading. So I think it crosses work around racial identity development and some others. And of course, coming through psychology yourself, yourself and Dr. Aucamp and other great scholars and practitioners from that department, you're well familiar with black psychology and some of the courses that I took in that department as well as research courses. And so learning about decision-making, conflict, feminist communication, feminist organizational communication, and supplementing and integrating that with how identities develop and the histories of persons who have been historically marginalized, and understanding motivations helped me to bring forth some of the work that I did in and around black women's experiences in organizations. So in organizational communication, reading the work of Brenda



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

Allen and Patrice Bazanelle and Dennis MUMBie and others helped me to understand feminisms in organizations and the work of Cross and others in psychology helping me to understand how identities develop in and around race and then taking courses in social psychology or on the psychology of gender, courses like—I think there was a course called third world feminism. And of course, I'm sure it may have been renamed because third world is so controversial and does not speak to the value of persons from those regions.

And so we did courses in and around that, and I was able to go, oh, this helps me to understand how identities develop, how we got to where we are, not only studying what is but understanding the historical components of behavior and of communication as it is. So I know these might be questions coming up later. But things like cognitive dissonance is connected to both cognition and disagreement or conflict, if you will, or dealing with uncertainty. And uncertainty reduction is another theory in interpersonal communication also applied in other areas. And to, me those two theories and feminisms really draw on multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. So I've been really excited to be introduced to that 20 plus years ago, 25 plus years ago now and have continued to critique and contest some of those theories and perspectives and develop as much as possible while still trying to hold administrative roles and keep a fairly active research agenda.

Shari Miles-Cohen:

And so I'm just thinking about your knowledge and expertise of both disciplines and how they've informed your work, both your research and your practice.

Diane Forbes Berthoud:

Great question. Thank you. So as you know, based on our previous projects and experience, I have both experience as an academic teacher-researcher and was a tenured professor at Trinity Washington University, associate professor and chair there, and continued on at University of California-San Diego as a lecturer there, part of the faculty, more importantly, trying to mirror and match that with an academic administrative role as a director of academic planning and assessment, and then moving on to formal work in equity, diversity, and inclusion. Outside of academic life, the Org Comm, the organizational communication background enabled me to be able to serve as a consultant to multiple organizations over 27 plus years, both domestic and international including the APA and Montgomery County government, working with smaller nonprofits and smaller government organizations and international entities and agencies in and around equity, diversity, and inclusion, around identity formation and development, if you will, as in who are we, purpose, mission, strategic planning and development. And the organizational communication background that helped with that is work in and around organizational culture and climate. And so a lot of that work that I studied there and the psychology and also, the identity elements too around diversity in organizations, women in organizations, persons from racially



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

minoritized groups in organizations, and what those experiences are like. At the time, we were talking about micro practices.

And so when we were studying about the experiences of women in organizations and other historically marginalized groups, we were talking about micro practices. Now more and more, we are talking about micro and macro aggressions, not just in organizations but in society. And so all of that informed my organizational comm research, teaching, and service, if you will, and consulting life because often organizations call a consultant in to quote fix things or to help them resolve things or think about things differently, more holistically, more integratively. So my experience with organizational communication helped to do that. My psychology experience helped in terms of understanding systems theory more deeply and more psychodynamically. That is thinking about networks—and recall, we drew on this as well in Org Comm, systems theory. The piece that is a little different is being exposed to work in through The Tavistock Institute and work around group relations theory and practice which is the central pieces around psychodynamics of groups, understanding the interconnectedness of people's networks identities as well as studying conscious and unconscious motivations of behavior.

The way we see it now more practically in our lives and the language we're hearing in organizations and in trainings and development, and those kinds of efforts is through language around unconscious bias or implicit bias. Those are psychological constructs that from a Freudian perspective, depending on the individual, of course, most people have a life that's 85% to 90% unconscious. And the way this is represented in understanding cognition and mental development as well as our life is that there's an iceberg, and the piece that we see, we use that term, that that's just the tip of the iceberg, well, that tip is about 1/10th and about 9/10th or 90% of that and some psychological theories and a union perspective too is that this is made up of dreams and things we don't understand or don't know or can't recall or things we have buried. And on Google, if you just Google like something around the Freudian perspective or unconscious mind, you will see that that iceberg has things like the tip is the utterances, the statements that have been made, the outward explicit expressions. Right now, you're nodding because you're expressing some understanding. That's outward. Beneath all of that in our interaction are our parents. How scary is that? Are the experiences we might have had of bullying or our first major conflict or showdown with a person who is senior to us or a leader or a teacher or a community member or clergy person or someone who sold us ice cream or something like that. Good or bad. So all of that is literally floating around in our minds and our existence. That is unconscious.

And until we have either meaningful, purposeful conversations, participate in certain spiritual, psychological, or academic or personal practices like psychotherapy and other kinds of things like that, that part of the 9/10th doesn't get reduced. It remains the same. We just kind of keep doing



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

the same thing. And so in our personal development and our professional development, we're encouraged to do some of that. I raise all of that because I was exposed to that work in graduate school with colleagues and professors, both interdisciplinary from other institutions in Boston and Midwest and other places to study this in an experiential set of contexts. And so I've done both. And without scaring people with all of what I just mentioned in a consultation, I'm able to and have refined a practice of understanding beyond the words, beyond the silence, beyond the rolling of the eyes or non-verbal that in communication we pay attention to as ignoring, dismissing, frustration, annoyance from a psychodynamic perspective. We're also interested in the why. We're interested in any historical elements that may have informed that final utterance. Oh, that's just crazy. And going beyond the, what does that statement mean? Why did it come at this time? What's this person's history and their engagement or behavior in this institution? And then brought it from a communication perspective to, how does that then impact and shape the organizational culture if two or three or five people have this as expected norms and behaviors and practices in the organization? So it's a lot of excitement and a lot of complication, and sometimes it gets to be intense depending on the type of consultation that there is in my writing and in the work that I've done over the years. It's been mostly around focusing on the experiences of either movements or specifically black women in leadership.

And 25, 27 years ago, I was struggling to find a lot of scholarship in those areas. Brenda Allen was one of our chief scholars and consultants in that area at the time, and would draw on Orbe's work and others work and Ron Jackson's work and others to understand more about culture and race and racialized interactions and influence of those interactions, Tina Harris and others who write about race and communication. I mean I could go on with great scholars that as we were coming through graduate school, we were reading their work. And so really being informed by that helped quite a bit. And then, of course, as I said, being enriched by the psychodynamic elements of those very interactions that we study in communication.

Shari Miles-Cohen:

And as you think about were there an interaction, like two people sitting at a dinner table or two colleagues when you come in as a consultant to help an organization work through a challenging situation with your communication hat on and your psychologist hat on, how do you tease that engagement apart and how do they inform each other as you were talking about sort of the iceberg being sort of what's visible most accessible and then the 90% below the surface of the water?

Diane Forbes Berthoud:

When there is a problem, conflict, usually by the time the consultant gets there, there's a great deal of complex layering of concerns, historical, present where sometimes they're also thinking about the future so doing some strategic planning. Other times there is some coaching that might



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

be involved with an executive with an individual because they want to then have a sense of what might I do with my senior team, my executive team, council, or I have a board. And there are different kinds of interactions with which I've dealt over the years. The communication skill practice to which I call on often is that wonderful, sometimes unforgotten practice of listening. And I remember there was a whole course in our program on listening, and it's like, what could we do in a whole semester on listening? Wow. I learned a lot, and I've continued to use those skills related to just understanding the difference between the hearing which is more of an auditory, physical, sometimes psychological. But do you have the ability to hear? And moving through understanding and retention, like all those steps. And then there's this evaluation component of listening, begin to critique, judge, understand beyond what is being said. We start thinking about issues of ethics. And so evaluation is happening there. A key part of listening is also a response, not necessarily verbal. So it is some of what we're doing here, the non-verbal, the pausing, the changing of our posture to indicate interest, and nodding. Sometimes we might raise our eyebrows, like whoa, that's surprising. And the listening, all of those things are behaviors and dynamics to which I pay attention.

And so upon an initial consultation, it would be something, not these exact words, but something along the lines of doing a needs assessment, understanding the priorities, the needs, the urgent concerns, and what they would like to get out of this. So I have to do a lot of listening to understand that, and I'll do that. And this is also a qualitative research perspective and practice of exploring deeply to the point of saturation, if possible, depending on the engagement with the organization. So then my qualitative research background also comes in here as well. And so I might interview the CEO or the executive director or the head of the faculty senate or whatever the group is that has asked for my assistance and support. And from a systems perspective, now here comes the Org Comm systems theory component, if I only heard from the CEO or the head of the board but not members of the organization or that board or affinity groups, so maybe I started an age group or a certain gender group, etc., then I would have been missing as much as possible that I can glean the full picture. So the interrelatedness of networks, practices, beliefs which is organizational culture back to my Org Comm background, is how I kind of tried to paint that whole picture. And my view as a so-called external actor or player in this is that I'm able to see differently what is happening in the organization. And part of my role would be to help to reflect or report that to not only the person who's commissioned this work but the whole organization for steps going forward.

Now where the psychology and some of the communication merge is there are times I end up meeting with groups. And so there's small group communication as well as psychodynamics of groups, calling on both. And I will notice as well as reflect dynamics of assertion, how decisions are being made, how people provide feedback and respond to feedback. And I'm looking also at



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

verbal and nonverbal. Who is speaking right after whom? Who at the moment that the CEO or at the moment that this particular woman executive speaks is jumping on their laptop or leaving the room or rolling their eyes? All of those things, or choosing not to speak at all, who is speaking at the same time two or three other people are speaking, etc., etc., etc. So those communication dynamics I'll notice and begin to draw some conclusions over time. And sometimes I've worked with organizations for several months. Sometimes during the summer when I was in faculty, a lot of those were concentrated between say May and August, I could really dive in. And while I was doing my doctoral work at Howard, I was privileged to be lead consultant on a major initiative in Montgomery County for about two years with thousands of employees. So I was both doing my research part in the doctoral program and making a living and practicing because I had already had a Master's degree. And as you know, with a Master's degree, I mean I was qualified to do that kind of work. So it continues. So I shared with you in in that sense. I know you talked about the breakfast example, but I'm also thinking about consulting with groups and serving those kinds of things.

The last thing that I'll mention which is so very important right now with the work and the experiences since 2020, and it's been referred to as a triple pandemic, both looking at the racial and the social unrest, the economic downturn that has taken place for most of the country if not the world and many marginalized populations, and also the public health medical issues. So triple. And other people can talk about multiple pieces. The other piece that emerged from that that called in my psychology background is the emotionality and the affect that comes with the experiences of trauma, of conflict, of devaluation, of disrespect, of hurt. And in communication, there is work in and around affect and emotions at work. There's work around that, and in both my process related and consultation work, I allow a bit more space than I think in a normal communication setting that might be allowed. And so sometimes depending on the context, the type of meeting I might be having in a professional context or in a consultation, this is now about my practice as an administrator, there have been sometimes many tears, sometimes raised voices, sometimes talking over, sometimes cutting off. I mean there's been different kinds of things. And from a psychological perspective, I don't always view this as disrespect or uncivil. And let me clarify. Certainly, each time each one of us is speaking or listening, we want the space to do both. We would like that mutual respect.

However, in the context of 2020 and in the context of Black Lives Matter and hashtag Me Too movement and many other movements that have affected populations that are the minority in their organizations and/or have lower or less power, there's been a bubbling up of frustration from mostly women in the Me Too movement and persons of color, specifically black persons or from other persons of color. And so what we found is in professional context when some people would think we separate, we're here to work. We're not here to do with all of this. I've heard those



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

statements. This is the communication dynamic. I've heard those statements. And so people will think, where do I go with my frustration, my trauma, the violence I've experienced? Not necessarily physical violence, but verbal and/or emotional or psychological violence. Here now this is my psych background. Where do they go with that when they're having these experiences of not being promoted, acknowledged, given the opportunities to grow? And so when they've seen what has happened both in the streets and with the murders of Mr. Floyd and Mr. Arbery and others and Miss Taylor and so on, when people have seen this from an organizational perspective, they also see themselves and themselves at work. So I have loved the work that we've done in these fields because all of that has informed how I might then facilitate very difficult meetings which I helped to facilitate over the last year or two which involved some of the dynamics that I mentioned which might be seen as well, voices were raised and it was so uncivil and everybody was—well, from a psychological perspective what I would like to understand more about, and in communication too, what are the unmet needs. These are questions we ask in conflict management and resolution. And it's not that I as an individual do this perfectly, but it's that I can bring a level of understanding and complexity and advice to my colleagues and senior leaders or persons to whom I report to say, here's something we might be thinking about as well.

And sometimes given my background, I let it ride, as in I let the chairs flow, I let the statements go forward, and allow for some understanding. Communication strategy? Paraphrase, reflecting. What I've heard is, so you've said or it seems that you are. And to do that check-in. Doing that check-in because the person might say, yeah, I am frustrated and sad, but I'm also angry. I hear that you are frustrated or angry about this. Is that an accurate reflection? And so on. And sometimes that alone is the de-escalating strategy, the validation and the acknowledgement of what we're hearing or feeling and the reducing of the defensiveness. I might want to add but I also want to share with you so and so and so. But kind of going through a consultative process, I'm able to listen, try to balance. Okay. So I hear Shari saying this or hear Diane saying this. Jackie or Jeff, I'd just like you to also just kind of do that reflection and sometimes oh, okay. And just having that intermediary helps with that as well as with once we get—because we can't do anything until we clear that, and spending the time to do that, clear that and often day two, day three of the retreat or the next time I meet with them in a month or two, we're able to get to some of the task related elements which are important to the organization too but are being thwarted or stymied because there are these components of affect. So yeah, I mean it's complicated and very exciting because I can see both coming and practicing that way.

Shari Miles-Cohen:

Sure. And one of the other things that I think is so unique, and I think could make you a unicorn, I'm not exactly sure, is the different settings you have held leadership roles. You've been in leadership at a historically women's college, at an HBCU, at a Hispanic-serving organization, at



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

an Asian-American serving organization. I'm just wondering if you can talk about how those different experiences working successfully in those settings with different institutional commitments, different student body populations, different staff populations, and how you bring all of that to bear with where you are now at UMB.

Diane Forbes Berthoud:

I have not thought about it in the ways that you've just framed it. I think what you've done there, Shari, and I appreciate it is a review of most of my academic and professional life by the types of institution. And I've often in my interactions with others talked about working in private and public institutions and larger and smaller and so on as you've described it there in terms of identity-based commitments. I'm well aware that Howard and Trinity are key elements of my core identity and my family's core identity, historically black institution and a women's college undergrad. Over time, while I was there I believe were before the graduate and professional schools. I think work co-ed or had always been co-ed, and I was pleased to teach and vote. However, the core liberal arts curriculum undergraduate was women's, and that encapsulated about almost 15 years of my professional career. And I look back, and thinking about your description, and I go, what a great life and exposure. What it has helped me to appreciate is the knowledge skills and abilities that I've developed in and around higher education issues and principles and practice. And not just the type of institution, but the people. For me, it's always about these wonderful people, not without challenge or conflict at all. However, I've brought everything in and framed it as been wonderful learning, it has complicated my understanding of organizations, of myself, of my leadership and management, and have helped me to, as my mentor used to say from Howard, helped me to master my craft, both in scholarship, research, teaching, service, consulting, and practice, etc., and my community work as well.

So from Howard to Trinity, George Mason, University of Maryland, College Park, I was a senior fellow there concurrently with my appointment at Trinity, and I was a faculty fellow at Georgetown. There was a fellowship program a semester or two on project-based learning and community-based learning and research. And sometimes I forget about that, and I go, wow, that informed a lot of my experience at University of California-San Diego when I was doing academic direction and assessment all the way to doing formal EDI work over the last 10 plus years. And it has helped me be more confident and to bring more people in and along it for those who might desire to follow or walk similar paths, whether they want to just strictly scholarship or some people have used that oracle background to do mostly practice. I've shared all of that in and around larger systems. I was talking about colleague delegates. You came from UC-San Diego. And there was a question about the way the systems are set up, and the word bureaucracy was used. But it was used in the most negative way, and I was thinking, I actually liked the organization and like the structure which was needed for 17 schools and divisions. Buildings are being built every day,



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

residential halls, new programs, new faculty are being hired, new programs to advance faculty promotion and retention, to support underrepresented faculty and specific initiatives, excellence hires to advance the hires of underrepresented groups particularly in STEM and other disciplines, arts and humanities and so on. And I'm thinking some of that bureaucracy is actually needed to make those things go. We need people to help to write those grants to oversee a strategy for something and then to advance that initiative. We needed an equity, diversity, and inclusion office, and through the leadership there, previously, when I was there and that will come in the future I am sure, it will focus, that office will continue to focus on faculty, staff, and student development, particularly historically marginalized groups. So bureaucracy used in that sense made its own cumbersome and complex. It's not a perfect institution at all nor is any. It's imperfect in its own ways, and it helps to keep the engine running in terms of leadership and management and execution and accountability.

Shari Miles-Cohen:

As you think about sort of bringing all of that now to UMB and the nexus of your organizational communication and social psychology background that's sort of informing the EDI work on the campus, one of the areas you're focused on is faculty retention, recruitment and retention. But you've also talked about how important pedagogy is to faculty recruitment and retention and student retention. And so can you talk about the system, right? How you're thinking about this systemically and the different pieces that really have to come together to make a successful sort of strategic action plan.

Diane Forbes Berthoud:

What you've described is a large, complex, highly matrixed project experiment and plan. And a role like mine doesn't operate individually. It must operate and I must operate and this office must operate in collaboration with academic and faculty affairs, student affairs, the staff association, human resources and so on. Specifically, you've talked about faculty, faculty affairs, and faculty retention. And in a role like mine, the relationship with academic affairs through provost's office and any teaching and learning center, any center that advances pedagogy or any kinds of those initiatives are the centers and are the offices and persons with whom I need to collaborate and that means harnessing our collective experience for collective impact. So what I know both from my experience, research, and practice, part of my area is also women's leadership development. I taught courses like that. I've developed courses like that and have research in and around how to design the kinds of courses that develop women's leadership and develop leaders who are ethical and conscious and effective as well. And so very often what we find is research and our teaching is somewhat autobiographical. And so people who are exploring things around cancer and stroke and heart disease, it's in part because they are grateful patients or they've had, I'm saying this because in my last two systems and over the last 12 plus years, I've been in a



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

university with the health center. So I've learned quite a bit about STEMM, science, technology, engineering, math, and medicine administration and research.

So what does it take then to advance faculty retention and equity, diversity, and inclusion in faculty affairs? Well, it is understanding the research and the practice and the experience of diverse faculty. And some of that is that we know women are not promoted at the same levels and the same rates as men on the tenure clock for all kinds of reasons, bias included. So it's not only family responsibility. It is also the experiences of the climate and the connections to others in terms of mentoring. So some of the things that are needed, again, not solely instituted by my office, are structured mentoring and collaboration opportunities and programs. So again, where administrators come in and where faculty leaders come in. Resources are also needed for faculty, for protected time, for course releases, for providing the resources to help them to advance any kind of grant writing or programs that will promote the goals and mission of that university for that academic department or division. It is unfair to depending on the institution, if it's a research one institution, to have a 4-4 load or a 5-5 load or something like that if it's on a semester system and still expect an assistant professor who's probably from a historically marginalized group to produce at the same level and rate when they're also trying to learn the institution, try to learn the ropes as it were related to organizational socialization and produce and teach and do the grading. And we know that women and our racially minoritized groups, black and brown faculty tend to be the ones to bear the emotional labor or pay the minority tax of also formally and informally advising and mentoring students of color and other groups that might be marginalized in any way in organizations.

How do we account for that and that work and that labor? So thinking more strategically, and this is in partnership with academic leaders, about course load equity. And someone will say, well, I have a 3-3 load too, but really they only have one or two preps and they have a class with four or five TAs. And if it's a smaller class, they might have 10 to 15. When I say 3-3, I might be talking about three large lecture and three separate preps. Well, that can be analyzed, and ACE, American Council on Education and other institutions have published tools and frameworks to help us conduct that equity analysis around the committees on which people serve the courses they teach, not just by number, but by quality and quantity and depth and complexity of preparation. And then there is the promotion and tenure process, thinking about how we account for equity, diversity, inclusion, or social justice related research, service, and teaching. Years ago, and in some cases still, research about women, research about any marginalized population, LGBTQ, etc. was seen as not good research or solid research. And if it wasn't quantitative, large groups of undergraduate classes from the Midwest of 5,000 plus students, then this is a good research. Well, someone who did some of that work but mostly did qualitative research. Because where was I going to find 4,000 black women CEOs when they barely make up 1% on boards



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

and things like that in organizations like that? Where was I going to find women who were heads of mega churches or who worked in the White House? When I did my work for my dissertation, someone who worked in the Clinton White House, there was probably one or two of them at the level that this particular person I'm thinking about was. And the types of CEOs and directors were very, very few. So I focused on depth and the breadth to the extent that I could about women's experience broadly and then deepened that analysis, thinking about black women. So I didn't have problems getting tenure it was a different type of institution, but I know that those are some of the barriers. So when we think about faculty retention, we have to, and equity, we have to think about where the barriers and disparities exist around promotion and tenure and around validation and inclusion and integration of research that deals with some of the areas that I'm addressing now and really transforming those processes with intention.

The final thing that I'll mention about that about faculty retention is, and we're seeing more work around this related to psychology as well, sense of belonging. We've talked about EDI. I've heard people talk about EDIB or DEIB or DEI, JEDI justice. And so the work is continuing to evolve, and we're talking about sense of belonging as in when I'm here, it's not just did I get invited to the party or to the so-called table. It's are they playing my song, are they putting on the rhythm of my work in the larger milieu of the academic enterprise, is the work of women represented in this department or unit or feminist research accepted here, do we understand indigenous knowledges or people who publish and write about that, do we respect it, and so on, and the different types of inquiries and research, different modes and understanding of human life and experience and human communication. Are all those elements being integrated or only the ones that particular individuals who've been there the longest and represent particular identities and racial, ethnic, cultural, gender groups, are those the ones that are going to be supreme? And this is why diverse leadership matters because department chairs, divisions, deans, provosts who are not only diverse in identity but in perspective and in inquiry and exposure will be able to unearth and problematize some of those dynamics that I think persist in higher education.

Shari Miles-Cohen:

Absolutely. I am sort of thinking about the sort of standard psychology and the standard communication curriculum, right? You didn't get to where you were just by taking courses in a classroom. So as you think about mentoring the next generation, providing guidance to communication students now who have an interest in doing the work that you're doing at your level, what sort of advice would you give them to how to round out their education as communication scholars?



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

Diane Forbes Berthoud:

For sure I would say, if possible, choose the environments where there is critical thinking encouraged and advanced, ask a lot of questions, and be free to share your views and thoughts. I loved and I still love Howard University for that, that when publishers would come to us and share books and editions or things were presented to us as law from guests or other colleagues in the field throughout the U.S. and other parts of the world, we would query and critique the method. We would query and critique the participants, the perspectives, the cultural, the academic assumptions that underlay all of the things that we were learning as a quote standard. How did we come to know about Pavlov's dog? How do we come to know about conditioning? Often, sometimes in psychology, these psychologists or holders of the canons of our disciplines did some of that with their child or an individual sometimes, an office mate or a colleague in a lab. And we took those things from 1800s, 1900s to be law in our current time. Very often, women or people of a particular age group might not have been included in that study. And so even with COVID vaccine trials and the findings and things like that, one of the things I learned in my graduate education and throughout life is who was included in that? Were patients, expectant mothers included in that? People from African-American, indigenous populations included in that? Hispanic, Latinx populations and so forth. Because the findings will be different when the populations are different. Necessarily they're different because of cultural, physical, historical, religious, all kinds of memberships, if you will, change the ways that we view life. So I would say ask as many questions and be free. Speak from your own experience and listen to others' experiences.

Shari Miles-Cohen:

I just have a couple of more questions, Diane. But one of them is to I think piggyback on what you just talked about and talk about the relationship between communication and psychology demonstrating the value of interdisciplinary communication research. Communication sort of lends itself to interdisciplinary work with many other disciplines, and I wonder if you can just talk a little bit about that.

Diane Forbes Berthoud:

The value is we're able to complicate and deepen our analyses of those experiences, particularly as qualitative researchers who focus on depth and meaning and purpose and complexity in a way that sometimes when we generalize, we don't get. When I think about social movements, because a few pieces that I've written have been around the experiences of Black Lives Matter, Me Too, and how black women have experienced the last four or five years since 2016, and political/social movements and any understanding of the psychology and the dynamics of those movements mean that we are also collaborating and deepening our knowledge of history, of political science, of ethnic studies, cultural studies, American studies. So all of those fields in and of themselves,



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

when we say cultural studies or American studies, that's interdisciplinary because we're talking about history politics, we are talking about economics. Because some of what we're experiencing with the pandemic and some of what we saw with Me Too and Black Lives Matter also rests on and are related to questions of economics i.e. pay equity, justice in the workplace. It's related to the experiences of promotion which is not just oh, I got a new a new job, but it is I got 20% more or 30% more. And therefore, often we're at the head of household. Well, many head of households in the United States are women. And so if they're making 76 cents on every dollar, and then we think about women of color and black women specifically at 64 cents and it's also below in some fields, this larger question of the racial wealth gap and inequity in real estate ownership and net worth and that in this country African-American slash blacks make black people I think that's something like 1/10th of the net worth of our white colleagues and friends and neighbors. Well, if that is the case, which we know is historically connected to slavery and the economic enterprise of slavery, if you will, and land ownership and everything else connected to that, that's history, economics, politics, sociology. It's psychology because of the trauma and the learning and what has been developed in our collective psyche around the value of peoples of color and in this case some African-American people. So all of those fields are connected to this pay equity issue, organizational experience, and these social movements. There's a long line that can be traced back to 1700 and before, if you will, that involves all these fields. Now no one article or piece or book can address all of those issues.

Shari Miles-Cohen:

I remember an earlier discussion I sat in with you where you talked about being a little girl with the women's freedom movement and sort of going to those meetings on a regular basis. And so thinking about young Diane and the work that you've done certainly around the intersection of racism and sexism for black women and black feminisms and you're writing around the women's march in 2017, I'm just wondering how do you see sort of black women in that space organizing differently, bringing particular experiences to bear that maybe you can make a connection back to those meetings that you sat in on as a little girl. And so is there a line that you can connect those two moments in time?

Diane Forbes Berthoud:

Thank you for those memories. I got goosebumps thinking about those times, the Tuesday and Thursday, going to those meetings with my mother in 1970s. And for our listeners who are like, my mother was a part of a movement called the WFM, the Women's Freedom Movement. And she was a teacher, and being the one who would pick my sister and me up from school because my father had a business. And so I had this longer day. They both had full-time jobs but a longer physical work day in the office. So he would be home after five most days, and she would finish teaching by maybe 1:30, 2:00, doing some prep for the next day. And then she would get us at



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

school, and then we would kind of head home. However, these meetings for one or two times a week, I'm remembering Tuesday/Thursday, and we would sit there. And I don't remember the words much, but I do remember the presence of women, mostly if not all women of color railing, shouting, speaking, declaring. And I recall the experiences of confidence, empowerment, call for justice and organizing. And I didn't consciously integrate that into my professional life right away. But having gone to a girls school for seven plus years before college, it kind of all came together over time. And that socialization and experience and especially my academic experience through most of my pre-teen to teen life shaped this idea in me that women are powerful, have always been powerful, and can do great things and do great things. So in the experience facing experiences of sexism or gender discrimination of any kind either personally or institutionally or sharing in the experiences of others who have and also as a person of color, as a black woman having those experiences related to racism have informed what I've done.

Now in terms of the research and the women's march and movement, the work that I've done around that, both talking with women and reflecting on my own experience is that it's varied and complex. That is some women of color and black women in particular have said, I showed up, I needed to show up. Generationally, I have a daughter. I have friends who say they went with their elder in their family, whether parent or another relative and their daughter and someone else. And so we had people both in the research and most of my conversations and my own experience knowing that I'm a part of this. I am a woman. It's a key part of my identity. Other black women felt that the movement was not inclusive of women of color or black women specifically, and that it was only when there was an outcry that they're like whether in those words or actions. Then black women or women of color were somewhat an afterthought, if you will. And so that is complicated because any question, effort, or research about feminisms has had that critique from Bell Hooks and others who have said from Sojourner Truth and others and I a woman, who said I am not a part of this women's movement. And this is something centuries old, coming through now into the 1980s to 2000s and 2020 and beyond, that these questions of sexual harassment, gender equity, all these questions don't involve us or involve us the same way because when we think about from an equity perspective, we think about that the leadership and representation needs to also reflect the concerns of all the people, in this case, all the women.

Shari Miles-Cohen:

In thinking about sort of communication approaches to analyzing social movements, particularly around social media with hashtag analysis or social media websites used for organizing, and then for psychology, thinking about community building, more sort of individual outreach, are there other perspectives that you feel that psychology can sort of add to the examination of social movements?



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

Diane Forbes Berthoud:

So there's the hashtags and so on, and I know there are colleagues who do perform analyses of the comments and continue to conduct analyses of speeches and statements. There are lots of statements now being written from and by organizations. Anti-racism, gender affirming statements, statements in support of veterans or persons with disabilities. You name a diverse or marginalized or affected group by any social organizational dynamic, and organizations have been sometimes pressured and sometimes motivated and inspired different ways to think about it to write these kinds of statements. I think those who do work in our own rhetoric, it used to be we would analyze things like people's speeches and things like that, these types of statements that are being written can be analyzed also for meaning, for context, for depth, for frequency of repetition of the word exclusion or the word trauma or the word race or the word veteran or whatever it is. Because sometimes we hear people give talks about particular issues, and they never said the word indigenous wants or they never said the word and they're trying to be allies with or to support our sponsor. And I'm like, these things matter, the things that are said. This is what we get in communication, and things that are not said and the things that we repeat and/or even in a conversation such as ours where I'm sure—it might be edited out—but where were there cases when I might have used vocal interrupters or pauses or bombs or those kinds of things. That could indicate doubt or conflict or complexity. Sometimes in experiences, in religious experiences for some cultural and religious or racial groups, there are particular ways of delivering a sermon or particular ways of saying something, and sometimes that very stutter or lead up to that, there's something that happens before the statement is made which is really not doubt. It's the lead up, it's the drama of the I'm about to drop something really amazing. And so there is value in that. Whereas in another context, that's seen as uncertainty or it's seen as ambiguity or something like that when, in fact, in some other cultural context, it's seen as confidence and a way to build excitement and expectation.

So I find a lot of that very fascinating. And I know that we've continued to analyze speeches, but I certainly think those kinds of statements related to social justice and those statements related to leadership conundrum, like all these issues now about organizational ethical issues. So with all the movements we're talking about, leaders have toppled because of their failure to address those issues over time and know that things have come to a head with me to all these cases have emerged because people said, well, there are increased cases of sexual harassment in organizations. Is it the increased cases or that people feel more confident to report these cases because women and others are saying, yeah, no, that wasn't right and that happened to me in 2016 or that happened in 2005. And of course, we have the detractors who will say that was 15 years ago. Why are you just bringing this up now? Or in 1980s or 90s. And so that experience of revisiting these historical experiences as well as looking at the statements and the trends of leadership and the ethical dilemmas that have been faced which are also studied in organizational



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

common cases are all very, I wouldn't say they're necessarily new, but we have new data. We have new examples and case studies to draw on some of our core practices.

Shari Miles-Cohen:

And Diane, I want to thank you for your time today, and I'd like to encourage our listeners to follow you at the University of Maryland-Baltimore to keep up to learn from the innovations that you're introducing to the campus. I'm definitely going to be paying attention. And I would just like to thank our listeners for joining us today on *Communication Matters*. I hope that this episode has offered some insight into the connections between psychology and communication and inspired listeners to consider the benefits of interdisciplinary research and practice. Thank you.

Diane Forbes Berthoud:

Thanks, Shari. It was a pleasure. I look forward to continuing the conversation. Thank you.

Shari Miles-Cohen:

In NCA news, submissions for NCA's 108th Annual Convention are open. The convention will be held November 17-20, 2022 in New Orleans, Louisiana under the theme, "Honoring PLACE: People, Liberation, Advocacy, Community, and Environment." Read the full call for this year's convention at natcom.org/convention and complete your submission by March 30, 2021 at 11:59 PM Pacific.

And, listeners, I hope you'll tune in for the next episode of *Communication Matters* when we'll focus on two recent special issues of *Review of Communication* about African Communication Studies. Guest editors Godfried A. Asante and Jenna N. Hanchey will join the podcast to discuss the articles in the special issue, the trajectory of African Communication scholarship, and how African Communication Studies can help shape the discipline of communication.

Conclusion:

Be sure to engage with us on social media by liking us on Facebook, following NCA on Twitter and Instagram, and watching us on YouTube. And before you go, hit subscribe wherever you get your podcasts to listen in as we discuss emerging scholarship, established theory, and new applications, all exploring just how much communication matters in our classrooms, in our communities, and in our world.

The National Communication Association is the preeminent scholarly association devoted to the study and teaching of communication. Founded in 1914, NCA is a thriving group of thousands of scholars from across the nation and around the world who are committed to a collective mission to advance communication as an academic discipline. In keeping with NCA's mission to advance



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
Connections Between Communication and Psychology

the discipline of communication, NCA has developed this podcast series to expand the reach of our member scholars' work and perspectives.

Communication Matters, organized at the association's national office in downtown Washington, DC, is produced by Assistant Director of External Affairs and Publications Chelsea Bowes with content development support from Director of External Affairs and Publications Wendy Fernando and Content Development Specialist Grace Hébert. Thank you for listening.

RECORDING ENDS