

CHANGING THE LENS ON DIVERSITY

Diverse is defined by Merriam-Webster, as (1) differing from one another and (2) composed of distinct or unlike elements or qualities. Unfortunately, the word gets used to refer to people or things that differ not from one another, but from what is considered to be dominant or the cultural norm. If you follow this to the root, what it's based in is the idea that there is a neutral, majority, dominant way of being, and that diversity is the addition of non-normative elements to that normative environment. This is a falsehood.

The truth is that diversity is what humanity inherently contains—we all differ from one another. The idea

that there is such a thing as “normal” or “neutral” creates a lie that there is a universal white experience, or a universal straight experience, a universal able-bodied experience, or a universal experience among any group of people that shares one aspect of identity or background.

So it may seem like a small act to use the word diverse in a manner that is true to its definition, but it's a small act with big ripple effects when you refuse to buy into a system that teaches us what “normative” is and then defines everything else as Other. Diverse is not Other. Diverse describes the collective beauty of humanity.

CAN I USE THE ADJECTIVE DIVERSE?

