

SEEING RACISM FOR THE FIRST TIME WHILE STRUGGLING WITH ITS IMPLICATIONS

Have you noticed when you disagree with a white person regarding entitlement, or racism and deprivation you might feel the very foundation of your soul crumbling beneath your feet? There could be no denial there is often a painful descent into a surprising misunderstanding between yourself and whomever you are talking to. A thin-black-line may have been drawn between both of you. Only one of the two of you may have benefitted from the moment.

Many relationships do not survive this transition. It is too raw, too honest and in our culture one has a lot of catching-up to do when it comes to the origins of white privilege and when it comes to how much we all rely upon one another for racial healing and social justice there is no end to the need for communication. In 2019 especially we are getting a good look at how difficult it is to meet on common ground or reach understandings because so much is at stake when you enter the relationship-zone.

Most all of us are quite scared of this part of our evolution. Now we know what serious trouble we are in. While activism creates bridges of hope and understanding the root of the problems can only be addressed by you in your personal life. Therefore the moments of conflict, of alienation or hopelessness will multiply because relating is relating and denial interferes as denial puts the accent on disruption. Disruption leads to anger and disharmony in cross-cultural relations which can shut us all down.

If white people withdraw they won't come out. They won't work on what they do not know or understand.

We see this all the time. We see discouragement on white folks faces when they try to 'get' racism, especially when poor as the newly poor still resent and reject the fact of white privilege no matter who speaks to them about it because something about it is too painful. In the midst of your own suffering you [when white] refuse to be compromised or diminished by the facts.

Healing from racism is a process which requires self-recognition. We [Whites and Blacks] have been informed about one another thru racial stereotypes. Stereotypes have also informed all of us of our self-worth and racism has held up a mirror to each of us to show us who we are in a white supremacist paradigm.

None of us asked for this but here it is.

Moments of conflict that are so powerful we are presented with our naiveté, ignorance or prejudices are unsettling. Those moments can alienate us from one another when we may have finally gathered up the courage to voice our concerns about racism to others. It can be frightening when people will not speak about it in your circle. As one client of mine said to me, "It is scary."

For decades white people had not realized how violent racism really is. Now they are getting it. Now they know.

Condescension about this subject does not work. Just as teaching while insulting does not work. When someone is wounded you do not stand there pouring salt on the wound. You do get what is needed to start to heal it. You cannot be in a hurry, it won't work as rushing creates more anxiety.

So what do you do?

You keep finding things out, putting it together. Racism is puzzling. Your role in it when you are white is confusing. Recovery from any addiction is not easy. It is always work.

Where are the missing pieces you may be in need of discovering right now to help you figure out where you are? What you want? How to work the racial equality muscle?

A welcoming encouragement from others may not be around the corner. People are harried. You do not have to be. Recovery takes steps. It is a process.

There are conflicts as you start to express and seek out your own ability to work on racism diluting its influence over you. When you are able to focus your attention on uncovering your prejudices and want to take the blindfold off let me know. Get a sense of direction and validation for your efforts.

Why?

A suspicion of motives could be next. Discussing racism is hard. No comfort-zones. It is a search into the underworld. You are entering the land of the forbidden.

Alienation kicks in if it requires too much effort or too much loneliness. I see it all the time. It does not take long. It doesn't take much to be rejected while finding racism out and where you fit into the mix will take a bit longer.

But don't be confused. Racism is cunning. Dissolving it requires self knowledge. Yours is a voice you may not have used before.

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