

There's a fair possibility you've tried at some moment in time to chat about the race. And the probability is equally high that it didn't go too far. You may have worded something incorrectly or been irritated with your companion in the discussion. Ever since then, you might have felt uncomfortable, scared of approaching the issue, terrified of getting it wrong.

She decided to deliver a book that would be "of use" when Ijeoma Oluo started writing *So You Want To Talk About Race*. When racial concerns popped up in the lives of people, she thought it would be a guide to go back to - a platform that clarified the racism framework and offered advice to encourage meaningful conversations about it.

Although these debates can be challenging, talking about race and inequality is a crucial first step in confronting the patriarchal social systems that maintain white supremacy in the United States, and eventually undermining them.

Chapter 1- Racism is inseparably integrated into - and validated by - structures of power.

After Donald Trump became president in 2016, several people claimed that the Democratic Party had failed because the socioeconomic crisis in America was about class, not a race. They believed that while pushing out working-class white men, the Left was so concentrated on the interests of black people, Latinx people, women in general, and trans people. They argued that if you changed conditions for the lower classes, life would change for minorities.

The writer Ijeoma Oluo found herself tired from continuously holding this argument -after all, the inequalities that make a competent Black woman poor are not the same as those that make a handicapped white man poor. Then she began telling people specifically, "Why do you think black people are poor? Can you believe white people are poor for the exact reasons?"

The fact is, the race is one of the major factors in the United States that decide your success, an argument that sometimes goes unrecognized.

The racial income disparity remains almost as high today, more than half a century since the civil rights struggle. This is no coincidence; segregation has been integrated into the economic structure of the United States. It has long supported white supremacy, which gives the guarantee that "you can get better because they continue to get less" to those considered superior.

It is not possible to erase this pledge simply by discussing class, so we need to begin discussing race. But occasionally, the initial obstacle to clear up is the issue of whether or not race is truly relevant.

To start, consider these three points:

First, if a person of color thinks it is related to race, then it is. Their cultural identity is a component of them, and it is connecting with the circumstances.

Second, it's about race if it impacts people of color uniquely or unfairly. Lastly, if it blends into a broader trend that impacts people of color uniquely or unfairly, it's about race.

It's good to set up a simple definition of racism before we proceed. Two prominent aspects are: "any bias toward anyone because of their color" and "any bias toward someone because of their color as political structures perpetuate those beliefs."

The latter definition is more relevant here because racism is usually limited to the individual's behavior in the United States. "How so?" Maybe you'll think. Well, the preservation is exacerbated by people's complacency in an atmosphere where racism is structural. And thus, the best way to tackle structural injustice is by consciously and directly eliminating it.

Chapter 2 - A crucial first step toward change is to have difficult discussions about race.

The first time she had a serious race talk with her mum, who is caucasian, was when Oluo was 34. Her mother clarified that she had told her colleagues a "black punchline" joke. One of them, a black man, questioned her, "What do you know about being black?" Initially, Oluo's mother was furious at her colleague — after all, she had three black children! She restricted herself, though. She informed Oluo that she planned to let him know that since some of her own family were Black, she knew where he was coming from.

It absolutely devastated Oluo. She realized at the same time that her mother did not completely see or understand the racism her kids faced. So that moment, in a white patriarchal culture, Oluo broke down the contradictions between being a white woman who liked Black people, lived with Black people and had kids with a Black person, and being a Black person.

This talk made Oluo's mother understand that she could turn her attention to encouraging other white people to take action, rather than attempting to show she was "one of the good white people." Equipped with this insight, her mother started working to counter racial disempowerment in her workplace through her union.

Even if it's going to be challenging, and you're sure to mess it up, it's a crucial step to take to speak about racism before promoting racial justice. For how to handle the discussion, below are several guidelines:

Define your purpose first. This way, if this is a discussion they want to have, the other party will decide straight away. If the other participant does not want to participate, don't insist on a discussion on race.

Secondly, do your research. It is not the duty of people of color to teach you on topics that a fast Google search will inform you.

Third, once you start feeling protective, stop, and ask yourself, "Has my focus shifted to defending my ego?" Note that "winning" is not the purpose of a discussion about race, it is to share, understand, and improve.

Finally, don't mimic the sound of your speaking partner. This is a point that we'll discuss in more depth later in these sections.

Such talks can often go bad, so don't attempt to push a settlement. Say sorry, step aside, and consider whether the discussion can be revisited later in a constructive manner.

Don't change the talk in your head as "the moment you got shouted at for trying," but don't beat up on it, either. Alternatively, take the opportunity to consciously think about something you could have done it, and then promise to try again.

Chapter 3 - To avoid personally reinforcing inequality, we must investigate our privilege and accept intersectionality.

A popular expression that's sometimes greeted with an eye roll in the language of social justice is "check your privilege." However, very few individuals truly grasp what privilege is, or how precisely they can "check it."

Checking your privilege means interrogating when you earn benefits unavailable to some, even though it means abandoning those benefits. It needs you to pause and remember not just how the gains you've received in life have influenced your outlook and behavior, but also the hardships you've escaped.

For instance, if you are viewed as "smart" by others because you are light-skinned, you eventually benefit from the unfounded implication that dark-skinned people are not. One component of a racist phenomenon called shadeism is this.

By sitting down and reflecting on all the opportunities you have received in life, you will concentrate on your privilege. Are you cisgender? Non-disabled? Are you a registered resident of the nation in which you live?

Even if you may be deemed "underprivileged" in other places, do not mention the drawbacks during this exercise. Reflect on how your privilege, particularly how you perceive political and social problems, has influenced your perspective. Then inform yourself by looking for work on these subjects, gathered by individuals who do not share your institutional benefits.

We see how our personalities hold distinct structures and injustices as we check our privileges. We may then follow intersectionality after this occurs: a comprehensive philosophy and methodology that captures the manner in which race and gender are interwoven to form the understanding of the environment of an individual. The word, initially coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a civil rights activist, was an effort to capture how the feminism movement left out women of color's interests and problems.

Without intersectionality, organizations frequently refuse to embrace all the people they seek to serve inside the party. Also, campaigns for social justice tend to emphasize the interests of the most powerful members of the community.

In discussions about race, you will integrate intersectionality by first asking yourself, "Can our disparities in culture lead to our disparities of opinion or perspective?" After that, question yourself, "Am I hearing from people who have had interactions different from mine?"

Before you have this discussion, though, bear in mind that to prioritize it in the race and social justice debates, you may need to explain intersectionality. Note that attempts to change society can, without intersectionality, potentially make it more exclusionary and discriminatory for certain individuals.

Chapter 4 - Implicit bias informs law enforcement in the US; we need to build trust to create change.

In 2015, when a police officer pulled her over for being 1 mph over the speed limit, Oluo was traveling with her two brothers. The only protection Black people have against police brutality is witnesses, so Oluo tweeted anxiously, "I got pulled over for driving while Black. Here's wishing I'll comfortably get through it."

As a result, she was just released with a ticket, but she received a stream of tweets in response to the post. That varied from individuals telling their own "driving while Black" experiences to those asking whether she thought it was first and solely about race.

Although it is hard to explain racial motives on an interpersonal basis, figures show that black drivers are 23 percent more likely than white drivers to be pulled over. They are more likely to be inspected, issued a ticket, and arrested as well. This increased risk of contact resulted in a 3.5 to 4 times greater probability of police shooting Black people and even Native Americans.

The cops have overwhelmingly brutalized people of color in the US past. Black Americans have been perceived by the American police department as the enemy and have been reflected in many actions and activities targeting such groups. The very first police department in the world, the Night Patrols, for instance, was primarily established to monitor Black and Native American people and to apprehend those fleeing slavery.

After, in the post-Reconstruction South, municipal law enforcement officers participated in the brutalization and killing of Black Americans; many became members of the Ku Klux Klan during the Jim Crow era and the civil rights movement. Black and Native Americans, and also Hispanic Americans, keep suffering from the burden of police brutality still. This has contributed to a pervasive and dangerous implicit bias - a set of unacknowledged biases that impact one's behavior. Black people have also traditionally been portrayed by policymakers and mass culture as "black brutes" and "superpredators," upholding the stereotypical idea that Black people are risky, aggressive, and undeserving of security.

Implicit bias informs police officers' conduct, especially in high-stress circumstances. When they kill innocent black males, they argue that they "worry for their lives," which might be real. Yet it is an irrational and discriminatory belief to conclude that black men are a deadly threat. The fact that Black people and people of color inherently do not trust the police since officers are more likely to misuse their authority or use force against them without even having to confront the repercussions of their acts makes the whole thing worse.

While it may be possible that in areas with greater immigrant populations there is a higher prevalence of violence, this is also because, in plain words, crimes are more likely to be committed in disadvantaged neighborhoods, regardless of race. And populations of color in the United States are particularly vulnerable to becoming socially deprived. It is painfully obvious that heavy policing does not deter crime; more jobs improved housing and expanded school spending do.

White people must trust that the encounters with the police are not fabricated by Black people and people of color and therefore expect justice and meaningful reform.

Chapter 5 - Many of the impacts of historical discrimination can be mitigated by increased affirmative action.

Marginalized groups must cross obstacles unthinkable to others to flourish in our culture. Oluo has witnessed this personally, growing up impoverished and attending colleges that are poorly funded.

Oluo volunteered for special projects as she conquered the obstacles these drawbacks brought and got her first job after college, and worked hours without pay to develop new skills. Her boss recognized her efforts with a raise, but then suddenly rescinded it. Odd.

Well, it was not long before Oluo learned that the raise had been anticipated by a white woman who had been with the organization longer and attempted to sue, alleging that Oluo was just promoted because she was Black. Ultimately, her raise was granted to Oluo. But the further she matured in her profession, the more distressed she was to find that she was the only woman of color in the room.

The only way to make sure that people of color do not continue to "battle the odds" in order to succeed is structural reform. Affirmative action is one of the ways we can counter this.

Presented in the 1960s, affirmative action was implemented to resolve the extreme racial gaps across the spectrum between African-American men and women in higher education and federal jobs. For these populations, it aimed to improve recruiting initiatives and to give them extra attention. This initiative has, however, declined dramatically since Reagan's presidency; it was found unnecessary by his conservative government and those who followed.

Yet discrimination and inequality have continued, and there is a compelling example of affirmative action in today's controversial pay disparity. Black women, for instance, only gain 65 cents for every dollar a white man receives. At 58 cents on the dollar, Hispanic women earn even less.

The US education system, to add to this, is rife with unfairness. A Yale research found that pre-school teachers are more likely to monitor problematic behavior among Black children, and lack tolerance towards children of a particular color, resulting in a greater level of suspensions and expulsions of Black students. In addition to that, children of color are more likely to attend schools that are poorly funded, implying that access to basic academic services is withheld. So, these students are jarringly inferior to their white counterparts by the point they apply for college.

The overall aim of affirmative action is to solve the institutional challenges that build and sustain representational and opportunity inequalities. For instance, if 10% of the local population is Black, the aim is to represent that to include approximately 10% of Black students or workers. In resolving the social and economic disparities in the United States, equitable and fair access and resources will go a long way.

Chapter 6 - A significant factor in the school-to-prison system is punitive policies that harm children of color.

Oluo's brother, Aham, wasn't as blessed as she was at school. He was targeted by teachers as an intense and active boy who misunderstood his energy as aggression. Aham, who was continually being punished for his bursts of energy, could not "afford" it after one teacher introduced a faulty classroom incentive scheme that allowed students to "pay rent" on their

tables. So he sat on the floor, and he got harassed by the other students. He became recognized at school as "the homeless boy."

Maybe the teacher didn't realize that sometimes Aham was really homeless. Yet he did not make friends for years following this event, suffered regular panic attacks, and ultimately dropped out of high school.

Luckily, music is what finally spared him. It gave him the requisite attention, which helped him to pass his GED easily and eventually earn a music school scholarship. In his early years, however, the unjust punishment he was exposed to as a young student destroyed him.

Studies suggest that discipline tactics are influenced by the implicit prejudice of managers and school workers and the excessively harsh steps undertaken to discipline children of color overwhelmingly end in their incarceration after leaving the US education system. It is known as the pathway from school-to-prison.

It starts with suspensions and expulsions. Psychologists believe that these interventions weaken the trust of children in teachers as well as in education, and their self-esteem suffers. It is seen that how harshly kids are disciplined is strongly associated with the percentage of Black children in a school, rather than with more possible sources of harsher penalties such as drug offenses. Also, black youngsters are most likely to be suspended for a moral excuse, such as "disrespect" while white kids are suspended for verifiable causes such as abuse or narcotics.

In part, the school-to-prison system illustrates why, in their lives, one in three Black men and one in six Hispanic men are jailed. For women of color, too, the incarceration rate is greater.

So what should you individually do to address this issue and tackle it? Well, you should start by talking to school boards and your schools. Question what their punitive strategies are, along with their levels for Black and Latinx students of suspension and expulsion. Then inquire about the racial "opportunity gap" - the academic difference in graduation rates, test results, and grades - and what the strategy of the school is to fight it.

Eventually, white-centric schooling, which emphasizes the needs of white people, teaches white values and is taught primarily by white teachers, is questioned. We must expect a more inclusive program so our students of color should not be criminalized and struggle.

Chapter 7 - The n-word, cultural appropriation, and microaggression are all forms of racism.

A lot of people don't get why the n-word shouldn't be used. A key, faulty statement on the subject asks: "Because it is done by many Black people, why can't people of other races do it as well?"

A basic answer to this question is that all injustice starts with language. Word is how we perceive the world, and the n-word was used as an insult to demonize and show contempt for Black people from the 1700s onwards. It was screamed at enslaved women, it was yelled at lynched black bodies as people spit, and it helped to create and maintain racism.

Today, while Black people may choose to "reclaim" it, the cruel and traumatic past of the word is recalled as used by white people.

The argument that cultural exploitation hurts people of color often irritates a lot of people. It's a complex idea, and in a dynamic world, it can be tough to realize what's unacceptable to someone. In simple words, cultural appropriation is when, by the incorporation of their traditions, customs, and concepts, a more oppressive community violates a marginalized community. Think of "ethnic" outfits for Halloween or wearing a bindi as an accessory.

The question fundamentally lies in the power inequality. This is exploitative if a dominant community tweaks a piece of community and gains from its exploitation, while those born in that culture appear to be violated.

Similarly, they normalize casual racism as racist micro-aggressions are used. Constant, minor insults and indignities sent to members in a minority or disadvantaged community are microaggressions. They perpetuate the idea that "less-than" is someone or that they do not belong.

Two micro-aggression examples are saying things like, "Wow, you speak very good English!" and "You're so exotic." But microaggressions are not only conveyed in words; another example is touching the hair of a black person without explicit approval or consent. This arrogant behavior shows that you do not see their bodies as their own and that you have the right to violate their rights and freedom.

Microaggressions have a serious accumulated effect. But because they are perceived as "small," they are often ignored or explained away in comparison to more blatant manifestations of racism.

Secure your emotional well-being by approaching it immediately anytime you witness a micro-aggression. Ask why the individual committed this microaggression. This would allow them to doubt their motivations and focus on the effects of their actions. Let them realize that you are annoyed and that if they do not want to continue insulting people of color in this manner, they should refrain.

Stop and ask why you took the action if you're the one being called out. Was it a reaction to feeling threatened or awkward? Truly doubt the origins of your microaggression. And, most obviously, apologize, even though you do not completely realize how insensitive you have been. Then do your research to figure out why.

Chapter 8 - Tone-policing and the notion of the "model minority" are counterproductive to the battle for freedom and justice.

Americans are taught in school and popular culture that there are two approaches to address the civil justice struggle: the "non-violent" solution advocated by figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., and Malcolm X's "by every means necessary" address. The assumption is that if you are a "Martin," you advocate love, peace, and pacifism - so your cause is appropriate. You're too mad and cynical if you're a "Malcolm" - because your cause is inappropriate.

Oluo's approach was considered more Malcolm than Martin in her early works on race. She was also told that it was for people like her, who were so "intense" and "troublesome," that race relations had been a discursive problem in the first place.

But a barbaric, silencing technique is to ignore calls for justice because you don't like someone's tone. This is called tone-policing, as you change the discourse around inequality and the way it is addressed.

And how is it possible to stop tone-policing? Well, to begin with, bear in mind that when you speak about injustice with people who have been targeted by discrimination, they join the discussion from a place other than you, which is more insecure. And there is undoubtedly some justified frustration in all the hurting and mourning.

So a person who portrays a marginal identity should never be urged to make your acceptance their priority. Get used to be uneasy. You do not see your participation in conversation as doing them a favor - it is your civic responsibility to address institutional injustice.

The "model minority" myth is a big silencing technique that is frequently used. This fetishizes the myth of Asian Americans that they are the "ideal minority group," believed to have the academic and economic achievement, a strong work ethic, and political modesty. The term, initially used in the 1960s to describe the socio-economic success of Japanese Americans, has many adverse effects. For one thing, it removes the expectations of parts of the Asian American population, especially refugees.

Thus, while the socio-economic data of "Asian Americans" is equivalent to that of white Americans, the differences are extreme when you identify the country of origin. Bangladeshi and Hmong Americans, for instance, have a 26 to 28 percent rate of poverty, which tops all Black and Hispanic Americans. And, of any ethnic or racial group in the world, Pacific Islanders have the highest unemployment rate.

Very often, harassment of Asian Americans is still neglected. For example, Asian American women, even though 41 to 61 percent are victims of physical or sexual assault, are not the target of domestic violence survivor advocacy campaigns.

To plant conflict and competition between Asian Americans and other people of color, the reductionist "model minority" myth is sometimes used, which prohibits them from coordinating. Instead, the focus should be geared into the battle against white supremacy.

Chapter 9 - Young people battle structural injustice and advocate for justice.

In the 1980s, Oluo grew up with the Cosby family on television, pledging that racism was forgotten. The point was, you wouldn't be refused chances depending on the color of your skin if you put your head down and worked hard. There came the crack epidemic and the 1994 Violent Crime Regulation and Law Enforcement Act, which intensified Black and Brown individuals' criminalization and mass incarceration.

One of the consequences of this is that culture so focused on rugged individualism is now being criticized by young people that it has facilitated the criminalization, detention, and assassination of others considered "less extraordinary."

By questioning your own racism, do your part. Don't freak out and don't ignore it if you're white and someone calls you racist. Pay attention, and be able to let go of the notion of defining yourself as "nice," even though you didn't want to do or say anything racist. You might be doing the job and also attempting to be consciously anti-racist. Yet you should keep in mind that you were born into a racist, white nationalist culture and cherished the benefits given to you. This necessarily suggests that in upholding such systems, you have already been complicit.

Furthermore, if you are white, it is important to recognize that the effects of institutional injustice on persons of color can never be completely known, and no one serving these groups or cultures owes you an answer.

If you completely deny that you committed a racist action after much thought, it is also crucial that you do not disprove the suffering of that person. It should not be your ambition to show that you're not racist. It should be to figure out whether you are, and, where and when possible, to fix the pain you caused.

Learning about race is a positive first move, but you must take steps to eradicate white supremacy. For starters, by voting locally and insisting that social diversity be a top priority for anyone who asks for your vote, you will do so. Or if you see a person of color being arrested or threatened by the police, whether and when it is safe to do so, you should pause, stand witness, and provide support.

You may also suggest that the union fight against employer racist disenfranchisement. You should fund organizations run by people of color. Boycott corporations and companies that target people of color and profit on them. Donate to organizations that work for racial justice.

Bring pressure on the city authority to put an end to police ethnic profiling. In the battle against structural injustice, there are so many ways in which you can take responsibility and show up.

And realize: we don't have an endless amount of time to sit back and talk. There are people dying. We must educate ourselves and battle at the same time.

So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo Book Review

In the battle for fairness, talking about race is just the first move. Listen, analyze your racism, check your privilege, work on intersectionality, and question the structures that keep people poor. Advocate for equity and inclusivity and, ultimately, take steps.

Speak to the board, principals, and teachers at your local school.

Are students at your schools talking about Black people's achievements only during Black History Month in February? Is the actual story of the founding of the United States being taught? What is removed? What do managers do to overcome the disparity in multicultural achievement? Speak to the administrators at your school and ask certain questions. Then let them know that equitable education, even though your child is not a person of color, is a concern for you.

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