

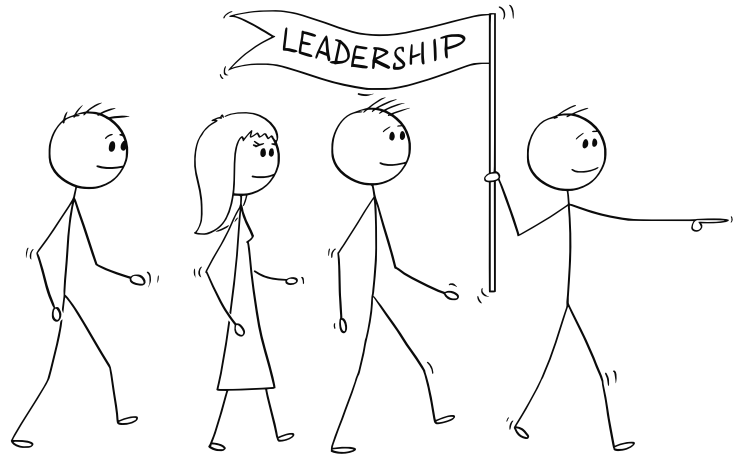


LET'S TALK

**WHITE
SUPREMACY**



"Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future, and renders the present inaccessible." – Maya Angelou



White supremacy or the belief that white people are superior, and therefore should lead and dominate society is not new. This belief still exists in society and has simply evolved. In fact, being American is often synonymous with whiteness.

Prejudice has become so ingrained that white Americans may operate with attitudes and actions that harm the Black community and not even be aware of it. This is often referred to as internalized or inner racism. This harm often comes in the form of constraints determined by the white majority.

America is a nation that takes pride in its motto "land of the free and home of the brave". In the same breath, our leaders have demanded whites-only accommodations and our citizens have reinforced it both actively and passively.

White America's historical xenophobia may have been left out of textbooks, but it is recorded in legislation. Though our past is shrouded in the fear and hatred of Black people, our future can be different if we actively make it so.

A Baseline Argument

A baseline argument that white supremacists often point out is that slavery has ended and we have moved past whites-only service counters. So what's the problem?

In reality, white supremacy and racism did not disappear or get resolved. Instead, it has evolved into what we know today as institutionalized racism, also known as systemic racism. This means there is a system of practices and patterns in society that have become normal but are in fact, racist. Institutionalized racism and inner racism are supporting pillars in the structures that make up our society.

Calling others out for conformity to systemic racism sometimes leads to gaslighting. Gaslighting happens when someone refuses to take responsibility or acknowledge racism by diverting attention or emotionally manipulating the victim.

Gaslighting may sound like this:

"Don't pull the race card! Everything is not about race."

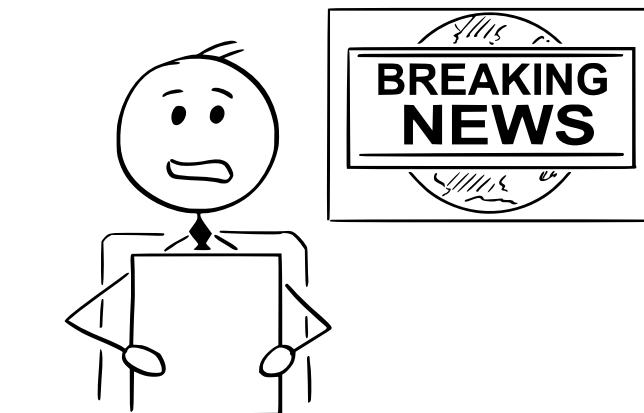
"My best friend is Black. She disagrees with you."

"I'm sorry if that sounded racist. You clearly can't take a joke."

Entertainment

"The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses." --Malcom X

The media plays a central role in how a society perceives the world. Since the beginning of broadcast news and cable, America's narrative has been white-centric. Since the beginning of America as we know it, white supremacy has been the dominant force.



An early example of racism in the American media is the post-Civil War minstrel shows. White people used blackface during these shows meaning they painted their faces with black paint to portray Black people in an exaggerated, stereotypical, and racist way.

Instead of being able to tell our own stories, the narrative of Black people was at the mercy of white people's misinterpretation. Blackness was displayed as a caricature and not a culture of brilliant-minded, innovative, and resilient people.

Negative stereotypes such as 'Black people are lazy' and 'Black people are dangerous' were played out through these shows. The idea that Black people are here to serve at the pleasure of white people was also reinforced. These stereotypes are still widely accepted and repeated today.

Fast forward to today, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) are still underrepresented and misrepresented in the media.

This comes in the form of dehumanizing Black bodies in the news, hiring white actresses to tell our stories, and paying Black people (especially women) at the lowest level for our stories, perspectives, and insights.

So why is it harmful when Black folks don't tell our own stories? It reinforces white supremacy.

White supremacy strips Black people of our right to tell our stories from our point of view. Therefore, our stories are filtered through a white lens that must deem them palpable before they are seen as valuable or the truth. As a result, "the truth" is often determined by the person causing the harm or someone who looks like the person causing harm and not the people experiencing the harm.

When Black people don't tell our stories from our perspective, the lens through which society perceives us gets distorted.

It is important to understand that the media does more than entertain. It's the source of our news and reality. It influences how we make decisions, see ourselves, and see others.

Government

The Three-Fifths Compromise and Jim Crow laws are two well-known examples of prejudicial legislation. Today, the prison system is a direct reflection of how racist laws have impacted Black people and communities of color.

According to The Sentencing Project, in 2016, African Americans and Latinos made up 57% of the adults in prison. However, these two groups of people only make up 29% of the entire nation's population. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color are more likely to be arrested and jailed than White people. BIPOC are also given lengthier sentences than white folks who commit the same crimes.

Education

Let's talk about opportunity hoarding. This happens when one group of people restricts access to resources that are in short supply. Opportunity hoarders have a leg up because of their resources and they want to keep it that way. This form of White supremacy is easily seen in America's education system.

Brown v. The Board of Education was supposed to achieve equitable education for all. Yet, more than 60 years later, the education system is still biased and unforgiving to minority students.

Today, private schools and top-rated schools around the nation are not easily accessible to Black people. Black and Brown students are underrepresented in academically rigorous programs. Black and Brown students are more likely to have under-qualified teachers with no or little experience and poor records for improving student test scores.

On top of this, Black and Brown students are approximately four times more likely to be suspended and twice as likely as white students to be expelled for the same misdeeds.

These issues continue to create an opportunity gap between students of color and their white peers. This opportunity gap reinforces white supremacy.

Employment

Are you missing \$23,653 a year? The National Women's Law Center calculates this amount as the current wage gap for Black women. The pay gap exists for Black women at every level of education and hits hardest those with the most education.

Historically, racism has been cleverly disguised as government-supported programs. After the California Gold Rush, Chinese immigrants began to look for other work. They were met with xenophobia and legislation that restricted them from voting and buying property, similar to the way that Jim Crow Laws restricted Black people.

Being exiled from the housing and employment market forced Chinese immigrants to become self-sufficient in the same way Black people were inclined to build cities within a city such as Black Wall Street. Today, we know these areas as Chinatown and "the hood" respectfully.

Housing & Land

"When the missionaries came to Africa, they had the Bible and we had the land. And then they said, 'Let us pray'. But when the prayer was over, and we opened our eyes, we found that we had the Bible and they had the land!" --Desmond Tutu

In 1845, the idea known as *manifest destiny* was on the rise. White people believed that God had given them the divine right and authority to expand their territory and white supremacy across the globe.

They flooded societies on a journey to kill, steal, destroy, displace, and enslaved to obtain and cultivate the land.

Then and now, owning your own home, land or being able to afford rental housing is essential to the process of building wealth. Throughout America's history, Black people have been refused affordable housing, excluded from safe and flourishing neighborhoods, and systematically removed from the wealthiest areas in the country.

For instance, in the 1850s, legislators in New York used eminent domain to displace thousands of people. This decimated the thriving, black community located smack dab in Manhattan. What was the land cleared for? Central Park!

During the first World War, many Black people migrated from the South to the North. They did not get a welcoming party. Instead, White people used violence and created laws to force Black people to live in certain areas of town. These areas lacked resources and the support of the neighboring cities.

Today, White supremacy in the housing sector comes in the form of gentrification, redlining, and devaluing properties owned by Black people.

The term redlining was introduced by sociologist John McKnight in the 1960s. He used it to describe the way lenders and the federal government would draw red lines on the map to show where they refused to invest.

These areas were often the neighborhoods of Black people. Banks denied home loans to Black families, even if they were considered middle or upper class. Over time, the homes in the redlined neighborhoods were worth much less, and the disparity has continued to grow.

In 2020, researchers from the National Community Reinvestment Coalition found that redlining has led to reduced minority wealth and even a lower life expectancy.

Creating A New Norm

Awareness → Education

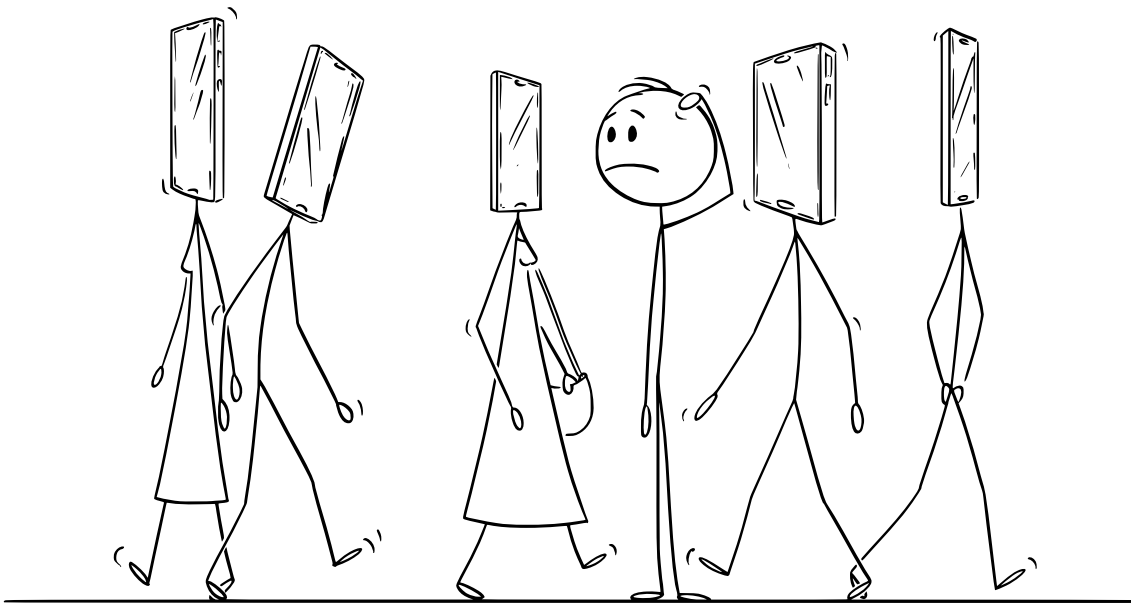
Claiming that you cannot take action because you are still learning is a cop-out. Doing so asks Black people to do the work of dismantling white supremacy. Read, view, and analyze information from Black people. Hear our stories, consider our solutions, and look beyond white fragility.

Education → Personal action

It's within human nature to deflect when we get challenged. There will be a temptation to self-preserve and play defeated. Don't let yourself off the hook. Be willing to do the hard work of challenging your own mindset and actions, before pointing fingers.

Personal Action → Advocacy & Reform

After you've checked yourself, move forward to advocacy. Be willing to advocate for Black people, even if there are no Black folks within a hundred miles. If you notice a problem in how Black people are being represented in your sphere of life, make some noise about it until change comes.



ACTIONS

that inspire change

RESEARCH

Google what are the effects of redlining.

WATCH

The Path to Building an Anti-Racist Workplace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnKGa38OZ10>

DISCUSS

How are you or will you actively and intentionally make room for Black people in your life, community, and business / workplace?

READ

Black Wall Street: The African American Haven That Burned and Then Rose From the Ashes

<https://www.theringer.com/2018/6/28/17511818/black-wall-street-oklahoma-greenwood-destruction-tulsa>

REFLECT

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