

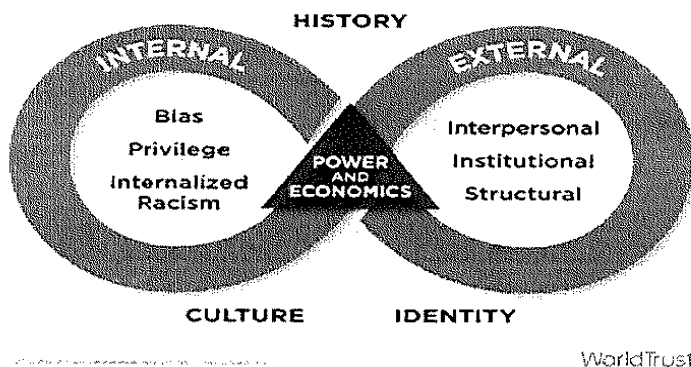
Anti-racism

The system of racial inequity

Every form of oppression is set against established norms and standards of “rightness” within any society and are reinforced by institutional and economic power. There is no hierarchy to oppressions; all are terrible, destructive, painful and wasteful in terms of human capital. And yet, even with the understanding that all forms of oppression intersect, racial disparities continue to be a complex and layered issue that many people deny and/or are afraid to confront.

The purpose of understanding the System of Racial Inequity is to:

- name, understand and explore the complex components that comprise the interconnected nature of racial issues, barriers and outcomes
- increase confidence within learning groups and communities to identify cumulative racialized outcomes that are the result of hidden structures
- build alliances and identify targeted strategies across race, class, culture and other “isms” that interrupt racialized processes



Glossary of terms

Bias – Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair. Unconscious or implicit bias refers to biases that we carry without awareness. To learn more about implicit bias and to take an implicit association test online, visit Project Implicit at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

Classism – Differential treatment based on social class or perceived social class. Classism is the systematic assignment of worth based on social class; policies and practices set up to benefit more class-privileged people at the expense of the less class-privileged people, resulting in drastic income and wealth inequality and causing basic human needs to go unmet; the rationale and the culture which perpetuates these systems and this unequal valuing. That includes:

- individual attitudes and behaviors;

- systems of policies and practices that are set up to benefit the upper classes at the expense of the lower classes, resulting in drastic income and wealth inequality;
- the rationale that supports these systems and this unequal valuing; and the culture that perpetuates them.

Culture – Sum total of ways of living, including 1) values, 2) beliefs, 3) aesthetic standards, 4) linguistic expression, 5) patterns of thinking, 6) behavioral norms, and 7) styles of communication which a group of people has developed to assure its survival in a particular environment. We are socialized through “cultural conditioning” to adopt ways of thinking related to societal grouping.

Dominant culture (also referred to as white culture) – The dominant, unquestioned standards of behavior and ways of functioning embodied by the vast majority of institutions in the United States.

Identity – The feeling of being included in a group or culture.

“ISMS” – A way of describing any attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group, color (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), youth (adultism), religions (i.e. anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobia), etc.

Oppression

- Historical, over time, ongoing, systematic targeting of certain groups as “less than”
- Supported institutionally in policies, laws, representation in top-level decision-making
- Personal costs to everyone

Historically excluded	Historically included
○ Statistically less likely to succeed	○ Statistically more likely to succeed
○ Deprived systematically of benefits	○ Unearned benefits and privilege

Power and economics – Are the engine that “drive” a system that provides a rationale and elements of cognitive dissonance that is divisive.

Racial justice – The systemic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone.

Racism

A system of oppression based on the socially constructed concept of race exercised by the dominant racial group (whites) over non-dominant racial groups; a system of oppression created to justify social, political, and economic hierarchy. Racism operates on four dimensions:

1. **Internalized racism** is the set of private beliefs, prejudices, and ideas that individuals have about the superiority of whites and the inferiority of people of color. Among people

of color, it manifests as internalized oppression. Among whites, it manifests as internalized racial superiority.

2. **Interpersonal racism** is the expression of racism between individuals. It occurs when individuals interact, and their private beliefs affect their interactions.
3. **Institutional racism** is discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and practices, inequitable opportunities and impacts within organizations and institutions, based on race, that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Individuals within institutions take on the power of the institution when they reinforce racial inequities.
4. **Structural racism** is a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequality. It is racial bias among institutions and across society. It involves the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of societal factors including the history, culture, ideology and interactions of institutions and policies that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color.

White privilege – Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it. Source: *White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies*. Peggy McIntosh. 1988.

Sources: *World Trust, VISIONS, Race Forward, Interaction Institute for Social Change, Transforming White privilege Curriculum, Classism.org*

Principles for working with an intersectional analysis

A version of this content was originally presented at a Roots of Justice workshop at Wild Goose Festival, June 2014.

- Explore differences and similarities so that individuals can form connections and eventually relationships and trust.
- Build authentic relationships across boundaries (of social locations and organizational entities) so that coalitions are based not only in common cause but thickened, lasting relationships that sustain people and processes.
- Be aware of the friendship paradox. Personal relationships embedded in accountability are the ties that bind, are where personal transformation happens, and are critical, but *are not instrumental*. In other words, you don't make friends just because you happen to want to work on something with that person, or to ensure your work has their involvement. Friendship and trust are authentic and precious. Not commodities.
- Use inclusive multi-issue framing: North Carolina's Moral Mondays movement are a good example. As you frame, see who is not there. Find ways to bring the table and the mic to their voices and realities.
- Work on multiple fronts in response to your local survival issues: violence and employment discrimination against trans* people, criminalization and incarceration of LGBT youth/youth

of color, inclusion of immigrants in the prison industrial complex, lack of access to safe housing and education.

- Explicitly identify intersections in individuals' lives and how they reinforce social oppression and disempowerment. Use intersections as connection points with other people and communities.
- Use cultural expressions – storytelling, testimonies, public art making and sharing – to enable the voices of the invisibilized to speak for and represent themselves. Use public spaces and creative cultural production: performance, video, music, dance.
- Avoid compartmentalization; welcome people's whole selves by encouraging self-affirmation of all aspects of their identities. Understand the need to create an internal welcome – to feel ourselves welcomed – in order to welcome others.
- See how the intersections are represented in economic/class situatedness, immigration status, relationship status, and access to resources.
- If part of an organization with a primary approach, explore or connect with an organization using another approach: community building, organization, service provider, arts/cultural, advocacy ... widen your view, your analysis, your approach.
- If part of an organization with a primary focus, get out of your issue silo: learn from your constituents what the multiplicity of their issues are, and begin to connect through relationships. Celebrate resistance to oppression, overcoming, and restoration of dignity.
- Call on resources of religious traditions, organizations, spiritualities. Use the spaces of religious places.
- Do your own work: engage in self-reflection to work on issues of internalized inferiority or superiority.
- Know your history and the history of your place. As Southerners on New Ground describes the context of their work: "building a political home across race, class, culture, gender and sexuality," means knowing themselves to be in a "land thick with what came before us— colonization, slavery, Civil Rights Movement, migration for labor, traditions of struggle, resilience, and beauty." See who has been working on your issue already.
- Consider the healing that is needed on individual and communal levels. Explore practices that can enhance that healing: speaking and listening, telling stories and restorying, practicing resistance and trust-building, environmental restoration, finding strength and imperatives for justice in spiritualities.

21 ways to stop a conversation about diversity

(Circle the ones you've said and put an X by the ones you can't understand why they would stop a conversation on diversity.)

1. I don't see color. We're all just human beings.
2. We have more similarities than differences.
3. I think deep down we're all the same.
4. Racism/sexism happens all over the world.
5. I think some people use diversity as an excuse.
6. I think identifying into groups only further divides us.
7. There are lots of other diversity issues besides race and gender.

8. I've never seen that happen before. Are you sure it happened?
9. Why does everything have to be so politically correct?
10. I was just joking.
11. Things are a lot better than they used to be. Don't you agree?
12. We'd hire more women and people of color, but are they qualified?
13. I love everyone.
14. Do you really think it's that bad?
15. I'm so glad you're not like one of them.
16. You know, you're a credit to your people.
17. You don't see other races complaining.
18. I think it's reverse racism/sexism.
19. America is the best place to live.
20. Some of my best friends are colored.
21. You speak such good English, where did you learn it from?

StirFry Seminars & Consulting
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When someone is offended by your comments

- What I heard you say was that . . .
- Tell me more what you meant by . . .
- What angered you about . . . ?
- What hurt you about . . . ?
- What's familiar about . . . ?
- What do you need or want from . . . ?

Be patient, listen, and don't rush to an apology or solution.

Stay with the relationship and process.

Empathy and sincerity are the gateways to understanding and compassion.

Process with the group:

- Tell _____ one thing you heard. Use his/her exact words.
- What did you appreciate about what happened?
- What did you notice was the turning point?
- What came up for you in watching this? What's familiar?
- What's good and what's hard about what happened?
- What did you learn today about listening and responding?

Excerpted from *The Art of Mindful Facilitator* by Lee Mun Wah. Copyright 2004. All Rights Reserved.

The journey continues: A year-long personal growth and learning experience in ethnic diversity

<p>February Arrange to meet once a month with a partner of another ethnic group for mutual learning. <input type="checkbox"/> 5 points each month (60) <i>(Black History month)</i></p>	<p>August Read about a hero in one of the following groups: African-American, Mexican-American, or Chinese-American. <input type="checkbox"/> 25 points</p>
<p>March Subscribe to a magazine of another racial ethnic group. <input type="checkbox"/> 15 points</p>	<p>September Visit a museum or cultural center which features another ethnic group. <input type="checkbox"/> 10 points <i>(Hispanic Heritage month – 9/15-10/15)</i></p>
<p>April Arrange for you and your family to visit a good restaurant from another ethnic group to sample “different” food (that you have not visited before). <input type="checkbox"/> 10 points</p>	<p>October Interview a leader from another ethnic group about their experience in America as a “minority”. <input type="checkbox"/> 15 points <i>(American Indian Heritage month)</i></p>
<p>May Go to the library and check out at least one video that chronicles the journey of a different ethnic group. <input type="checkbox"/> 10 points each <i>(Asian Pacific American Heritage month)</i></p>	<p>November Read or review a book on the history of another ethnic group. Find three errors in how history portrays them. <input type="checkbox"/> 30 points</p>
<p>June Over the next four months, visit a church of another racial ethnic group on three separate Sundays. <input type="checkbox"/> 20 points each</p>	<p>December Arrange for someone of another ethnic group to give you a driving and walking tour of their community. <input type="checkbox"/> 25 points</p>
<p>July Share with four different people some of the things you have been learning. <input type="checkbox"/> 5 points each (20)</p>	<p>January Write your own two-page summary of your own one-year journey and share it with friends. <input type="checkbox"/> 30 points</p>

Goal: 150 point minimum
 <100 Growing tourist
 100-200 Participant observer
 200+ Growing resident alien

Point total: _____

Adapted from Chicago Urban Reconciliation Enterprise (CURE) model

My personal journey to understanding, appreciating and celebrating ethnic diversity

Is there a history of prejudice anywhere in your family?

Human beings are born into families. Thus they are born into a particular culture and a small ethnic community. They inherit a social context with role models, rituals and rites, and language. When their social horizon is expanded, they are exposed to other social institutions, schools, religious communities, and political structures. The larger the contexts, the more pluralistic it tends to become, although the individual remains in a small subgroup or family and participates in the conventional wisdom of the group.¹

When were you first aware of people unlike yourself, in race or way of life?²

What were your feelings about those unlike yourself?

Can you recall how your parents expressed their feelings about other races? Did your grandparents' view have a strong influence as well? Did those opinions of your parents and grandparents coincide or conflict?

Was race talked about openly in your family, or was it mentioned only in off-hand remarks, jokes and stereotypes?

Did you determine how your parents felt about race not by what they said but by how they lived and how they treated others?

Were there heated arguments? Were threats made, such as if you dated someone from another race or religion, you would be punished – or even disowned?

When and how did you realize that there was prejudice in your family?

Examine the external factors that influenced your family's opinions about race.

- How diverse was your neighborhood, school, church or synagogue?
- How did your teachers and friends feel about other races?
- What were the racial issues in the country and in the community during your upbringing?
- Was it a time of open discrimination or "tolerance"?

How did your parents' beliefs influence your behavior outside of the family?

¹ Robert W. Steffer, "Multicultural Education," in *Encyclopedia of Religious Education*, ed. Iris and Ken dig Cully, 1990.

² Questions adapted from *40 Ways to Raise a Nonracist Child*, by Barbara Mathias & Mary Ann French, 1996, chapter 5, "Trace Your Family's History of Prejudice."

White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack

By Peggy McIntosh

This article is now considered a “classic” by anti-racist educators. It has been used in workshops and classes throughout the United States and Canada for many years. While people of color have described for years how whites benefit from unearned privileges, this is one of the first articles written by a white person on the topic.

It is suggested that participants read the article and discuss it. Participants can then write a list of additional ways in which whites are privileged in their own school and community setting. Or participants can be asked to keep a diary for the following week of white privilege that they notice (and in some cases challenge) in their daily lives. These can be shared and discussed the following week.

Through work to bring materials from Women’s Studies into the rest of the curriculum, I have often noticed men’s unwillingness to grant that they are over privileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. They may say they will work to improve women’s status, in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can’t or won’t support the idea of lessening men’s. Denials, which amount to taboos, surround the subject of advantages, which men gain from women’s disadvantages. These denials protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened or ended.

Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there was most likely a phenomenon of white privilege, which was similarly denied and protected. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege which puts me at an advantage.

I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is like to have white privilege. I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was “meant” to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks.

Describing white privilege makes one newly accountable. As we in Women’s Studies work to reveal male privilege and ask men to give up some of their power, so one who writes about having white privilege must ask, “Having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?”

After I realized the extent to which men work from a base of unacknowledged privilege, I understood that much of their oppressiveness was unconscious. Then I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive. I began to understand why we are justly seen as oppressive, even when we don’t see ourselves that way. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence.

My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. My schooling followed the pattern my colleague Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow “them” to be more like “us.”

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege on my life. I have chosen those conditions which I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographical location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can see, my African American co-workers, friends and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place and line of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area, which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
3. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
4. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
5. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
6. When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
7. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
8. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
9. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, in a hairdresser’s shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
10. Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of my financial reliability.
11. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
12. I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
13. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
14. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
15. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
16. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world’s majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
17. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
18. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to “the person in charge,” I will be facing a person of my race.

19. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
20. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.
21. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.
22. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.
23. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the place I have chosen.
24. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help my race will not work against me.
25. If my day, week or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.
26. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.

I repeatedly forgot each of the realizations on this list until I wrote it down. For me white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own.

In unpacking this invisible backpack of white privilege, I have listed conditions of daily experience which I once took for granted. Nor did I think of any of these perquisites as bad for the holder. I now think that we need a more finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege, for some of these varieties are only what one would want for everyone in a just society, and others give license to be ignorant, oblivious, arrogant and destructive.

I see a pattern running through the matrix of white privilege, a pattern of assumptions which were passed on to me as a white person. There was one main piece of cultural turf; it was my own turf, and I was among those who could control the turf. My skin color was an asset for any move I was educated to want to make. I could think of myself as belonging in major ways, and of making social systems work for me. I could freely disparage, fear, neglect, or be oblivious to anything outside of the dominant cultural forms. Being of the main culture, I could also criticize it fairly freely.

In proportion as my racial group was being confident, comfortable, and oblivious, other groups were likely being made unconfident, uncomfortable, and alienated. Whiteness protected me from many kinds of hostility, distress, and violence, which I was being subtly trained to visit in turn upon people of color.

For this reason, the word "privilege" now seems to be misleading. We usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned or conferred by birth or luck. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work to systematically over empower certain groups. Such privilege simply confers dominance because of one's race or sex.

I want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred systematically. Power from unearned privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you, or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society. Others, like the privilege to ignore less powerful people, distort the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored groups.

We might at least start by distinguishing between positive advantages which we can work to spread, and negative types of advantages which unless rejected will always reinforce our present hierarchies. For example, the feeling that one belongs within the human circle, as Native Americans say, should not be seen as a privilege for a few. Ideally it is an unearned entitlement. At present, since only a few have it, it is an unearned advantage for them. This paper results from a process of coming to see that some of the power which I originally saw as attendant on being a human being in the U.S. consisted in unearned advantage and conferred dominance.

I have met very few men who are truly distressed about systemic, unearned male advantage and conferred dominance. And so one question for me and others like me is whether we will be like them or whether we will get truly distressed, even outraged about unearned race advantage and conferred dominance and if so, what will we do to lessen them. In any case, we need to do more work in identifying how they actually affect our daily lives. Many, perhaps most of our white students in the U.S. think that racism doesn't affect them because they are not people of color, they do not see "whiteness" as a racial identity. In addition, since race and sex are not the only advantaging systems at work, we need similarly to examine the daily experience of having age advantage, or ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion or sexual orientation.

Difficulties and dangers surrounding the task of finding parallels are many. Since racism, sexism and heterosexism are not the same, the advantaging associated with them should not be seen as the same. In addition, it is hard to disentangle aspects of unearned advantage which rest more on social class, economic class, race, religion, sex and ethnic identity than on other factors. Still, all of the oppressions are interlocking, as the Combahee River Collective Statement of 1977 continues to remind us eloquently.

One factor seems clear about all of the interlocking oppressions. They take both active forms which we can see and embedded forms which as a member of the dominant group one is not taught to see. In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in the invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth.

Disapproving of the systems won't be enough to change them. I was taught to think that racism could end if white individuals changed their attitudes. (But) a "white" skin in the United States opens many doors for whites whether or not we approve of the way dominance has been conferred on us. Individual acts can palliate, but cannot end, these problems.

To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking

about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these taboo subjects. Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist.

It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculturated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people props up those in power, and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already.

Though systemic change takes many decades there are pressing questions for me and I imagine for some others like me if we raise our daily consciousness on the perquisites of being light-skinned. What will we do with such knowledge? As we know from watching men, it is an open question whether we will choose to use unearned advantage to weaken hidden systems of advantage and whether we will use any of our arbitrarily-awarded power to reconstruct power systems on a broader base.

Peggy McIntosh is an Associate Director of the Wellesley College Center for Research for Women. Reprinted by permission of the author. This essay is excerpted from her working paper, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies." Copyright 1988 by Peggy McIntosh.