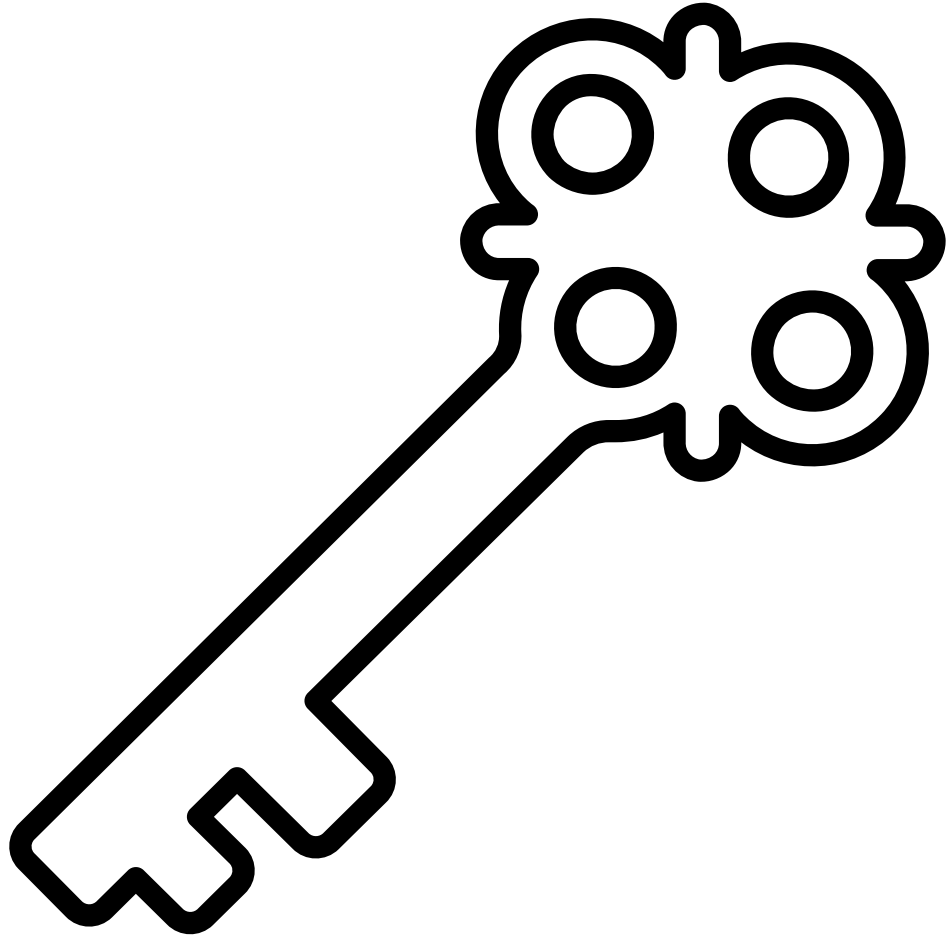


Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends
Stony Run*
1:30 to 3:00 P.M.



How to be Anti-Racist

*An earlier version was presented to Alexandria Monthly Meeting 9/20/2020

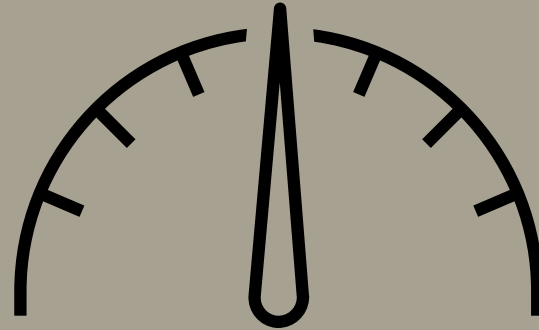


Key Terms



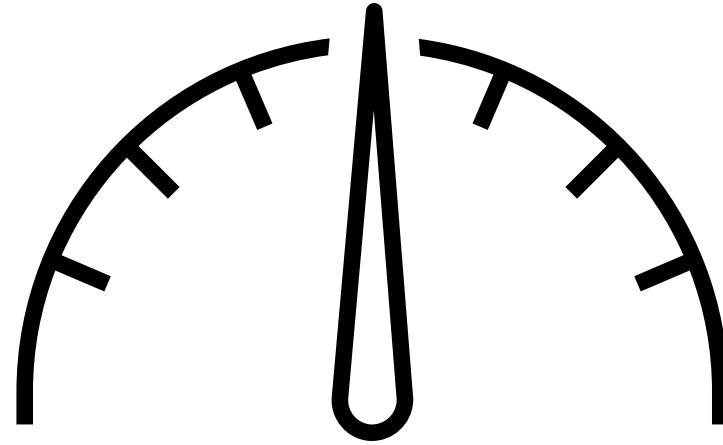
Social Justice

- Racism is an institutionalized system of oppression.
- The negative impact of social injustice includes unequal treatment in the legal system, in medical care, in housing, in recruiting (jobs, education, etc.), in hiring and retention, in wages, and in educational opportunities.
- We cannot bring about social justice by acting alone, but we can help by being part of a network of people who are committed to fairness and equality.



Racism – Non-Racism – Anti-Racism

- It is often useful to talk about behavior and not to label people.
 - A person may see the self as fundamentally non-racist but behaves as a racist or anti-racist in different situations (i.e., engages in behavior that is situational).



Active – Passive – Curative

Racism



- Uneven and unfair distribution of power, privilege, land, and material goods favoring people categorized as white.
- Pervasive, deep-rooted, and long-standing exploitation, control, and violence directed at indigenous peoples, people of color, and immigrants of color (i.e., at anyone perceived as different).
- Scapegoating or blaming indigenous peoples, people of color, and immigrants of color for societal and personal problems.
- Prejudice, ignorance, and stereotypes are results of racism, not the cause.

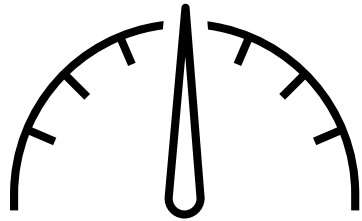
Racism Operates on Four Different Levels

- **Interpersonal Racism** – taking misinformation and stereotypes toward a group and performing an act of harassment, exclusion, marginalization, discrimination, hate, or violence.
- **Institutionalized Racism** – policies, procedures, and everyday practices that are built into health care, education systems, job markets, housing markets, media, criminal justice systems, etc. to advantage people identified as white and disadvantage those who are not.

Racism Operates on Four Different Levels

- **Structural Racism** – the cumulative effects of interpersonal and institutional racism within our society.
- **Cultural Racism** – consistent and persistent images, pictures, comments, literature, movies, advertisements, and online media consistently portraying people of color as inferior, lazy, dangerous, sexually manipulative, infantile, and less intelligent than whites.

Non-Racism



- Not being influenced by a person's physical attributes (e.g., pigmentation).
- *Passive* rejection, opposition, and disassociation from behaviors, discourses, and ideologies that are unfair or unjust toward people of color.
- A non-racist society would be one in which pigmentation would be the equivalent of the eye color of individuals in our society.

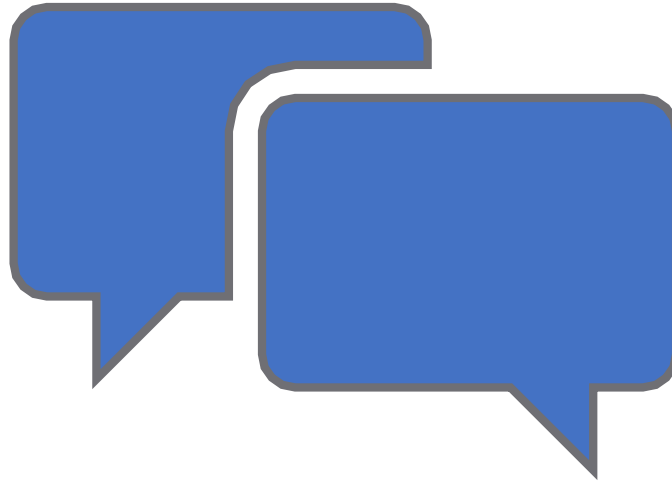
Anti-Racism

- It is often thought of as the *active* contrast, oppose, or dichotomy to racism.
- It is recognizing that pigmentation has a profound negative effect on people's lives, regardless of the category into which they are placed.
- Being anti-racist is not about whether you or society categorizes you as a white or a person of color. There is work that all people can do to help end social inequalities in our society.

- It is an active way of seeing and being in the world to transform it into a more socially just civilization.
- It is unlearning the misinformation and disinformation we have embraced and to replace it with a more truthful and complex understanding of peoples and cultures around us.
- It is the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies, laws, practices, and attitudes so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.

Anti-Racist Behavior





Let us pause for questions and comments.

What am I called to do?

Interpersonal Racism – stop using misinformation and stereotypes toward people of color to rationalize acts of exclusion, marginalization, discrimination (including microaggression), harassment, hate, and violence.

Cultural Racism – avoid or protest the pervasive images, pictures, comments, literature, movies, advertisements, and online media that regularly portray people of color as inferior, lazy, dangerous, sexually manipulative, infantile, and less intelligent than whites.

Ibram X. Kendi – *How to be an Antiracist* (2019)

- Six Steps:

1. Understand the definition of racist.
2. Stop saying “I’m not racist.”
3. Identify racial inequities and disparities.
4. Confront the racist ideas you have held or continue to hold.
5. Understand how your anti-racism needs to be intersectional (i.e., across gender, sexuality, and ethnicity).
6. Be a champion of anti-racist ideas, policies, and practices.

What am I called to do?

- Becoming anti-racist starts with acknowledging that racism exists, that you contribute to it, and that you benefit from it.
- Recognize the following:
 - ✓ there is no scientific basis for the construct of “race;”
 - ✓ every time your attention begins to focus on people of color, you need to learn to notice and refocus.
- ✓ Racist behaviors contradict verbal assurances that one does not notice racial differences. Saying “I do not see color” could be the equivalent of saying “I do not care about social justice in my society.”

What am I called to do?

- **Learn more about the following:**
 - ✓ how racism affects the lived experiences of people of color and indigenous peoples,
 - ✓ how racism is systemic and has been part of many foundational aspects of society throughout history,
 - ✓ how racism can be manifested in individual attitudes and behaviors as well as formal (and unspoken) policies and practices within institutions, and
 - ✓ how you participate, sometimes unknowingly, in racist behavior.

What am I called to do?



1

Rise above the tendency of Friends to avoid conflict and unpleasant truths – we cannot solve a problem if we do not confront it.



2

Do not respond to the challenge of racism by denying the severity of it, quibbling with the facts, and hoping that it will simply disappear.



3

Stop creating narratives that implicitly or explicitly say that people of color cannot do for themselves - help but do not take charge.

What am I called to do?

- Engage in good practices such as those that apply to any healthy relationship:
 - ✓ Build and maintain trust by being:
 - authentic (sharing the real you),
 - logical (being rigorous in your thinking, set and maintain high standards),
 - respectful (listening and affirming that the views of others matter), and
 - empathetic (trying to understand and share the feelings of others).
- Practice the “Platinum Rule.”
 - ✓ The Golden Rule says, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”
 - ✓ The Platinum Rule says, “Do unto others as they would have you do unto them.”
 - The Platinum Rule considers unequal distributions of power.

What am I called to do?

- Talk with people of color honestly, simply, and caringly across the differences.
- Do not be patronizing or condescending in words or actions.
- Understand that discomfort is the root of all learning and developing – do not take everything personally, which you too often accuse people of color of doing. It is an act of **microaggression** when used to excuse hurtful behavior.

What is a microaggression?

- Remember that **interpersonal racism** refers to taking misinformation and stereotypes toward a group and performing an act of harassment, exclusion, marginalization, discrimination, hate, or violence.
- A microaggression* is a subtle, often unintentional, form of sexual or racial exclusion, marginalization or discrimination that takes the form of an offhanded comment, an inadvertent painful joke, or a pointed insult that make people of color, females, and similar groups feel uncomfortable and serve to remind them that they are not fully accepted or trusted in a community.
- Microaggressions may be likened to paper cuts that sting but do not kill; however, they take a toll over time such as leading to essential hypertension or depression.
 - *A term coined by Harvard Medical School psychiatrist, Chester Pierce, in the 1970s.

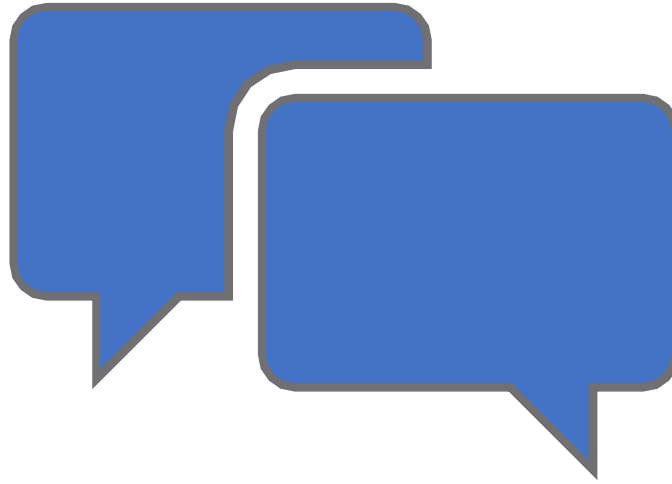
Types of Microaggression

- **Micro-assault** – explicit racist behavior that is offensive whether verbal or nonverbal.
 - ✓ Using racial slurs.
 - ✓ Refusing to work with someone because of their ethnicity or national origin.
- **Micro-insult** – rudeness in communication that demeans a persons' heritage or identity.
 - ✓ Ethnic jokes.
 - ✓ Saying a person is unlike other persons of a particular ethnic group.
- **Micro-invalidatation** – communication that excludes or negates the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person belonging to a particular ethnocultural group.
 - ✓ Saying a person of color is too sensitive.
 - ✓ Saying that a person of color took a joke the wrong way.

Microaggression and COVID-19

- Virtual Meetings

- Unwelcome guests are exposed to participants' homes. What should one do if the person does not fit the default of white, male, able-bodied, wealthy, educated, etc.?
- Have you noticed whether Friends of color and young adult Friends are more likely, less likely, or about the same in clicking the “no video” button during meeting for worship?
- Video technology is often developed for people with light skin. Do we care whether Friends have concerns about not being displayed well using technology that was designed for people who are different in skin tone?



Let us pause for questions and comments.

What is my Meeting called to do?

Institutionalized Racism – assess and change policies, procedures, and everyday practices built into the functioning of the Monthly Meeting and Yearly Meeting that serve to advantage people identified as white and disadvantage those who are not.

Structural Racism – strive to reduce the cumulative effects of interpersonal and institutional racism within the monthly Meeting and the Yearly Meeting.

What is my meeting called to do?

Don't	Work on	Include	Focus	Center	Accept
Do not let the clock be your "master." Take time to be inclusive and to encourage democratic and thoughtful decision-making.	Work on defensiveness.	Include people who are most affected by a decision in the decision-making.	Focus upon the quality of the process as well as the product (quantity is not synonymous with quality).	Spend less time focusing on what is wrong with people of color and more on what is right and good.	Accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal and that different experiences lead to different perspectives.

What is my meeting called to do?

- If people of color attend meeting for worship a time or two and suddenly disappear do some fact-finding and some soul searching to ascertain why?
- If you sponsor an activity, look around to see how many Friends of color attend and participate. If there are not many, you may find it useful to try to determine why.
 - ✓ Remember presence is not synonymous with participating.
- Give people of color chances to build leadership skills.
 - ✓ If society has thrown you to the ground and put its knee on your neck often, you may not be inclined to be on a committee, believe that you are wanted, or expect that speaking from your experience will be received well. Recruiting people of color may require a different strategy and a different base of support.
 - ✓ If I do something well, for example, clerk a committee, do not use it to keep me from assuming a greater leadership role in the organization.

What is my meeting called to do?

01

Spend less time focusing on what is wrong with people of color and more on what is right and good.

02

Take time to ensure that all people's work and efforts are genuinely appreciated.

03

Separate people from mistakes. Focus more on solutions and less on who is to blame.

04

Commit to long-term, persistent, strong anti-racism effort at all levels – individual, Monthly Meeting, Yearly Meeting.

What is my meeting called to do?

- Consider how we can effectively use the Yearly Meeting queries as a tool for becoming an anti-racist, faith-based Meeting.
- Define a few things that we want to accomplish, e.g., to bring about more equitable practices, policies, programs in the Meeting.
- Focus more on social change and less on social services for people of color and their causes.
 - ✓ The aim of social services is often to protect the well-being of children and vulnerable adults. Do not make color synonymous with vulnerable.
 - ✓ The goal of social change should be to change mechanisms within our social structure e.g., rules of behavior, institutionalized relationships, and value systems.

What is my meeting called to do?

Speak Truth

Speak truth to ourselves about how we contribute to racism – face the facts.

Model

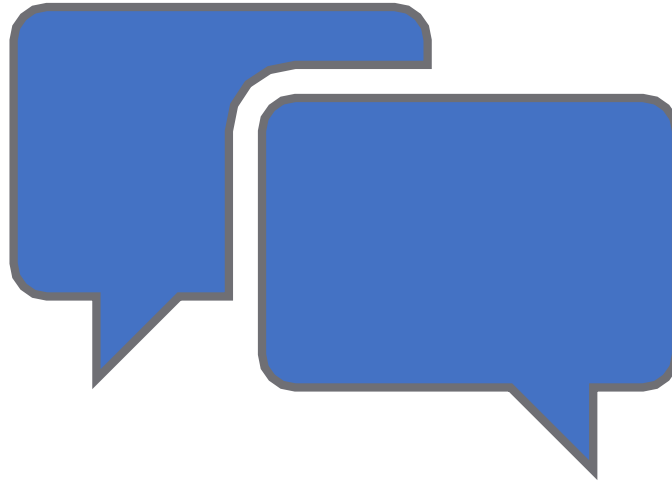
Model the behavior that we want anti-racists to exhibit.

Worship

Pursue anti-racism in a worshipful, open state of mind, so that we may be open to the Spirit.

Love

Never forget the power of love.



Let us pause for questions and comments.

Reflections

- There is a difference between knowledge and knowing.
 - ✓ Knowledge is a collection of facts or information acquired from external sources.
 - ✓ Knowing on the other hand is achieving a deep understanding of something based on experience (personal or vicarious).
 - Ideally, knowledge will be transformed into knowing, and knowing will be used to create more knowledge and a deeper knowing.
 - “Knowing” is internal and often results in a change in the way we think and behave – it changes the way we live.
- Strive to move from social justice being something to learn more about to its being something to be lived.

Knowledge

While preparing this presentation, I was reminded of a few years ago when I walked through what is called a “Slave Castle” in Ghana. During the last part of the tour of this holding place for enslaved people, I passed through the “door of no return,” where some of my ancestors may have been forced to walk to the waiting vessels off the shore of Ghana and taken to the Americas. Once outside, I left the group of people who had passed through the horrifying building with me and walked down to the edge of the water where the vessels that may have transported some of my ancestors probably had been docked. When I looked back, I saw that many of my fellow sightseers (people of various ethnocultural backgrounds, genders, etc.) were standing in a group near the building weeping and trying to console one another.

Knowing

Everything that I experienced in that setting, and many since then, say to me that as devastating as that experience was for my fellow travelers, they may well have gained knowledge, but that trauma alone may not have led to their “knowing.” I imagine that the experience was something to talk about with friends and family, but I wondered whether it led to internalizing the need to ensure that such cruelty toward one's fellow human beings should not be allowed to recur or to be perpetrated in other forms (such as structural racism) in any society.

Knowing creating more knowledge

Did the participants engage in a moment of intellectual stimulation but stay at a level of thought without any “heart engagement” – tears and hugs notwithstanding? Was the experience powerful enough for them to change the way they saw the world thereafter and the way that they lived in the world?

As for me, I think I organically began to view the world and to live my life differently following that experience. This is what I think Layla Saad was trying to help others achieve in her initiative and book, *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*. That is, she seeks to help people, categorized as white, understand actions and attitudes they can adopt, with effort, to combat racism.

Epilogue

As I stood on the shores of Ghana, I was sure that I could hear my ancestors whispering “Don’t give up the struggle and don’t give in to those who think they have done all they can do. You may not be able to do much but keep trying to do whatever you can wherever you are.” I have reflected on that moment often as it changed my view of the world – humans’ inhumanity to humans – as on that day my commitment intensified to make a difference whenever and wherever I can.

A Friend once told me that I give people a headache, but he found it important and enlightening to listen carefully to what I had to say. While I did not tell him at the time, I say to you today “blame it on my ancestors.”

Making this presentation today is but one way that I am trying to do whatever I can in the struggle to help others to “know.”

Thank you

Thank you for inviting me to share my thoughts with you today!

I invite you to join me in making a difference whenever and wherever you can.



Let us end with questions and comments.

Resources

- Kendi, Ibram X. (2019). *How to be an Antiracist*. New York: Penguin Random House, LLC.
- Kivel, Paul. (2017). *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*. British Columbia, Canada: New Society Publishers.
- Okun, Tema. *White Supremacy Culture*. www.dismantlingracism.org
- Saad, Layla. (2020). *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks.