

Anti-Racism Committee Meeting Summary

January 9, 2023

Submitted by Nancy Richman

Mission: Learn, Educate, Advocate

*Beauty is before me and Beauty behind me,
Above me and below me hovers the beautiful.
I am surrounded by it; I am immersed in it.
In my youth, I am aware of it, and, in old age, I shall walk quietly the beautiful trail.
In beauty it is begun. In beauty it is ended.*

From the Navajo Nation

Having previously decided that we wanted to build our skills to feel more confident having effective and constructive conversations across differences, we practiced using role plays. Our purpose in this exercise was to practice an initial response that would engage the person in the scenario in a curious, neutral, non-judgmental way. Examples of the scenarios:

1. During an informal chat with a friend about your leaking roof, your friend suggests that you hire a “bunch of illegals” to fix it.
2. You are taking your dog for a walk and are chatting with a neighbor down the street that you have lived near for many years but haven’t spent a lot of time with. She opens up to you about her dilemma of moving her teenaged daughter to a private school. Private school is expensive, but about the local public school, she says, “*you know, those black boys, they just don’t know how to stop.*”
3. An acquaintance asked you what you were up to this weekend. You said, “*Oh, I’m going to a workshop to practice talking about racism.*” She looked startled and said, “*That’s interesting. I wouldn’t need that because I don’t see race; I only see the human race.*”

Conclusion: This is hard! The neutral, curious entry point is difficult to come up with on the spot. We decided to spend a little time in every meeting practicing effective ways of getting into the conversation.

Recommended reading: [How to Have Difficult Conversations About Race](#), by Kwame Christian.

Next meeting: January 23, 2023

Agenda:

1. The Pyramid of Love: How might love play a role in our conversation?
2. Contempt podcast by Freakonomics (link sent in email)