

The Immigrant Experience

First off, it's important to note that there are two types of immigrants. Those that were born to immigrant parents and were raised in the country and those that have emigrated to a country but grew up in their mother country.

This is important to know as the lived experience of these groups is widely different, even though on the outside, the groups look the same. Perceptions and biases are made on first look. Those in the second group are not always attuned to the discrimination they may be facing or understand why. Those in the first group have lived with it and created compensating mechanisms for years.

This also can cause misunderstanding within the groups, as while the ethnicity is the same, education, family and experiences are not. One size does not fit all.

I am from the first group. My parents moved to the UK in the early 70's, post partition India. I faced discrimination from day one, but because I didn't know any differently, I was not always aware of the more subtle forms. Being followed from school by a group of boys as they screamed ape sounds at me, I understood as bad. In primary school, I was regularly removed from lessons to attend drawing and reading classes. What I didn't know at the time, was that they were remedial classes. I was automatically put in them as someone assumed that because I was a child of Indian immigrants, I would not know how to read or write. Both my parents have multiple degrees from some of the best Universities in South Asia, so they were very much "those" parents, I could read and do basic trigonometry before attending school. Once the teachers realised I didn't need extra help, they put me to work to help them others...I loved it, I got to be bossy with permission!! My parents fought for over a year to get me removed from those classes. These experiences shaped and influence me, even today. It's easy to disregard the affects of latent experiences on your adult life.

As a senior leader from either group, you may be facing your own challenges in progressing and maintaining your position. Or as a leader outside of these groups, you want to understand them more to support them in their careers.

Executive coaching can help you understand how the immigrant experience is impacting you or your teams career path and provide understanding and tools how to utilise your background and experience to reach your goals.

Get in touch to find out how LoGho Executive Coaching can help you define and own your path.