

HOW TO BE A RESILIENT & HUMBLE LEARNER: People of Color

Racism is an enormous institutional, personal, and interpersonal force benefiting white people at the expense of people of color. It thrives on resentment, fear, blame, isolation, and notions of “us and them.” When we experience or unintentionally collude with racism, we are left feeling angry, guarded, defensive, stuck, and hopeless. The consequence is often self-protection through any means necessary, resulting in callousness, hardening, desensitization, and isolation. When we experience and collude with racism, we can use tangible tools to dismantle the **Giant** that is racism and stay centered in our power:

<p>Grace Inquiry Acknowledgement Next steps Tenderness</p>

Grace

Acknowledge and grant forgiveness to ourselves for having been hurt by and colluded with the institution of racism. Extending grace can be the first step in unearthing our internalized racism. Additionally, when white people (and POC) harm us through their collusion with racism, extending grace, *the unmerited favor of one human toward another*, can be the first step in centering ourselves in the power that racism works to strip from us.

Inquiry

Asking questions of self/others is critical if we are to examine and move ourselves outside of historical patterns of internalized racism: “*What was the impact of the perpetrators action, and what were their intentions?*” “*What can I learn from what was going on in my body during the interaction?*” “*What is the socialization that may have led to this action?*” When we can accept that we do not – nor will we ever – know everything, we can approach inquiry with genuine curiosity rather than fear.

Acknowledgment

Acknowledging the ways that you have been impacted by racism is an important step in finding oneself outside of the system of racism. This could come in the form of admitting to yourself how you have been hurt, or through making a statement like, “*Your actions, whether intended or not, have hurt me and caused me harm,*” to a person who has oppressed you. Whether this is an internal or external action, this step requires emotional vulnerability that is counter to the ways that racism teaches us to survive.

Next steps

What will you do with the oppression you just experienced? Do you have the energy and relationship with the perpetrator to support their growth and change? How will this lead to your own liberation? What, if any, corrective action would you like from the perpetrator? What ways of being need to change for you with this new learning? What support do you need to seek out from other people of color in order to process any trauma that may have resulted from the oppression? Do you have allies and communities with whom you are able to safely express rage, sadness, anger, and other emotions, and get the support you need? Do you have people with whom you can share joy, hope, and love?

Tenderness

Be tender with yourself. Show yourself compassion. Forgive yourself and let go of the resentment you may hold toward white people for the role that they are playing in the system of racism. Remember we did not create the system of racism nor did we ask to learn how to act it out with one another. Remind yourself that you deserve to live happily and be part of a diverse, interdependent, and healthy community.