

Healing from Toxic Whiteness to Better Fight for Racial Justice

While we're waiting to start at 1 pm ET / 10 am PT, please share in the chat box:

- 1. What is your name and where are calling in from?**
- 2. What brought you to participate in this program?**

If you've used Zoom before but haven't done an update recently, please download Zoom Clients for Meetings at:

<https://zoom.us/download>

Got tech questions? Email Josette at josette@everydayfeminism.com

Introductions!

- Who are we and why are we offering this program?
- Who is joining us and why do you want to be a part of this community?

About the Program

- What will this program provide (and what will it not)?
- How is this program structured?
- How can I best engage in this program?

Goals for Today's Session

- Understand how white supremacy is emotionally harmful to white people
- Identify how it shows up in you and your actions
- Learn how to use mindfulness to work with the pain and difficult feelings

How White Supremacy is Emotionally Harmful to White People, Too

While white people benefit socially and materially from white supremacy, they are also emotionally harmed in the process.

White supremacy teaches you:

1. That being racist is one of the worst things you can be
2. To think and act in racist ways that personally benefit you
3. That these racist behaviors are either not racist or are even anti-racist (like being “colorblind”) and don’t personally benefit you
4. To believe that since you don’t personally benefit from or intentionally engage in racism, you have no personal responsibility to do anything to end it
5. Systemic racism doesn’t really exist anymore so it doesn’t harm people of color, much less white people

So the Question Is...

- What kind of emotional system do you need to have in order to not resist systemic racism?
- How did that trauma get passed down generationally and come to live inside of your body?

How Whiteness Was Created

- Whiteness is a social construct created and spread in the 16th through 19th centuries (and continued today) by wealthy, land-owning Northwestern European elites (particularly English folks settling in the Americas).
- The goal was to pit non-wealthy people from other European countries, like Ireland and Italy, against Black and Native folks so they wouldn't join forces against the ruling elite.
- Poor Europeans gained white privilege and lost their connection to their cultural heritage, to their history and awareness of their own struggles, and to their own humanity in relation to people of color

Never forget — racism is a tool to keep us distracted from how the ruling elite have been running and continue to run our societies for their own personal benefit at the expense of the rest of us, the majority.

Why White People Need to Liberate Themselves From White Supremacy

- POC do not need white people to save them from racism that's "outside, over there."
- POC need white people to do the hard work of unpacking how they've been unconsciously conditioned to think and act in everyday racist ways. AND...
- Unpack what kind of emotional system they would need to have in order to remain ignorant and in denial of systemic racism and restore themselves to emotional wholeness.

White people's liberation is bound up with freeing themselves from toxic whiteness and acting in solidarity with POC to dismantle systemic racism.

Why This is Compassionate Activism

- In order to unpack this unconscious conditioning to be racist, we need to not perpetuate the dynamic of policing and punishing ourselves and each other.
- Instead, it's important to hold the space for ourselves to sit with the pain, grief, and fear that comes up as we examine our own implicit biases — which we undoubtedly have.
- From there, white people can be emotionally honest with others and take action to restore trust with POC and dismantle systemic racism.

The only way out is through.

How Compassion Can Lead To Activism

- Compassion is the desire to alleviate suffering in the presence of pain. Compassion is what heals us, and restores us back to our natural wholeness.
- That means we need to get in touch with the pain that white supremacy has caused white people.
- But without the tools to know how to heal, getting in touch with our pain is both terrifying and counter-productive

What We Normally Do

We were taught to deny the pain of systemic oppression in our lives so that we wouldn't be moved to address it.

So when we feel it, we often:

- **Become resistant** to its existence by trying to change it, minimize it, and deny it
- **Make someone wrong** as a human being for it - either ourselves or someone else, through judging, shaming, and blaming

When we try to access our pain from this make believe world, it goes badly. So we understandably don't try to get in touch with our pain again.

The Three Core Pains Caused by White Supremacy

1. Disconnection from the reality of systemic racism and its impact on people of color
2. Disconnection from yourself and your emotional system
3. Disconnection from people with different degrees of consciousness

1. The Pain of Disconnection from the Reality of Systemic Racism and POC

Your unconscious conditioning teaches you that you're racially normal and therefore have no racialized frame of reference for the world.

This generally manifests as denying, minimizing, or justifying racism, and refusing to self-examine.

As you become more racially conscious, you may feel:

- Afraid of exploring the “rabbit hole of white ignorance” – of feeling like you’ll never know enough
- Afraid of continuing to cause harm despite your best intentions because of your ignorance - while knowing that white silence contributes to the continuation systemic racism
- Feeling like your understanding of the world has been turned upside down and feeling anxious because you no longer know what you’re “supposed” to do

Reflection Time!

- If and how does this pain of being disconnected from the reality of white supremacy and its impact on people of color show up in your life?
- How do you relate to this pain?

Q&A Time!

10 Minute Break

2. The Pain of Disconnection from Yourself and Your Emotional System

Your unconscious conditioning teaches you that racism is in the past and that POC deserve what happens to them in today's society.

This generally manifests as victim-blaming, refusal to recognize the pain of POC, and denying implicit bias.

As you become more racially conscious, you may feel:

- Afraid of becoming aware of your own biases
- Guilty and judgmental over your white privilege and how you may not want to give it up in the name of racial justice
- Deep fear of harming POC unintentionally while recognizing you sometimes don't know what's racist

Reflection Time!

- If and how does this pain of being disconnected from yourself and your emotional system show up in your life?
- How do you relate to this pain?

Q&A Time!

3. The Pain of Disconnection from People with Different Degrees of Consciousness

Your unconscious conditioning teaches you that racism isn't really a problem any more and it's best to not discuss racism in order to keep the peace.

This generally manifests as a belief in "reverse racism" when incidences of racism are raised, which works to marginalize POC and their experiences and derail conversations around race.

As you become racially conscious, you may:

- Be unable to deal with less racially conscious white people and wanting to just make them agree with you
- Afraid of how talking to loved ones and other white people in your life who are less conscious may damage your relationships
- Not sure how to respond to white people about their biases against POC since they "should know better"
- Strive to be the 'perfect white ally' while also being unwilling to examine and recognize your own biases
- Afraid of being called out and wanting to remain silent while knowing that silence helps systemic racism continue

Reflection Time!

- If and how does this pain of being disconnected from people with different degrees of consciousness show up in your life?
- How do you relate to this pain?

Q&A Time!

Moving from Resistance to Acknowledgment

- I feel X and it's ok / that matters.
 - It's possible to feel X and that be ok.
- I see your pain and I care.
- I did/didn't do X and that happened.

Sharing Time!

What did you notice as you did this exercise?

What shifted for you, if anything?

**What's Your Main
Takeaway?**