Opportunities for White People in the Fight for Racial Justice
Moving from Actor → Ally → Accomplice

The chart below, very much a work in progress, has been developed to support White people to act for racial justice. It draws from ideas and resources developed mostly by Black, Brown and People of Color, and has been edited by Black, Brown, and People of Color. I recognize that categorizing actions under the labels of Actor, Ally, and Accomplice is an oversimplification, but hopefully this chart challenges all of us White folks to go outside of our comfort zones, take some bigger risks, and make some more significant sacrifices because this is what we’ve been asked to do by those most impacted by racism, colonialism, patriarchy, white supremacy, xenophobia, and hyper-capitalism. I believe that for real change to occur, we must confront and challenge all people, policies, systems, etc., that maintain privileges and power for White people.

Feedback: jonathan.osler@gmail.com or anonymously here.

STEP 1:
Identify the racial justice organizations in your area. Here are two lists of organizations (Black Led Racial Justice Organizations & A Partial Map of Black-Led Black Liberation Organizing) mostly led by “directly impacted” individuals (people who are most impacted by racist, xenophobic, and violent people/policies) and with missions to directly challenge institutionalized racism and White supremacy.

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1 When Malcolm X was asked how white people could be allies and accomplices with Black people in 1964, he responded: “By visibly hovering near us, they are ‘proving’ that they are ‘with us.’ But the hard truth is this isn’t helping to solve America’s racist problem. The Negroes aren’t the racists. Where the really sincere white people have got to do their ‘proving’ of themselves is not among the black victims, but out on the battle lines of where America’s racism really is — and that’s in their home communities; America’s racism is among their own fellow whites. That’s where sincere whites who really mean to accomplish something have got to work.”

2 Thank you also to Bree Picower, Lauren Morse, Maureen Benson, Tanya Friedman, and other White people for their input and feedback.
**STEP 2:**
Understand the distinction between Actors, Allies, and Accomplices.

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<td>The actions of an Actor do not disrupt the status quo, much the same as a spectator at a game, both have only a nominal effect in shifting an overall outcome. Such systems are challenged when actors shift or couple their actions with those from Allies and/or Accomplices. The actions of an Actor do not explicitly name or challenge the pillars of White supremacy which is necessary for meaningful progress towards racial justice. There is an excellent quote by Lilla Watson on need for Actors to shift to Accomplices: “If you have come here to help me, you’re wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”</td>
<td>Ally is typically considered a verb - one needs to act as an ally, and can not bestow this title to themselves. The actions of an Ally have greater likelihood to challenge institutionalized racism, and White supremacy. An Ally is like a disrupter and educator in spaces dominated by Whiteness. An Ally might find themselves at a social gathering in which something inappropriate is being talked about. Instead of allowing that space to incubate Whiteness, the Ally wisely disrupts the conversation, and takes the opportunity to educate those present. Being an Ally is not an invitation to be in Black and Brown spaces to gain brownie points, lead, take over, or explain. Keep in mind that as White people, whether as an Actor, Ally or Accomplice, we are still part of the ‘oppressor class’. This means we have to be very creative in flipping our privilege to help Black, Brown and Indigenous peoples. Allies constantly educate themselves, and do not take breaks. Franchesca Ramsey’s Video: <a href="#">5 Ways of Being an Ally</a></td>
<td>The actions of an Accomplice are meant to directly challenge institutionalized racism, colonization, and White supremacy by blocking or impeding racist people, policies, and structures. Realizing that our freedoms and liberations are bound together, retreat or withdrawal in the face of oppressive structures is not an option. Accomplices’ actions are informed by, directed and often coordinated with leaders who are Black, Brown First Nations/Indigenous Peoples, and/or People of Color. Accomplices actively listen with respect, and understand that oppressed people are not monolithic in their tactics and beliefs. Accomplices aren’t motivated by personal guilt or shame. Accomplices build trust through consent and being accountable - this means not acting in isolation where there is no accountability.</td>
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STEP 3:
Commit to taking 3 actions in the next month, and share these with a trusted friend, colleague, or family member in order to increase your accountability to follow through on your commitment. Can you take at least one action in the next two weeks in the Ally or Accomplice category?

Where Do You Want To Start?

- Your Protesting
- Your Money
- Your White Communities
- Your Advocacy
- Your Job
- Your Time / Volunteering
- Your Vote / Electoral Politics
- Interrupting Violence/Intimidation
- Your Self-Education
- Your Children
- Your Art
- Your Home
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| Attend marches, vigils that are “comfortable” and perhaps even fun. Includes most events led by White people. | Organize protests that interrupt “business as usual” and force other white people to confront / recognize the comfort we live with. If these actions are not forcing other White people to experience some discomfort, they are comparable to those in the Actor category. The exception could be getting other White people who normally don’t attend such events to show up for anything. | Engage in or support civil disobedience organized by Black People and People of Color. One of the most important things that can be done as an Ally and Accomplice is be cautious on how you take up space at direct actions and protests. Ask yourself these series of questions before and while attending such events:  
  - Am I following what the leadership is asking of me?  
  - Am I directing media to designated Black, Brown or Indigenous People?  
  - Am I being cautious not to control or criticize the actions of Black, Brown, or Indigenous Peoples?  
  - Am I checking other White People for not being good accomplices? |

Protesting

Check out [The Ruckus Society](#) to learn a lot more about Direct Action and Civil Disobedience.

White anti-racist organizers at the [Catalyst Project](#) will keep you educated and updated with lots of opportunities for action.
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<td><strong>$</strong></td>
<td>Donate to political candidates or organizations that don’t have an explicit racial justice mission or that are not led by directly impacted individuals.</td>
<td>Raise funds and bundle money for organizations with an explicit racial justice mission, led by directly impacted individuals. Raise money publicly, but donate more silently, as this is not for boosting your ego.</td>
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<td><strong>Your Money</strong></td>
<td>Donate money explicitly to organizations with an explicit racial justice mission, led by directly impacted individuals. Also donate to bail funds for Black, Brown and Indigenous activists. Use your economic capital to support businesses owned by people of Color. Boycott companies owned by or working with Trump and other White supremacists. Be public (ex. on social media) about your actions to encourage other White people to join you to amplify your impact. Educate yourself on issues such as reparations, returning stolen land, and Black, Brown and Indigenous Labor and their relationship to capitalism. Use this as a lens to help guide your actions involving money.</td>
<td>Find ways of using your privilege and access to capital and funnel that to Black, Brown, and Indigenous grassroots organizations and peoples.</td>
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<td><strong>Your White Communities</strong></td>
<td>Reach out to other White people in your life (family members, old friends, distant social media connections) to engage them in conversations about racism, Whiteness, etc. Bonus points for seeking out and engaging (White) Trump voters in your personal networks.</td>
<td>Coordinate (and pay for) organizations that conduct anti-racism trainings to facilitate their workshops within your school, church/synagogue, neighborhood, workplace. Purposefully disrupt White spaces, meaning, create discomfort in places where other White people and Whiteness would otherwise exist in comfort. White community is a support pillar of White supremacy.</td>
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<td>Organize and engage White friends, family members, neighbors to take group / collective action (actions that are in the Ally or Accomplice category) to amplify your impact. Participate in organizations that engage White people in the struggle to advance racial justice (like <a href="https://www.showingup.org/">SURJ - Showing Up for Racial Justice</a>).</td>
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| Make phone calls and send emails (at the city/state level, with school districts, etc.) advocating on behalf of policies being put forth by racial justice organizations.  
  - *We're His Problem Now* - calling sheet guide | Attend meetings, hearings, and other public events to advocate in person on behalf of policies being put forth by racial justice organizations. | Diversify your social media. Follow radical/progressive Black, Brown, Indigenous figureheads and leaders in the movement. Then do your best to share and amplify their voice with your white social circles. This is great way to culture shift ideas, art, and media.  
  In quoting Amanda Gelender: “*Amplifying voices of color to your network is an important part of solidarity work. We are not the experts on race, but we have an opportunity to learn from so many experts and boost their influence.*” |
| Your Advocacy | | |
| Any job that doesn’t somehow challenge institutionalized racism. | A job that is service-oriented towards helping people from marginalized backgrounds.  
  Be extremely cautious of these jobs, because they can easily have very negative impacts on the communities they espouse to serve. Too many organizations slip into a dominant role, and only end up enabling/harming disenfranchised communities instead of alleviating the oppressive conditions that prevent the community from empowering themselves.  
  Use your job position to help Black, Brown, and Indigenous People. Ex: purposefully seek out Black and Brown people to interview for jobs, and use Black caterers, or Indigenous speakers. | A job that involves organizing internally and externally to fight against institutionalized racism and white supremacy and/or that supports these efforts.  
  In other words, your work should focus on alleviating the oppressive conditions that prevent disenfranchised communities from empowering themselves.  
  The reality is ANY job you already have or choose to apply for, you can use your position to become a collaborator with Black, Brown and Indigenous Peoples; and thus a traitor to White supremacy. |
<p>| Your Job | | |</p>
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<td>Volunteer at a service-oriented organization (tutoring, meal delivery, collecting canned goods, clothing drives)</td>
<td>Volunteer at a local racial justice-focused organization (<a href="#">see resources here</a>)</td>
<td>Join an organization with an explicit aim of naming and disrupting racial injustice</td>
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<td>Vote for Democrats. Exception could be voting for candidates of color in elections where a White person and a person of Color are running for the same position from the same political party.</td>
<td>Donate to campaigns of progressive people of Color running for political offices. Donate to campaigns of local progressive politicians in other cities/States who are trying to unseat incumbent Republicans/conservatives.</td>
<td>Actively fundraise for and campaign on behalf of progressive/radical politicians (especially non-White people), including those running in local elections (school boards, transportation agencies, housing authorities, city councils). Volunteer with and fundraise for organizations led by directly impacted individuals to support voter registration efforts within their communities. Don’t tell Black, Brown and Indigenous People how or whom to vote for. Use your energy and resources to organize White communities to support progressive/radical politicians and policies.</td>
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<td><strong>Confronting Violence, Intimidation, and Microaggressions</strong>&lt;br&gt;Use proximity (stand close and watch) when you observe any form of intimidation, harassment, or violence against a person of Color by another white person or police officer.</td>
<td><strong>Use proximity (stand close and watch) when you observe any form of intimidation, harassment, or violence against a person of Color by another white person or police officer.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Film any such confrontations.&lt;br&gt;Shout as a way to try to stop such a confrontation.&lt;br&gt;Engage White people in conversation about their actions (perhaps focusing on intent v. impact) when you observe or hear about racialized microaggressions.</td>
<td><strong>Physically intervene in such confrontations.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Here’s how to respond if you see a Hijab getting pulled off.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Here’s another illustrated guide for directly challenging/interrupting Islamophobia.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Your Children</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ensure that the reading material you provide for your children explicitly addresses issues of justice and equity. Expose children to books, movies, and TV that feature people of Color as protagonists and heroes. Enroll in public, district-run schools, not private or charter schools.</td>
<td>1) Take your young (age 0-16) children to events where adults (people of Color and other white people) are speaking about racism, violence against communities of Color, white supremacy, etc.&lt;br&gt;2) Talk with your children about these issues explicitly, including where they/you fit into these systems including the privileges they occupy.&lt;br&gt;2) Organizing and educating other people’s children to develop critical consciousness (like a great teacher might do)</td>
<td>Take your children to events, or organize events, where facilitators explicitly work with kids to explore intersection between race, power, privilege, etc.</td>
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| Read, watch films, attend events, to gain greater knowledge of white privilege, white supremacy, institutionalized racism, the prison industrial complex, etc. Study and deal with your white guilt and white fragility.  
  - Understanding Systemic Anti-Black Racism in the United States: A Reference List for #BlackLivesMatter - look especially for a section called “Resources for White People”  
  - Decentering Whiteness  
  - Robyn Diangelo (writes about white fragility).  
  Read/follow Black and people of Color-led organizations, journalists, authors (including on social media).  
  - “Like” these pages on Facebook  
  - Black Lives Matter Syllabus  
  - James Baldwin, *Black on White: Black Writers on what it Means to be White.*  
  Join Facebook groups that focus on White allyship to racial justice causes.  
  - White & POC Allies Against White Supremacy  
  - Black Lives Matter | Take action beyond your own learning by engaging with other White people. Start conversations and share your learning with other white people in your life, especially those you are closest to (family members, children, neighbors, colleagues). Go to workshops and trainings (see resources). | Organize other white people to study these issues together, attend events as a group, invite speakers to meet with your group.  
  Workshops & Trainings  
  Whites Confronting Racism Training  
  People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond  
  White Privilege Conference  
  Facing Race Conference  
  6 Action Items for White People in the Workplace & Beyond |
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<td><strong>Your Art</strong></td>
<td>Consume (enjoy, purchase) art, in all forms, produced by non-white people. Could include attending performances, choosing specific movies and documentaries, etc. (See Self-Education above).</td>
<td>Create visual art, poetry, films, websites, social media campaigns, etc., that address what you see as the role for white people in struggles for racial justice.</td>
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<td><strong>Your Home</strong></td>
<td>Put up signs in your windows, on your lawn, inside, like a Black Lives Matter poster.</td>
<td>Make your home available to organizers who need safe, accessible, welcoming spaces to meet, plan actions, etc.</td>
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Additional Facebook pages to “Like” that are written/edited by Black, Brown and Indigenous people and have a focus on racial justice:

- Colorlines
- ColorOfChange.org
- For Harriet
- The BlackOut Collective
- Everyday Feminism
- Urban Cusp
- Black Girl Dangerous
- Darkmatter
- HuffPost Black Voices
- Black Lives Matter Bay Area
- Michelle Alexander
- Brittney C Cooper, Ph.D.
- Crunk Feminist Collective
- Rahiel Tesfamariam
- The Root
- Trans Women of Color Collective of Greater New York
- Audre Lorde Project
- Black Girls Code

(Thanks to https://medium.com/@agelender/6-action-items-for-white-people-in-the-workplace-beyond-ecf87271e89a#.zns8p706d for the sources)
White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack
Peggy McIntosh

"I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group"

Through work to bring materials from women's studies into the rest of the curriculum, I have often noticed men's unwillingness to grant that they are overprivileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. They may say they will work to women's statues, in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can't or won't support the idea of lessening men's. Denials that amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages that men gain from women's disadvantages. These denials protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened, or ended.

Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that, since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there are most likely a phenomenon, I realized that, since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there was most likely a phenomenon of white privilege that was similarly denied and protected. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.

I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is like to have white privilege. I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks.

Describing white privilege makes one newly accountable. As we in women's studies work to reveal male privilege and ask men to give up some of their power, so one who writes about having white privilege must ask, "having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?"

After I realized the extent to which men work from a base of unacknowledged privilege, I understood that much of their oppressiveness was unconscious. Then I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive. I began to understand why we are just seen as oppressive, even when we don't see ourselves that way. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence.

My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. My schooling followed the pattern my colleague Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work that will allow "them" to be more like "us."

Peggy McIntosh is associate director of the Wellesley Collage Center for Research on Women. This essay is excerpted from Working Paper 189, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies" (1988), by Peggy McIntosh; available for $4.00 from the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley MA 02181
The working paper contains a longer list of privileges. This excerpted essay is reprinted from the Winter 1990 issue of Independent School.
Daily effects of white privilege

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions that I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographic location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can tell, my African American coworkers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place and time of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.

2. I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.

3. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.

4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.

5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.

6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.

7. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.

8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.

9. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.

10. I can be pretty sure of having my voice heard in a group in which I am the only member of my race.

11. I can be casual about whether or not to listen to another person's voice in a group in which s/he is the only member of his/her race.

12. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.

13. Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.

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14. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.

15. I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.

16. I can be pretty sure that my children's teachers and employers will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others' attitudes toward their race.

17. I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color.

18. I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty or the illiteracy of my race.

19. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.

20. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.

21. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

22. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.

23. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.

24. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to the "person in charge", I will be facing a person of my race.

25. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.

26. I can easily buy posters, post-cards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys and children's magazines featuring people of my race.

27. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance or feared.

28. I can be pretty sure that an argument with a colleague of another race is more likely to jeopardize her/his chances for advancement than to jeopardize mine.

29. I can be pretty sure that if I argue for the promotion of a person of another race, or a program centering on race, this is not likely to cost me heavily within my present setting, even if my colleagues disagree with me.

30. If I declare there is a racial issue at hand, or there isn't a racial issue at hand, my race will lend me more credibility for either position than a person of color will have.
31. I can choose to ignore developments in minority writing and minority activist programs, or disparage them, or learn from them, but in any case, I can find ways to be more or less protected from negative consequences of any of these choices.

32. My culture gives me little fear about ignoring the perspectives and powers of people of other races.

33. I am not made acutely aware that my shape, bearing or body odor will be taken as a reflection on my race.

34. I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking.

35. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having my co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of my race.

36. If my day, week or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it had racial overtones.

37. I can be pretty sure of finding people who would be willing to talk with me and advise me about my next steps, professionally.

38. I can think over many options, social, political, imaginative or professional, without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.

39. I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race.

40. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.

41. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.

42. I can arrange my activities so that I will never have to experience feelings of rejection owing to my race.

43. If I have low credibility as a leader I can be sure that my race is not the problem.

44. I can easily find academic courses and institutions which give attention only to people of my race.

45. I can expect figurative language and imagery in all of the arts to testify to experiences of my race.

46. I can chose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.

47. I can travel alone or with my spouse without expecting embarrassment or hostility in those who deal with us.

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48. I have no difficulty finding neighborhoods where people approve of our household.

49. My children are given texts and classes which implicitly support our kind of family unit and do not turn them against my choice of domestic partnership.

50. I will feel welcomed and "normal" in the usual walks of public life, institutional and social.

**Elusive and fugitive**

I repeatedly forgot each of the realizations on this list until I wrote it down. For me white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own.

In unpacking this invisible knapsack of white privilege, I have listed conditions of daily experience that I once took for granted. Nor did I think of any of these perquisites as bad for the holder. I now think that we need a more finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege, for some of these varieties are only what one would want for everyone in a just society, and others give license to be ignorant, oblivious, arrogant, and destructive.

I see a pattern running through the matrix of white privilege, a patter of assumptions that were passed on to me as a white person. There was one main piece of cultural turf; it was my own turn, and I was among those who could control the turf. My skin color was an asset for any move I was educated to want to make. I could think of myself as belonging in major ways and of making social systems work for me. I could freely disparage, fear, neglect, or be oblivious to anything outside of the dominant cultural forms. Being of the main culture, I could also criticize it fairly freely.

In proportion as my racial group was being made confident, comfortable, and oblivious, other groups were likely being made unconfident, uncomfortable, and alienated. Whiteness protected me from many kinds of hostility, distress, and violence, which I was being subtly trained to visit, in turn, upon people of color.

For this reason, the word "privilege" now seems to me misleading. We usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned or conferred by birth or luck. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work systematically to over empower certain groups. Such privilege simply confers dominance because of one's race or sex.

**Earned strength, unearned power**

I want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you, or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society. Others, like the privilege to ignore less powerful people, distort the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored groups.

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We might at least start by distinguishing between positive advantages, which we can work to spread, and negative types of advantage, which unless rejected will always reinforce our present hierarchies. For example, the feeling that one belongs within the human circle, as Native Americans say, should not be seen as privilege for a few. Ideally it is an unearned entitlement. At present, since only a few have it, it is an unearned advantage for them. This paper results from a process of coming to see that some of the power that I originally say as attendant on being a human being in the United States consisted in unearned advantage and conferred dominance.

I have met very few men who truly distressed about systemic, unearned male advantage and conferred dominance. And so one question for me and others like me is whether we will be like them, or whether we will get truly distressed, even outraged, about unearned race advantage and conferred dominance, and, if so, what we will do to lessen them. In any case, we need to do more work in identifying how they actually affect our daily lives. Many, perhaps most, of our white students in the United States think that racism doesn't affect them because they are not people of color; they do not see "whiteness" as a racial identity. In addition, since race and sex are not the only advantaging systems at work, we need similarly to examine the daily experience of having age advantage, or ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.

Difficulties and angers surrounding the task of finding parallels are many. Since racism, sexism, and heterosexism are not the same, the advantages associated with them should not be seen as the same. In addition, it is hard to disentangle aspects of unearned advantage that rest more on social class, economic class, race, religion, sex, and ethnic identity that on other factors. Still, all of the oppressions are interlocking, as the members of the Combahee River Collective pointed out in their "Black Feminist Statement" of 1977.

One factor seems clear about all of the interlocking oppressions. They take both active forms, which we can see, and embedded forms, which as a member of the dominant groups one is taught not to see. In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth.

Disapproving of the system won't be enough to change them. I was taught to think that racism could end if white individuals changed their attitude. But a "white" skin in the United States opens many doors for whites whether or not we approve of the way dominance has been conferred on us. Individual acts can palliate but cannot end, these problems.

To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these subject taboo. Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist.

It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculturated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that
democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people props up those in power and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already.

Although systemic change takes many decades, there are pressing questions for me and, I imagine, for some others like me if we raise our daily consciousness on the perquisites of being light-skinned. What will we do with such knowledge? As we know from watching men, it is an open question whether we will choose to use unearned advantage, and whether we will use any of our arbitrarily awarded power to try to reconstruct power systems on a broader base.

*Peggy McIntosh is associate director of the Wellesley Collage Center for Research on Women. This essay is excerpted from Working Paper 189. "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies" (1988), by Peggy McIntosh; available for $4.00 from the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley MA 02181 The working paper contains a longer list of privileges. This excerpted essay is reprinted from the Winter 1990 issue of Independent School.*
19 Books About White Supremacy & How To Combat It

By K.W. COLYARD
4 weeks ago

The United States is in the midst of a domestic terrorism crisis. I've picked out 19 must-read books about white supremacy and white nationalism, which should help you understand why racist violence is such a huge domestic threat, and how to combat it.

Although the U.S. was founded upon, and has been governed by, the ideals of white supremacy, white nationalists are a threat to life in this country. In the aftermath of the weekend mass shootings in El Paso, TX and Dayton, Ohio, white nationalists took to social media to laud the El Paso terrorist as a "saint," and to promote his ideas and actions. On its Hatewatch blog, the Southern Poverty Law Center reported that some were praising the El Paso attack as an act of "accelerationism" — or "the belief among
some far-right extremists that committing acts of terrorism will cause society to collapse," providing the "opportunit[y] to build a country for only white, non-Jews."

Hate crimes rose nine percent over the last year, according to the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism, and researchers at the University of North Texas found that "counties that had hosted a 2016 Trump campaign rally saw a 226 percent increase in reported hate crimes over comparable counties that did not host such a rally." The rise of the so-called Trump Effect has been charted by numerous groups, including America's Voice. Popular opinion holds the White House's rhetoric responsible for white supremacist attacks like the one in El Paso. It's time to get educated and take action.

'The History of White People' by Nell Irvin Painter

If you've ever heard the argument that "the Irish were slaves, too," or had to endure complaints of "historical inaccuracy" over the inclusion of a nonwhite person in a work of fiction, this is the book you're going to want to read. In The History of White People, Nell Irvin Painter traces the history of racial concepts from ancient tribalism to modern-day whiteness, which came to be defined through exclusion in the 19th and 20th centuries. Click here to buy.

'White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide' by Carol Anderson

A National Book Critics Circle Award winner, Carol Anderson's White Rage was composed in the aftermath of the Ferguson protests. This book examines the history of
the ideas and organizations that have systematically prevented social, political, and economic equality for black Americans. Click here to buy.

'How to Be Less Stupid About Race' by Crystal M. Fleming

A plainspoken social critique, Crystal M. Fleming's *How to Be Less Stupid About Race* takes on the myths and misconceptions of race and racism in the U.S., held by people across the political spectrum. This book is a must-read for anyone who believes that there are "very fine people on both sides." Click here to buy.

'Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism' by Michelle Goldberg

Christian nationalism is intrinsically linked to white nationalism, largely through the Christian Identity Movement. Michelle Goldberg teases out these connections, and identifies the threats to democracy posed by Christian nationalism, in *Kingdom Coming*. Click here to buy.

'Proud Boys and the White Ethnostate: How the Alt-Right Is Warping the American Imagination' by Alexandra Minna Stern

Although we've moved past calling them the "alt-right" to naming them as the white nationalists they are, Alexandra Minna Stern's *Proud Boys and the White Ethnostate* takes a searing look inside one of the newest white supremacist movements in the U.S. Click here to buy.
'Mothers of Massive Resistance: White Women and the Politics of White Supremacy' by Elizabeth Gillespie McRae

Little is often said about white women's role in the propagation of white supremacy, which is what makes *Mothers of Massive Resistance* such an important read. Elizabeth Gillespie McRae's book examines how white women helped to enforce and maintain segregationist policies throughout the 20th century. [Click here to buy.](#)

'White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism' by Robin DiAngelo

White people's refusal to acknowledge racial privilege and bias is one of the myriad reasons why white nationalism and white supremacy flourish in this country. In *White Fragility*, Robin DiAngelo explores the cause and effect of white people's vitriolic reactions to accusations of bigotry and the notion of institutional racism. [Click here to buy.](#)

'How We Fight White Supremacy: A Field Guide to Black Resistance,' edited by Akiba Solomon and Kenrya Rankin

A collection featuring Ta-Nehisi Coates, Tarana Burke, Alicia Garza, and Patrisse Khan-Cullors, *How We Fight White Supremacy* is a how-to guide for new members of the resistance. [Click here to buy.](#)

'White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America' by Nancy Isenberg
Focusing on the unique socioeconomic history of poor whites in America, Nancy Isenberg's *White Trash* offers an unflinching look at the ways in which white people of lower economic classes have been denied the social mobility promised by the American dream, and how their tenuous position has been preyed upon by politicians. Click here to buy.

'So You Want to Talk About Race' by Ijeoma Oluo

Tackling major arguments surrounding race in the U.S., from affirmative action to police brutality, Ijeoma Oluo's *So You Want to Talk About Race* is a must-read primer on the politics of American racism. Click here to buy.

'Behold, America: The Entangled History of "America First" and "the American Dream"' by Sarah Churchwell

Although they're often conflated today in Trump's "Make America Great Again" slogan, the concepts of the American Dream and "America First" were once at odds. Sarah Churchwell traces the intertwining histories of American isolationism and the promise of a better tomorrow in *Behold, America*. Click here to buy.

'White Identity Politics' by Ashley Jardina

Conservatives may decry "identity politics" of racial and ethnic minority communities, but, as Ashley Jardina shows, huge portions of the white population amass and vote to maintain white supremacy in the U.S. Read about the hows and whys of this phenomenon in *White Identity Politics*. Click here to buy.
'Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America' by Kathleen Belew

Tracing the history of white nationalist movements from the 1970s to today, Kathleen Belew offers readers a shocking glimpse inside the politics and planning of domestic terrorism in *Bring the War Home*. Click here to buy.

'Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race' by Reni Eddo-Lodge

An exploration that began with a viral blog post, Reni Eddo-Lodge's *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* is a lauded treatise on racial tension in the UK. With Brexiter and Trump favorite Boris Johnson recently elected Prime Minister, our allies across the pond may have some valuable insight into America's racism problem. Click here to buy.

'The Long Southern Strategy: How Chasing White Voters in the South Changed American Politics' by Angie Maxwell and Todd Shields

Believe it or not, the American South was once deeply blue, before a sea change that swapped the priorities of the Democratic and Republican parties. In the midst of that transition, then-presidential candidate Richard Nixon deployed "the Southern strategy" — a unique form of dog-whistle politics — to win the South for the GOP. For a fascinating look at the continued use and ramifications of the Southern strategy, check out Angie Maxwell and Todd Shields' *The Long Southern Strategy*. Click here to buy.
'Racism, Public Schooling, and the Entrenchment of White Supremacy: A Critical Race Ethnography' by Sabina E. Vaught

White supremacy has created, maintained, and widened the achievement gap between white students and students of color in the U.S. Sabina E. Vaught examines the origins and contemporary realities of this problem in *Racism, Public Schooling, and the Entrenchment of White Supremacy*. [Click here to buy.](#)

'Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-First Century' by Dorothy Roberts

Is race coded in your DNA? If you said yes, you should read Dorothy Roberts’ *Fatal Invention*, which explores the ways in which contemporary science projects merely rehash the same bad-faith efforts to categorize race. [Click here to buy.](#)

'Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities' by Jessica Trounstine

Decades after integration, the United States remains deeply racially divided along geographic lines. Jessica Trounstine examines the history of city-level segregation in *Segregation by Design*. [Click here to buy.](#)

'The Future of Whiteness' by Linda Martín Alcoff

What will whiteness look like when whites are no longer the majority race in the U.S.? That's the question Linda Martín Alcoff seeks to answer in *The Future of Whiteness* — a
wake-up call for any white person who wants to end white supremacy and white nationalism forever. Click here to buy.