

Becoming Anti-Racist

My journey from being a white person to becoming a person who is white.
You too Can Become!

Presenter: Rick Wilkin

Definition of Terms: As they will be used in this presentation

- **Racism** – a system that encompasses economic, political, social, and cultural structures, actions, and beliefs that institutionalize and perpetuate an unequal distribution of privileges, resources and power between White people and people of Color. ***This system is historic, normalized, taken for granted, deeply embedded, and works to the benefit of whites and to the disadvantage of people of color*** (Hilliard, 1992). Italics and bolding are mine.

Definition of Terms: As they will be used in this presentation

- **whiteness** – a socially significant structure that mitigates life chances in American society. Research in the specialty area of whiteness studies examines the social, economic, and political significance of whiteness and its connection to the persistence of racism in American society. Conventional approaches to the study of “race” in America tend to ignore “whiteness” by treating it simply as a given and even as a benign factor in “race” relations.

Guess, Teresa J. “The Social Construction of Whiteness: Racism by Intent, Racism by Consequence”, University of Missouri-St. Louis, https://diversity.umsl.edu/documents/W07_Guess_article_s6.pdf

Definition of Terms: As they will be used in this presentation

- **BIPOC** – Black, Indigenous, Person/People of Color
- **Ally** – “allies do not have to question their privilege, decenter their voice, build meaningful relationships with folx working in the struggle, take risks, or be in solidarity with others. They just have to show up ...; thus, ***ally-ship is performative*** or self-glorifying ***ally-ship still centers Whiteness in dark spaces.***” (Love, Dr. Betina. We Want To Do More Than Survive. p. 117.) Italics and bolding are mine.

Definition of Terms: As they will be used in this presentation

- **Co-conspirator** – an individual willing to use their privilege, leverage their power and provide support in solidarity in the work of confronting anti-Blackness. ***Co-conspirator functions as a verb, not a noun.*** Co-conspirators:

- Understand “where [they] stand in relation to systems of privilege and oppression, and [work to unlearn] the habits and practices that protect those systems, which is lifelong work for all of us, without exception”
- Build “authentic relationships of solidarity and mutuality, which are not possible when we try to avoid or transcend power imbalances”
- Honestly acknowledge and confront relationship imbalances in order to create authentic relationships
- Understand that “social change work is rooted in collaboration, humility, and accountability”
- Realize that the “interior journey into silence, mediation, inner wisdom, and deep joy is inextricably linked to the outer work of social change

Love, Dr. Betina. We Want To Do More Than Survive. pp. 117 – 118. Italics and bolding mine.

Definition of Terms: As they will be used in this presentation

- **Anti-racist** – “taking a committed stand against racism, ***a stand that translates into action that interrupts racism in all its forms,*** whether personal or institutional, blatant or routine, intended or unintended. Antiracism is active by definition - the opposite of passivity, which colludes with racism. If one claims to be antiracist but takes no action against racism, the claim is false.” (Trepagnier, Barbara. Silent Racism: How Well-Meaning White People Perpetuate the Racial Divide 2nd Edition. p. 104.)
- **Abolitionist Teaching** – “the practice of working in solidarity with communities of color while drawing on the imagination, creativity, refusal, (re)membering, visionary thinking, healing, rebellious spirit, boldness, determination, and subversiveness of abolitionists ***to eradicate injustice in and outside of schools.***” (Love, Dr. Betina. We Want To Do More Than Survive. p. 2.)

Italics and bolding mine.

Basic Beliefs

- Racism exists today, in both traditional and modern forms
- All white people benefit from racism, regardless of intentions; intentions are irrelevant
- The racial status quo is comfortable for most whites. Maintaining white comfort maintains white supremacy culture and racism
- All members of American society have been socialized to participate in it
- No one here chose to be socialized into racism (so no one is “bad”). But no one is neutral – to not act against racism is to support racism.
- Racism must be continually identified, analyzed and challenged; no one is ever done
- The question is not “did racism take place?” but rather “how did racism manifest in that situation?”

Modified from Robin DiAngelo “Anti-racism-handout-1-page-2016.” <https://robindiangelo.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Anti-racism-handout-1-page-2016.pdf>

Before Anything Else, Educate Yourself

We cannot/should not expect BIPOC persons to teach us about their racial experience.

- Asking BIPOC persons to explain racism sends the message that racism only happens to persons of color and that we as white people do not understand the ways in which racism plays out in the world around us.
- Asking BIPOC persons to explain racism to us as white people, reinforces the systemic power dynamic of BIPOC persons serving white people.
- Asking BIPOC persons to explain racism to us as white people, implies that white people do not understand how racism works; that we are somehow innocent.
- Asking BIPOC persons to explain racism to us as white people opens the BIPOC person to further harm.

“Expecting BIPOC people to teach us about Racism,” Nice Racism by Robin DiAngelo. Pp. 90-91.

Educate Yourself – Check Your Privilege

- **DIRECTIONS:** Check the privileges that apply to you. Once you're done, look back at the privileges you have. How privileged are you?
- **KEEP IN MIND:** Privilege does not mean that you did not work hard for what you have or that your life was obstacle free, it means that the things that you checked on this list, were not obstacles that you had to overcome in order to get your needs met or to be safe.
- The phrase "Check your privilege" means being conscious of the role your privileges play in your life and actively considering how your privileges have impacted others. In order to "check your privilege" you need to be aware of what benefits you have.

Modified from Do The Work by W. Kamau Bell & Kate Schatz. pp 46-47.

Educate Yourself – Own Your Fears

What is holding you back?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure where to start | <input type="checkbox"/> Not being able to integrate social justice work into my life in meaningful ways |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Losing momentum | <input type="checkbox"/> Not doing the work after I promised I would |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burning out/Burned out | <input type="checkbox"/> Having patience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling overwhelmed | <input type="checkbox"/> Fearful of speaking up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making a mistake | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling confused about what to do and when |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remaining positive thru setback | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saying or doing the wrong thing | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Losing friends and family | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not doing enough | |

Modified from Do The Work by W. Kamau Bell & Kate Schatz

Take Action - Commit

We don't just one day become anti-racist. Being anti-racist is a lifelong commitment.

- Commit to Continual Education
- Build Authentic Relationships
- Build Circles of Support
- Engage in Affinity Groups

"Lifelong Commitment." [Nice Racism](#) by Robin Diangelo. Pp. 173-177.

Take Action - Commit

- Schedule "Action" time
- Set aside time to read a book
- Catch up on the news
- Have a monthly movie night
- Start a book club
- Choose an issue to commit to
- Mark cultural holidays on your calendar
- Choose a cause to donate to monthly
- Celebrate Activists' birthdays
- Remember to breathe
- Take time to reflect
- Google search – "What white people can do about racism."
- VOTE!

Modified from [Do The Work](#) by W. Kamau Bell & Kate Schatz

Take Action - Support

- Support BIPOC individuals taking on leadership roles in the groups you are in
 - Encourage BIPOC members to take on leadership positions
 - Help elect BIPOC members to leadership positions
 - When a BIPOC person is in a position of leadership, be sure to not undermine their leadership
 - Step in if another white person is attempting to undermine a BIPOC leader
- Be an authentic friend
- Know when to step-in and when to step aside
- Be willing to “put your hand on the flagpole”

Take Action – Speak up/Speak out

- Be willing to use your white privilege, even if it may bring on white rage, denial or fragility. Call out hurtful or harmful comments and actions.
- Remember that white privilege is not a tangible object given to us in limited supply. We do not lose any of our privilege when we use it.
- While some may choose to disregard what we have to say, we still have the right to say, “I object.” “Not around me.”
- At the end of the day, we will still be white and we will still have our privilege.

Questions/Comments

Rick Wilkin
wilkin.rick@gmail.com

Resources

- **Books**

- Caste by Isabel Wilkerson
- The Sum of Us by Heather McGhee
- How To Be An Anti-Racist by Ibram X. Kendi
- Systemic Racism 101 by Living Cities, Aminah N. Pilgrim
- We Want To Do More Than Survive by Dr. Betina Love
- White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo
- Nice Racism by Robin DiAngelo

- **Workbooks**

- Me and White Supremacy by Layla F. Saad
- 21 Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge by Dr. Eddie Moore
 - <https://www.americaandmoore.com/>
- Do The Work by W. Kamau Bell & Kate Schatz

- **Racial Equity Tools** - <https://www.racialequitytools.org/>

- “Whiteness Project” Whitney Dow. <https://whitenessproject.org/checkbox>, 2014
- “Whiteness Project” Whitney Dow. <https://whitenessproject.org/millennials>, 2016

Sources

- Bell, W. Kamau & Kate Schatz. Do The Work: An Antiracist Activity Book. Workman Publishing Co., Inc., New York, NY, 2022.
- DiAngelo, Robin. Nice Racism: How Progressive White People Perpetuate Racial Harm. Beacon Press, Boston, MA., 2021.
- Love, Dr. Betina. We Want To Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom. Beacon Press, Boston, MA., 2019.

DIRECTIONS: Check the privileges that apply to you. Once you're done, look back at the privileges you have. How privileged are you?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White | <input type="checkbox"/> Blue-eyed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair/light-skinned | <input type="checkbox"/> Green-eyed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Upper-middle class | <input type="checkbox"/> Have an "American" sounding name |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rich | <input type="checkbox"/> Blond-haired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land-owning | <input type="checkbox"/> No speech impediment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home-owning | <input type="checkbox"/> Full head of hair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College-educated | <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good test taker | <input type="checkbox"/> Good teeth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thin | <input type="checkbox"/> Can pay rent every month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tall | <input type="checkbox"/> Always able to pay utility bills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Never been to prison |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seeing | <input type="checkbox"/> Laugh easily |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Live in a "safe" neighborhood | <input type="checkbox"/> Not worried about money |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Debt-free | <input type="checkbox"/> Have "connections" with "friends in high places" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nondisabled | <input type="checkbox"/> Understand the stock market |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have a good relationship with the police | <input type="checkbox"/> Often put in charge of things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Straight | <input type="checkbox"/> Everybody in my home has their own room |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cisgender | <input type="checkbox"/> Have a well-worn passport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not the first in my family to go to college | <input type="checkbox"/> Have employees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian | <input type="checkbox"/> Get doctor appointments easily |
| <input type="checkbox"/> US citizen | <input type="checkbox"/> Have time for hobbies and leisure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feel safe walking alone at night | <input type="checkbox"/> Aren't afraid of a medical bill |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural history was part of the regular school curriculum, not just an elective | <input type="checkbox"/> Clothes sold in stores fit my body |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inherited money | <input type="checkbox"/> Have gotten away with yelling at a cop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have a trust fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Right-handed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work because it's "fun" | <input type="checkbox"/> Get invited to parties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between the ages of 18 and 60 | <input type="checkbox"/> Car registration is paid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grew up with access to children's books, TV, and movies with characters who looked like you | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel mildly annoyed by parking tickets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neurotypical | <input type="checkbox"/> Own multiple functioning cars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading this in my first language | <input type="checkbox"/> Not afraid to show ID |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A cis man | <input type="checkbox"/> Can easily access buildings I need to go into |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have health insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Know how to swim |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housed | <input type="checkbox"/> Have a strong Wi-Fi connection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employed | <input type="checkbox"/> Can easily access fresh food |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not worried about being threatened, harassed, or harmed because of my identity | <input type="checkbox"/> Not kept up at night by the sounds of gunfire or sirens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Married | <input type="checkbox"/> Not worried about family members getting deported |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends and family share my belief systems |

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