



## Are You More Than a Single Story?

October 2016



Dear Friend,

When was the last time that someone reduced your life story to a single story?

Perhaps they only thought about you in terms of your gender, or race, or religion. Or maybe they viewed you only through the lens of your weight, or your children, or your job.

At our [Bridge of Hope Conference](#) last week, we watched a TED talk video, [The Danger of a Single Story](#), by Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

[Chimamanda](#) explains that when she began to write as a child, her characters were white and did Western things (like playing in the snow and eating apples) because she grew up reading only British and American children's books.

Chimamanda shares about how her U.S. college roommate asked if she could listen to her tribal music – and was disappointed when Chimamanda shared her tape of [Mariah Carey](#).

She recalls a time when she visited the family of their house boy in Nigeria. Because her mother had always explained how poor the family was, Chimamanda was surprised to learn that his brother made beautiful baskets. She says, "Their poverty was my single story of them."

She also notes that **power** is the ability to tell the story of another person and make it the definitive story (which robs them of dignity). She quotes the Palestinian author, [Mourid Barghouti](#), who said, "If you want to dispossess a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story, and to start with, 'secondly.'" For example, starting with the story of a failed African state, and not with the colonial creation of that African state.

### Quick Links

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100 cameras were given to the homeless in Spartanburg, SC. [Check out](#) what they photographed (and how it shows there is more than a single story of homelessness).



The theme of our Bridge of Hope Conference was **Cultural Humility: Everyone has a story.**

Our keynote speaker, [Leanna Lewis](#), explored these 3 dimensions of [cultural humility](#) – which help us to not reduce the experience of another person to a single story.

- **Lifelong learning & critical self-reflection**
- **Recognizing and challenging power imbalances for respectful partnerships**
- **Institutional accountability**

I remain grateful for how Bridge of Hope [brings together](#) families facing homelessness and mentoring families from Christian faith communities. As homelessness is ended, all of these families learn that the experiences of the other are much more than a single story – more than poor/rich, homeless/housed, single/married, etc.



## What's New?

- At our conference, we showed this Carrie Newcomer [Room at the Table](#) video. The lyrics say, "Let our hearts not be hardened to those living on the margin. There is room at the table for everyone."
- We are thrilled that in fiscal year 2015-2016, **84%** of families in the Bridge of Hope network exited with permanent rental housing. Check out our [Annual Report](#).
- October is [Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#). 60% of Bridge of Hope participants have experienced domestic violence. I invite you to make a [Woman of Hope](#) gift – to help end homelessness for a single mother and her children.



## Blessings,

Edith Yoder





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