



Racial Injustice & Inequities Perspective

My White Privilege

by Megan L. Schultz, MD, MA

I am racist. As a white person born into a racist society where white people have all the power – and always have – I am racist. It is essential that white people say this out loud, believe this is true in our white privileged hearts, and work unendingly to fix this in ourselves. It is essential that white people understand that racism is **our** problem to solve – we are the perpetrators. It is essential that white people conduct a personal reckoning with the infinite ways we have sustained, promoted and profited from the racist structures that oppress Black people in our country. As a white person, I will start.

- I bought a home in a neighborhood that is overwhelmingly white.
- I send my children to schools where the students are overwhelmingly white.
- I have not surrounded my children with Black role models and leaders. My social circle is so segregated that when my son was 3 years old, he saw a group of Black men standing at a bus stop and said to me, “Look, Mama, basketball players!” Even after his comment, I **still** have not directly spoken about racism with my children.
- I live in the most segregated city in America and I have never once called my representatives to demand affordable housing, school desegregation or better public transportation.
- I live in a city where a mentally ill Black man was shot fourteen times by police for sleeping on a park bench and I have never once called for police demilitarization, universal body cameras, or police de-escalation training.
- I have asked for the presence of security guards in the Emergency Department where I work more often with Black patients than white patients.

- A Black medical student once told me she thought she was treated differently on a clinical rotation because of her skin color, and I did not immediately seek out and speak with the medical team members who made her feel inferior.
- I once heard a colleague say, “I don’t understand why we can’t joke about lynching,” and I did not directly engage her in conversation about the extreme lack of comedy in racial violence.
- I have never once challenged a supervisor or a board of directors about the lack of Black leadership in a department, conference or organization in which I am involved.
- I have never once asked a political candidate to end mass incarceration, end solitary confinement, decriminalize marijuana, end cash bail or divest from private prisons – all of which disproportionately affect Black people in our communities.
- I have never once donated to organizations that support Black people running for political office, such as Higher Heights or Collective PAC.
- I have completely and thoroughly bought into the racist schema that the opioid epidemic, which largely affects white people, is tragic and the people affected are victims, while the heroin and crack cocaine epidemics, which largely affect Black people, are criminal and the people affected are guilty.
- I have scrolled past documentaries and movies like *13th* and *Selma* and thought to myself, “Ugh, I don’t want to watch that, it’s too depressing.” Meanwhile, Black people in my community fear for their lives, and the lives of their children, every day, and do not have the privilege of not thinking about racism.
- I have never once thought about specifically supporting Black-owned businesses.
- I have perpetuated racist theories about “Black on Black crime” when most crime, due to the vast segregation in our country, occurs within the same racial group. 84% of white murder victims are killed by other white people, and I have never once described this as “white on white” crime.
- I have felt uncomfortable talking about reparation and affirmative action. Instead of educating myself and listening to Black voices about these topics, I have avoided them completely.

- I have not protested, I have not rioted, I have not raged in the streets about the inhumanities and injustices that Black people in my community endure every day.

I am racist. I hereby publicly vow to work on becoming anti-racist. Because Black lives matter.

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