

BEYOND DENIAL

"I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group" -Peggy McIntosh



We are a collection of activists who are from the Pacific Northwest and around the country. We created this installation in collaboration with the Backbone Campaign 7th annual Localize This Action Camp.

We are responding to recent events of racism and to a request from people of color. We have been asked to educate ourselves in order to see racism, and then take actions to end racism.

As a group, we are predominantly white activists who are looking inwards and reaching out to our peers to join us in this action. We are challenging ourselves, and others to commit to taking one concrete step towards racial justice and to share our challenge.

Pitch-in to support creative interventions justice:
LocalizeThis.org/

**WHAT IS
 YOUR
 COMMITMENT?**

Recognize that everyone makes mistakes, and sometimes mistakes lead to positive results and offer opportunities for learning.	"I commit to viewing mistakes as opportunities for learning."
Recognize that sacrificing interests of communities of color in order to win victories for white people is seen as a default or norm community.	"I commit to disrupt patterns of domination."
Recognize that defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture. Work on your own defensiveness, and name it as a problem when it is one.	"I commit to working on my own defensiveness"
Those without power do not really know how decisions get made and who makes what decisions and yet they are completely familiar with the impact of those decisions on them.	"I commit to stop making decisions for and in the interests to those without power."
Results in trying to simplify complex things, for example believing that poverty is simply a result of lack of education.	"I commit to not simplify complex issues in my community."
Those with power do not see themselves as hoarding power or feeling threatened. Those with power feel threatened when anyone suggests changes in how things should be done in the organization; feel suggestions for change are reflection on their leadership.	"I commit to share my power"
Equating the raising of difficult issues with being impolite, rude, or out of line. When someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person for raising the issue rather than look at the issue which is actually causing the problem.	"I commit to listening to sensitive and uncomfortable topics"
In a capitalistic society, competition is valued higher than cooperation and there is little time or resources devoted to developing skills in how to cooperate.	"I commit to giving recognition and credit where it is due."
Progress in an organization, which expands (adds staff, adds projects) or develops the ability to serve more people notwithstanding of how well they serve them.	"I commit to genuinely serve others"
The belief that emotions are inherently destructive, irrational, & should not play a role in decision-making or group process. Invalidating people who show emotions has been identified as a characteristic of white middle-class dominant culture.	"I commit to recognizing that peoples' emotions are valid."
Recognizing the need to deepen your political analysis of racism & oppression so you have a strong understanding of how your personal experience & feelings fit into a larger picture; don't take everything personally. The belief that those with power have a right to emotional & psychological comfort (another aspect of valuing 'logic' over emotion.)	"I commit to not using people of color as a scapegoat for facing larger issues."

DAILY EFFECTS OF WHITE PRIVILEGE BY PEGGY MCINTOSH

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions that I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographic location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can tell, my African American coworkers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place and time 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. I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.
3. 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.
4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
7. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
9. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
10. I can be pretty sure of having my voice heard in a group in which I am the only member of my race.
11. I can be casual about whether or not to listen to another person's voice in a group in which s/he is the only member of his/her race.
12. 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, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
13. Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
14. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
15. I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.
16. I can be pretty sure that my children's teachers and employers will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others' attitudes toward their race.
17. I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color.
18. 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.
19. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
20. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.

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