

Why does Anti-Racism, including Anti-Semitism, have to be one of the components in a multicultural process? Isn't it enough that we are inclusive and democratic, that we value diversity and are culturally competent?

If we were starting out today, without 500 years of history, we might be able to ignore Racism and anti-Semitism. However, when we come together in a multicultural environment, it is in a White, Christian-based Racism. Even if we are all included, even if we listen, value, and respect each other, and even if we focus on the challenges we face, we still need to address this ongoing legacy.

Anti-racism is the process of actively and consistently confronting racism and anti-Semitism wherever they occur. The only way to build a democratic multicultural society from a society dominated by White, Christian-based Racism is through a commitment to use anti-Racist analysis and action.

We have seen how white people hold power in ordinary interactions and in institutional settings and receive unequal and unjust benefits from the social system. We bring this history of inequality and injustice and our training in racism assumptions of power and privilege with us wherever we go. All too often, people who are proponents of multiculturalism refuse to acknowledge or address the persistent effects of racism on our ability to create an inclusive process.

Other dynamics of racism make it difficult to achieve our goals unless we focus on eliminating them. For instance, people of color and Jews carry with them varying levels of distrust, unease, and internalized racism and anti-Semitism from their prior experience. In addition, there are many levels of institutional racism that influence particular situations. Unless we pay explicit attention to the specific, ongoing dynamics of racism, it will inevitably sabotage our efforts to build an inclusive, diverse, and respectful society. The first efforts to create a multicultural event, program, or staff may be greeted with great anticipation and fear by all parties. Whether it's a new employee of color, a new policy, inclusion of new material in a program, or even one new song or book in a curriculum, pent-up feelings hoping for and fearful of change can interfere with the normal process of interaction and evaluation. That person, policy, program, or item becomes the test of whether multiculturalism will work. The high stakes may well jeopardize the long-range prospects for successful change, as white people quickly judge something or someone as less than perfect and therefore as a failure. If we pay attention to the way that racism undermines the considered responses of both white people and people of color, we are better able to counteract its effects.

A clear anti-racist agenda can also help prevent multiculturalism from being watered down. It is possible to use our emphasis on inclusiveness to divert attention from racial issue. Concerns of gender equality, sexual orientation, physical access, or even anti-Semitism can become dominant issues while the struggle against racism is ignored. This dynamic occurs in part because we tend to treat any other inclusion issue as a white issue. This is another manifestation of racism.

Even if we disagree with, or are violently opposed to, homosexuality, for example, it is often more comfortable to talk about lesbian and gay rights if we have created a white context. We define issues of disability, gender, class, and sexual orientation as white issues, not having to do with race. (Most of us would actually say these issues are racially neutral, but in a racist society “neutral” means not taking into account the reality of racism and therefore is a code for “white.”) In trying to be so broadly inclusive, we end up excluding people of color with disabilities, women and lesbians of color, gay men and bisexuals of color. Without a strong and continuous focus on racism, we end up with a group of heterosexual white men and women, white lesbians, white gay men, white people with disabilities, white Jews, and some people of color who “represent” their racial groupings. This setup perpetuates racism under the guise of multiculturalism. We do need to focus on complete inclusion, but we can not let that become a substitute for dealing with racism.

The effects of racism will linger with us for a long time, even if we immediately institute massive changes to create a democratic multicultural nation. Unchallenged, racism makes a mockery of our democratic values. It turns multiculturalism into the same kind of false promise that integration has been, camouflaging the continued dominance of white people in our society. A commitment to anti-racism encourages us to pay attention to the effects that racism and anti-Semitism continue to have so that we can take action against them.

Unequal distribution of wealth is a keystone of racism. We haven't achieved much if we produce a multicultural ruling class. Our government, large corporations, and other institutions are capable of becoming multicultural while continuing to exploit the majority of us. The word “democracy” implies more than a cultural democracy where every culture is represented. We also need to make sure it includes the concept of economic democracy, that this multicultural agenda includes the goal of ending economic injustice. We have already noted how sections of the African-American, Latino/a, Asian-American, and Jewish communities have been given economic opportunities in exchange for supporting the status quo. Without an economic analysis, we can continue to support injustice while appearing multicultural.

There are many ways that inattention to the distribution of wealth can subvert our efforts at democracy. For instance, we might bring only

middle or upper-class people of color into the organizations we are involved with, and this will do little to redress the unequal participation of broad groups of poor and working-class people of color. We can become professionals, specializing in multicultural or diversity trainings, and not change the segregation in our schools, neighborhoods, and workplaces. Diversity training now supports an industry generating millions of dollars a year for professional trainers. Multiculturalism without attention to issues of wealth and power can become a form of collusion among professionals, both white and of color, to maintain control of the movement to end racism and to benefit themselves.

Integration and Tokenism:

Many People of Color have expressed concern that multiculturalism will become (or already is) a new form of integration and tokenism. Unless we are vigilant it certainly can become so.

Integration is based on the belief that people of color have been segregated from the mainstream of U.S. society and need to be incorporated into it for full participation. Even before the Brown vs. Board of Education decision in 1954, the discussion about racial equality in the United States revolved around integration. I want to look at these issues more closely because they influence our efforts to build a democratic, anti-racist multiculturalism.

Our belief in the importance of integration is based on the assumption that there is one mainstream, normal set of (white) values, practices, and procedures that other people can learn and adapt to. We assume that people of color want to be included in the mainstream but have previously been excluded because of prejudice and discrimination- racism.

There is real cause for concern about the exclusion of people of color from mainstream institutions in the United States. To a great extent, people of color and white people live separately, pray separately, go to different schools, do different jobs, and socialize separately. Insofar as people of color are not only separate but unequal, this is a tragedy of injustice, as the Supreme Court ruled in 1954.

Integration is not necessarily the solution to racism. Integration assumes that people of color will adapt to a white, mainstream way of doing things and that the institutions they integrate into will accept them as equal participants. There is certainly some question whether present U.S. institutions will ever welcome people of color as full and equal participants because of the deep levels of white culture and racism embedded in them. Many people of color also feel that having to give up cultural, traditional, and ethnic ways of thinking, acting and relating to others in order to “integrate” simply maintains white power. Integration fails to

address the problem of white racism. It's a form of tokenism- small or insignificant change in lieu of fundamental transformation.

The question is: "Integration into what, on whose terms?" When we assume that the terms and the institutions are fixed, we are advocating not integration, but assimilation-continued control by those who have traditionally held it. For example, under pressure from African Americans, many traditionally white colleges and universities integrated their classrooms in the 1960's and 1970's. When students of color started to demand participation in decisions about the curriculum and policies, these same institutions reacted by calling the students ungrateful and irresponsible. Today, over 30 years after integration of those schools, most public and private school administrators, deans, and professors are white. Obviously most college and university student bodies are integrated to varying degrees. Just as obviously, white people remain at the center of power and decision making. This "you can join us, but we're going to keep control" form of integration does not deal with the fundamental inequalities of racism.

Not everyone wants to be integrated, and few people want to be assimilated. Some people of color are cynical about the ability of white people to fully accept them as equals. Others are skeptical about most white people's willingness to seriously question their own privilege. Many people of color have rich cultures, practices, and identities they don't want to give up. There are some Native Americans and Black Nationalists who want cultural and political sovereignty. Still others are only willing to integrate into democratic, multicultural, and explicitly anti-racism institutions because only these will protect them from further white racism.

We need to develop a much more sophisticated view of racial progress in which we don't make assumptions about what people of color want or don't want. In some cases, for some people, integration is an appropriate strategy. In other cases, it may be a step backwards. In still others, it may be a way to sidestep demands for justice. Integration can only be a strategy for justice and equality, not a goal. As a goal, it too often leads to various forms of tokenism and isolation.

Tokenism plays out in our society in many ways. When people of color demand greater power and participation, they meet with white resistance at each stage. White people seldom voluntarily give up control or willingly look at our role in resisting change. If people of color push hard enough, we slowly and reluctantly accept their participation. We meet each stage with cries of "We've already done so much, what more do they want?" or "They're so unappreciative of what we've done; they'll never be satisfied until they control everything" or "We're moving as fast as we can." All

the tactics of denial, minimization, blame, and counterattack discussed in Part I are marshaled to justify the slow pace toward equal participation.

The first and simplest stage of tokenism occurs when a small and insignificant number of people of color are allowed to integrate a school or workplace. Or we add a few names and pictures of people of color to a textbook or a wall. We treat people of color and their contributions as the exception. People of color are extremely isolated in these situations and acutely vulnerable to personal abuse. They do not have much support and usually succeed only if they assimilate by thoroughly internalizing the values of the institution.

Another early stage of token integration occurs when white people include only those people of color who fit a certain mold or support the traditional values of the institution. Any who might challenge traditional patterns are screened out, isolated, fired, or otherwise neutralized. People of color are accepted for their decorative role and to deflect concerns about discrimination or diversity, not to be full participants.

This is also the stage where we quote or point to particular people of color, such as well-off-people in academia or politics like Shelby Steele, Ana Chavez, Clarence Thomas, Elaine Chao, or Thomas Sowell, to give a seal of approval to our policies and statements.

These tactics may not work to derail integration. There may be significant numbers of people of color who are demanding equality. We will then seek input from people of color. We allow them to speak out or testify, we study the situation, we do research, and we remain in control. This process creates the illusion of participation, but there is still no sharing of power.

This stage might be coupled with another form of tokenism that involves paying attention to racism only when people of color are in the room, outside the door, or in the streets. When they are not visibly present, it is business as usual. Racism is viewed as a problem for people of color and only of incidental concern to the main business of the organization.

If these tactics don't succeed in quelling protest, white people will give up some control, but only in special areas that are deemed culturally appropriate to people of color. We may allow them to teach in ethnic studies departments but not in the sciences, or to write about news in their community but not about mainstream events.

These are just some of the ways that white people control the participation of people of color and present a democratic multiculturalism

from developing. Each involves a token form of integration in which white people retain ultimate power and control.

Many organizations can look multicultural from the outside- they are often intended to . Multiculturalism can become token integration, hiding our failure to redistribute power and resources. To break these patterns of white control, we must see through these tactics and understand why the democratic and anti-racist components of multiculturalism are crucial. Most importantly, we must be willing to share power. We should be actively organizing to create a democratic, anti-racist, multicultural process in our workplaces, schools, police and fire departments, religious organizations, athletic clubs, unions, and city, state, and national governments. The assessments we did in the last section can be guidelines for proceeding. The four key questions are:

1. Is this organization multicultural?
2. Is it democratic?
3. Is it anti-racist (and anti-sexist, etc.?)
4. What are you going to do about it?

Up to this point, we have been talking about institutions that may have more effect on us than we have on them. There is much that we can do to change them, particularly if we work in concert with others. But they can present formidable challenges to our ability to organize and sustain social action.

There is one institution over which we have a lot of control. It is a place where we can work to make changes with people who are closest to us. This is a place where we can practice the skills we want to develop and model the kind of society we want to build. This is a place that can nurture and sustain our struggles against social injustice “out there.” This place is at home with our family.

Very often, we think of Racism as an issue out there, in the community. We don't think of social action as including how we live with other family members. The walls separating us from the community are permeable, and racism doesn't stop at the door. This section will give you ideas for eliminating racism in the ways you live with others and raise your children.

Although your family members may be all white and your neighbors appear so, there may well be people of other cultures, people in interracial families, people of mixed heritage, or people who are passing as white among your friends. People of color may also be providing services for you, your children, your apartment, house, or yard. Our environment is seldom as white as we assume it to be because we generally don't notice

people of color when their presence doesn't challenge our sense of their proper role.

Our homes are less separable from the greater community than they have ever been. They are connected to the outside world via TV, cable, computer games, internet, toys, music, radio, books, magazines, newspapers, and direct market catalogs. Each of these provides a vehicle by which racism can enter your home, but they also give you opportunities to respond to it.

Do you talk about racism where you live?

When you and other family members watch a movie, discuss the news, or talk about daily events, do you notice and discuss racism?

Talking about Racism is not easy for most of us to do. Few of us grew up in homes where Racism or other difficult and emotional issues were mentioned at all. We come from backgrounds of silence, ignorance, or a false belief that to talk about racism is to further it. When talk about race did occur, some of us experienced conflict with family members because we disagreed over racial issues. We can acknowledge and overcome these past experiences and create an atmosphere in our homes where we can openly and respectfully talk about issues of race, gender, or class.

It is challenging to raise white children in the highly racism society we live in. When babies are born they are unaware of racial difference and attach no intrinsic value to skin color. We know that they begin to notice racial differences and their effects between the ages of two and five.

Throughout their childhood, they are bombarded with stereotypes, misinformation, and lies about race. Without our intervention, they will become the racist shock troops of the next generation. They may not (or they may) become members of extremist groups or commit hate crimes, but they may well become white people who accept the injustice, racial discrimination, and violence in our society and perpetuate racism through their collusion. That is why we must begin teaching them at an early age to embrace differences and to become anti-racism activists. We can start this process by assessing our home and family environment for evidence of racism.

We have an impact on family, friends, and neighbors by the physical environment we create in our home. Do the calendars, pictures, and posters on your walls reflect the diverse society we live in? Are there books by women and men, lesbian, straight, and gay people from many different cultures? Are there magazines from communities of color? We don't get extra points if there are. Nor are we trying to create an ethnic museum. But paying attention to our environment broadens our

perspective and counters the stream of negative racial stereotypes that otherwise enter our home through the media.

It is even more important to discuss racism and to pay attention to our home if we have children. As responsible parents, we need to think about the toys, games, computer games, dolls, books and pictures that our young ones are exposed to. It is not just children of color who need Latino/a, Asian-American, Native American, and African American dolls. It is not just children of color who are hurt by computer games that portray people of color as evil, dangerous, and expendable.

I am not recommending that you purge your house of favorite games and toys or become fanatical about the racism you find in your child's life. Children don't need to be protected from racism. They see it all the time. They need to be given critical thinking tools for recognizing, analyzing, and responding to the different forms that racism takes. Discussing the racism (or sexism) in a children's book or movie, helping them to think about the injustices of racism, and providing alternative, anti-racist materials- all these contribute to your children's awareness and their ability to respond to injustice.

Our children need to listen to the experiences of people of color. Placing our children in multicultural childcare settings, encouraging multiracial friendships, reaching out to co-workers and colleagues who are of diverse backgrounds, and choosing professionals like doctors and dentists who are people of color are all ways to broaden our children's experience. Our society is so highly segregated that any of these efforts may turn out to be more complex than we imagined. But that complexity also can become material for understanding how racism operates and for introducing our children to the issues.

If our neighborhood or school is segregated, we can still introduce our children to a multicultural world experience that breaks down stereotypes. The best and often most accurate way is to read what people of color write about their lives. Many new children's books realistically portray the lives of adults and children who are African-American. There are a substantial number of books about the lives of Latino/as. Books by Native American, Arab-American, and Asian-American writers for young people are still few and hard to find, but there are some good ones available. Many of us, especially if we live or visit large cities, have access to photo exhibits, live musical performances, museums, and cultural centers where we can take our children. Hearing and seeing examples of other people's diverse experiences is extremely valuable for our children.

If we understand that we live in a multicultural society, we will begin to question any situation where people of color are not present. For example, if our children are in a Scout troop, sports team, Math Olympics

team, or a religious school class that is all white, we will ask ourselves, “Why is this group all white? Are there any barriers that keep children of color from participating?”

Our children need to know that they are not responsible for the existence of racism, but they are responsible for how they respond to it. Will they stand for racial justice and equal opportunity? Will they stand with people of color? Their answers to these questions will depend on how we raise them.

You might want to initiate family discussions about racism by talking about this book and how you don’t want your home to support racism. You can describe what racism is and how it affects white people and people of color in terms appropriate for the ages of your children. You can solicit their help in doing an assessment of your home and thinking about how different games, books, videos, or advertisements might be racist.

Let your children help decide what to do to make your home different. It is one thing to create an anti-racist, multicultural environment by yourself. It is an entirely different level of education, empowerment, and activism to include your children as valued participants in the process. Again, the goal is not to create an ethnic museum but to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of people and cultures represented in our society.

Obviously, this kind of assessment and interactive process should address issues of gender, class, disability, sexual orientation, and religious and cultural differences as well as race. We don’t want to foster stereotypes that people of color are not also women, poor or working class, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, or bisexual, and/ or Muslim, Buddhist, or Jewish. These issues are inseparable. When dealt with in a context of social justice, young people are quick to develop principles of fair treatment and equality, eager to become co-participants in creating a healthier environment and challenging injustice. They may well end up inspiring and leading us with their readiness to challenge authority, take risks, and stand up for fairness.

Questions and Actions:

Home and Family-

1. Were people of color and racism talked about in your childhood home? Think about particular incidents when they were. Who initiated discussions and who resisted them? Was there tension around it? What was the general tone?
2. Were Jews, the Holocaust, or anti-Semitism talked about? Think about particular incidents. What was the general tone? Who

- initiated discussions, and how was tension handled if there was any?
3. Was there silence in your home on issues of racism or anti-Semitism? What did you learn from the silence?
 4. Was there conflict within your family because of racism or anti-Semitism (over integration, interracial or interfaith dating, music, busing)? Think of particular incidents. How was the conflict dealt with?
 5. Were there people of color who cared for you, your parents, house or yard? If so, how were they treated? How did their presence and your family's attitudes toward them influence you?
 6. As a child, what stories, TV shows, or books influenced you the most in your attitudes about people of color? About Jews? What do you carry with you from that exposure?
 7. Talk with your partner, housemates, and friends about these issues. Notice the whiteness of your surroundings out loud to family and friends. This needn't be done aggressively or with great anger. You don't need to attack other people. Ask questions, notice things out loud, express your concerns, and give other people room to think about and respond to what you say.
 8. If you did a room-by-room assessment of your home today, would you find a diversity of images and items?
 9. If the answer to Question 8 is no, what do you and other family members lose because of that lack? How might it contribute to racial prejudice and discrimination?
 10. Bring up feelings or thoughts about reading this book at dinner or other family time. What is difficult or awkward about doing this? What is the response?
 11. Do an assessment of your home including the following items:
a. books b. posters c. cookbooks d. calendars e. paintings f. magazines g. newspapers h. videos i. games j. computer games k. toys l. art materials m. religious articles n. sports paraphernalia o. music
 12. What would you like to remove?
 13. What would you like to add to what you have? Try to go beyond the tokenism of putting up pictures of Martin Luther King Jr. or Michael Jordan, or adding a book or two to your children's collection. Explore the roles and contributions of people of color in areas where you and other family members share an interest, such as sports, science, music, books, or movies.
 14. Are women well represented in the items in your home? Are poor and working class people? Are people with disabilities? Are Muslims, Jews, and Buddhists? Are lesbians and gay men? Are children? Are the creations of children themselves included?
 15. Do you employ people of color? How well are they paid? How well are they treated? How do your children respond and

relate to them? How will you talk with your children about these relationships? How will you balance these relationships with friends and neighbors from different cultures who are not employees? Are your children exposed to professionals such as teachers, doctors, and dentists who are people of color? How could you increase such exposure?

These are small, personal steps, but they have two important consequences. The more contact we have with people of color and with images and information about them, the more we are motivated and equipped to challenge racism. We are able to see more clearly the tremendous gap between average white perceptions about people of color and the lives and communities of people of color themselves. This awareness can guide our action and enrich our lives.

Second, we prepare our children to notice how racism operates and to become champions for racial justice. There are resources in the bibliography for enhancing your parenting skills and continuing this process.

For the Long Haul...

Racism is not going to end tomorrow or next year. Every delay and setback saps our strength and strains our hope. It is easy to despair, easy to give up. How do we nurture and sustain ourselves for what may well be a lifetime of struggle? How do we keep alive the vision of racial justice and multicultural democracy that guides our action?

The first step is to stop and think about how we are taking care of ourselves for the long term. Our guilt, desperation, anger, fear, the immediate pressure of events, or even our enthusiasm may make it difficult for us to think about how to keep going after this next action, campaign, or crisis.

If we are not thinking about how to nurture ourselves in the coming years, we are probably also not thinking strategically about the future. We may have become bogged down, reacting to everyday events. We may have lost sight of our goals, not noticed how the world is changing, and forgotten that we are going to have to renew ourselves to remain effective.

We need to create time in our overworked, overcommitted lives to reflect on the future. Some of us do this best alone, others with friends and family. In either case, we must start with time for reflection.

Take a moment to think about how you center your energy or calm yourself amidst the pressures and stress of your daily routines? How could you strengthen this part of your life?

Reflection is a spiritual practice for some of us. Any spiritual practice that connects us to a reality greater than our individual lives- that connects us to other people, to animal and plant life, and/or to a larger energy in the world- can increase our respect for life and our valuing of difference. It can renew and guide our pursuit for a better world. We each have, or can find, our own unique way to reflect and connect.

What activities help you connect to a greater reality?
How could these activities support your work for social justice?
How might you create more time for reflection in your life?

We also need to take care of ourselves physically and emotionally. We need to live as if we wanted to be alive when our visions are realized. It goes without saying that we need to eat, exercise, relax, have fun, play, enjoy, and smile. Yet how many of us don't take these parts of our lives seriously until we can't continue our work because of exhaustion or poor health? How do we expect to continue in the struggle? What are we modeling for the young people around us?

For people from a white Christian background, there may be a big divide between work and leisure. Taking care of oneself, goofing off, and having fun may seem self indulgent, even sinful. Some people can turn exercise and other forms of recreation into work, canceling out some of their value to us. These attitudes can also make it difficult to exult in the singing, dance, drama, and other celebratory rituals that can be so renewing to our lives.

Reclaiming or developing cultural rituals can heal and reinvigorate us. Rituals build community, connect people, and inspire new visions and strategies. Singing or going to hear music, writing, reading, or listening to a poem, participating in a holiday ritual, sharing a meal with friends- we need to allow ourselves the cultural activities that nurture our souls.

Mainstream male, white, and Christian traditions also push people to be rugged individuals. The message is "Go it alone." This assumes there is an individual path to salvation and that people shouldn't make mistakes or ask for help. We become isolated, scared, confused, lost. We don't know where to turn for support. Many of us find it easier to support others than to ask for help. We have to overcome our pride and fear to admit that we can't do it all by ourselves.

We can't fight racism alone. We can't create social justice by ourselves. Cultural activities and broad-based community support and action networks are essential to sustain us in this work. Friends, family members and community networks, keep us connected, supported and inspired. They help us maintain perspective on who we are and what we can do. Working with others aids us in evaluating what we can or can not take on, what our share is. Taking care of ourselves through healthy lifestyles, rituals, cultural activities, and support networks builds and sustains a community of people dedicated to the struggle for social justice.

Finally, we need to celebrate our successes, no matter how small; our victories, no matter how tenuous. We need to see how far we've come as well as how far there is to go. Although racism is still a central constituent of our society, we have made progress, things have changed. They have changed because multitudes of courageous people of color and white people have fought, resisted, and refused to be overwhelmed by racism. They have changed because the human spirit is indomitable and we each share that spirit. We can only sustain our efforts by building on and celebrating the achievements of the people who have contributed to getting us as far as we are today.

1. Who are family and friends you could talk with about doing racial justice work? Who will you talk with first?
2. Who are co-workers who might help you form a racial justice action/support network? Who will you talk with first?
3. Do you know or know of people of color who you want to talk with about fighting racism? List the one you will talk with first. Ask if he or she has time and is willing to do this with you.
4. Name one network, action committee, or support group that you are going to join.
5. What kind of cultural events, rituals, or celebrations have inspired you to fight racism? What kind of cultural activity brings you together with others? Which ones renew your spirit?
6. How can you make your work to end racism an honoring and a celebration of the efforts of those who have preceded you?