

BLM Journey Group 6/25 Discussion
White Fragility + Explained: The Racial Wealth Gap

12:00 - 12:05pm

INTRO & GROUND RULES

- Focus on yourself
 - There is *absolutely* and *necessarily* a need for structural, legal, and political change in this country to create a more just society - while those discussions are valid, they are not for this group today.
 - We are focusing on us and what we can immediately control.
- The second ground rule is to not point fingers and make critical statements of groups you don't belong to
 - Statistically speaking, we have to have people in this group who voted for Trump and others who didn't, democrats and republicans, liberals and conservatives, all who have different reasons and priorities behind their political affiliations, and we need to be cognizant of that
 - Making broad critical generalizations just serves to further exacerbate the polarization that already exists in the US
 - Instead, let's focus on "I" statements such as:
 - When I hear people criticize Colin Kaepernick for kneeling, I get angry, because I'm like how are we supposed to protest? Isn't this just a backdoor way of silencing our voices?
 - When I hear people talk about defunding the police, I feel terrified for my personal security and for the security of the country
 - Those statements open up the dialogue in a unique way that allows others to respond without defensiveness
- The third ground rule is simply to respect what's said in this group
 - If someone says something you think is totally wack, that's fine, but don't go outside this group talking about how stupid you think it was. Address it here.
 - All that does is break trust and erode what this group is about

12:05 - 12:35pm: White Fragility

- General questions:
 - What topic did you find most eye-opening from the reading?
 - In what ways did you feel the most challenged from the content?
 - Are there any points from the book you find difficult to accept?
 - **How have the topics discussed impacted our society?**
- Potential Topics (if people aren't willing to talk)
 - **White Fragility definition:** "the result of the reduced psychosocial stamina that racial insulation inculcates."
 - **Impact versus intent:** moving away from "I didn't mean that to be racist or offensive" and towards "if it hurts others then it matters to me." E.g. How interrupting others, and how it differs when we do it across race. "When we do it across race, we bring our histories with us."
 - **Racism in an individualist society:** We are conditioned to think of racism in terms of what we do in particular, not of a system that's larger than ourselves. What's the problem with just striving to not be racist ourselves?
 - **The problem with the good - bad binary,** the idea that we're either racist or we're not. She really attacks that in this book. What does she suggest instead?
 - **White Supremacy:** "White history is the norm for history." Whiteness is lifted up as the ideal. After reading this where have you seen this show up around you?
 - "The ubiquitous socializing power of white supremacy cannot be avoided. The messages circulate 24-7 and have little or nothing to do with intentions, awareness, or agreement. Entering the conversation with this understanding is freeing because it allows us to focus on how--rather than if--our racism is manifest."

- **White Identity / The creation of the white race**
 - "There was no concept of race or a white race before the need to justify the enslavement of Africans....One concept could not exist without the other...In this sense, whites need black people; blackness is essential to the creation of white society."
 - "White identity is inherently racist; white people do not exist outside the system of white supremacy. This does not mean we should stop identifying as white and start claiming only to be Italian or Irish. To do so is to deny the reality of racism in the here and now, and this denial would simply be color-blind racism. Rather, I strive to be "less white", that is, less racially oppressive...to be less white is to be open to, interested in, and compassionate towards the racial realities of people of color....Ultimately, I strive for a less white identity for my own liberation and sense of justice, not to save people of color."
- **Aversive racism:** examples: paying lip service to not being racist, yet using code-language to talk negatively about blacks; rationalizing segregation as unfortunate but necessary to have access to "good schools," etc.
- **Romanticizing the past:** is it problematic? When white people think about the past in America, we tend to get nostalgic, whereas for people of color the past was even worse than the present. How does this change how we view/talk about the past?

12:35 - 12:50pm: Racial Wealth Gap

- The immediate retraction of housing rights of black people post-civil war
- What were the impacts of red-lining and limited access to housing? What were the long-term consequences of these restrictions?
- Discuss generational wealth and its ability to grow over time

12:50 - 12:57pm: Breakouts

- What is the most significant takeaway for you personally from this discussion, and how does it change the way you think or live?

12:57 - 1pm: Wrap-up

- Preview content that is lined up next
- Offer ways to connect after the discussion to keep the conversation going