

Let's try something. Grab another piece of paper. Now, I want you to – in a column – write down the first names or the initials of the six to ten people you trust the most WHO ARE NOT FAMILY MEMBERS. The 6 – 10 people not related to you in any way who you trust the most. If you can't think of 6, just write down as many as you can think of. If your circle of trust could fit in an auditorium, please narrow it down to 10. I'm going to give you another minute or so to do that.

Ok, everyone ready? Now, I want you to put a check mark next to the name of anyone on your list who shares your race or ethnicity. If you're white, put a check next to the white people. If you're Black, next to the Black people. If you're Native American, Latinx, Asian, etc – put a check mark next to anyone who shares that heritage with you.

Place a check mark next to the name of anyone who shares your gender identity. If you're a woman, put a check mark next to the women. Men, put a check mark next to the men. If you are trans, nonbinary, genderqueer, genderfluid – you get the idea.

Place a check mark next to anyone who shares your native language.

Place a check mark next to anyone who shares your sexual orientation.

Place a check mark next to anyone who shares your religion.

Place a check mark next to anyone who shares the same country of origin as you.

Place a check mark next to anyone who has achieved a similar – or higher – level of education as you.

How many check marks does your circle have? For many people, the answer is “a lot” or even “all of them”. Chances are good most of your circle share 4 or more of these characteristics, leading to minimally diverse groups. Remember that our brains – specifically our amygdalas – don't like encountering things we perceive as different? We surround ourselves with those we identify with. This doesn't just happen with these types of identifying characteristics, either. If you're a runner, chances are at least 1 or 2 of the people you listed are also runners. If you're a musician, a couple of them are also musicians.