Core Equity Questions
By Daisy Han

How do I choose a school that embraces equity?
When I interview candidates for a job, how can I assess for equitable mindsets?
How do I even bring up questions about equity?

These are common questions I am asked and grapple with on a daily basis. As an organization, it is core to Embracing Equity’s work to have built-in opportunities to dive into questions about how we are more intentionally embracing equity. As the founder of Embracing Equity, it is critical to our own hiring process with our growing team. As a Person of the Global Majority, this is something I confront whenever I’m in a new situation or relationship.

So I offer this flowchart to you as a starter to deeper conversations about equity, in the hopes that it may be helpful for your own growth and self-awareness or in your process of finding a school for a child/hiring an employee/engaging in a family conference/and on and on. As always, I offer this resource as a guide to consider and use in whatever way works best for you; it is how I’ve personally and professionally managed to probe in more meaningful and heart-opening ways.

Of course, there are many possible answers that can fall along the spectrum of responses (I’m sure there are plenty of good stories!). In this article, however, I am choosing to focus on two possible responses as the most common I have encountered and thought about in my own experiences.

**Question: How does your racial identity impact your practice and ways of being in the world?**

**Possible Answer #1:** “I have not thought about my racial identity.” “I don’t know why we need to bring up race here.” (Or some variety of this.)

This response indicates a lack of awareness of the role of race and racism in our society and the lived experiences of People of the Global Majority who are systemically disadvantaged by structural barriers and compounding effects of inequity. In this scenario, listening to this answer as a Person of the Global Majority, I would need to assess whether it is worth both the risk and the labor for me to offer feedback to this person. If this is an ongoing relationship that I care about with someone I would like to engage with in the future, I will likely respond with a question like, “Would you like to learn more about your racial identity?” Their answer at this point will lead me to direct them to one of Embracing Equity’s learning programs, or end the conversation.
Question: How does your racial identity impact your practice and ways of being in the world?

Possible Answer #2: “My racial identity influences the way I interpret the world and interact with people. Because of my racial identity, I have internalized specific messages about who I am and my positionality.”

This response indicates a consciousness around race and also a willingness to openly talk about the role of race and racism in our society. As a listener, this immediately builds trust. If the answer falls along this line of thinking, then I will follow-up with additional questions about how this consciousness shows up in their day-to-day practice. For example, “What structures or safeguards have you set up in your practice that helps you mitigate the risk of falling back into the default white supremacy culture?” OR “What are some ways you have practiced checking your biases?” OR “How do you stay accountable to your own anti-racist practice?”

These follow-up questions are important as it allows the conversation to move from a theoretical/intellectual one to a pragmatic discussion on the concrete ways in which this understanding has manifested. If they are aware of their racial identity but haven’t translated that awareness to action, then there is a disconnect in their consciousness and their responsibility.

If you are reading this and realize this is you, there are many opportunities for taking critical action all of the time – and I understand how it can be challenging, if not overwhelming and potentially dangerous, to do on your own. That’s the beauty of joining one of our cohorts. It provides an intimate community to vent, process, strategize, and experiment. If it’s not one of our cohorts, find yourself a community that will hold you compassionately accountable – and ask for real ways in which that will be done!
How does your racial identity impact your practice and ways of being in the world?

I have not thought about my racial identity
I don’t know why we need to bring up race here

OR

My racial identity influences the way I interpret the world and interact with people. Because of my racial identity, I have internalized specific messages about who I am and my positionality.

What anti-racist action have you taken in your daily life or practice to dismantle systemic oppression?

I am aware, but I have not translated that my awareness into action
I have concrete examples of translating awareness into action

OR

Assess whether it's worth the risk and the labor to continue

No
Yes?

STOP

Would you like to learn more about your racial identity?

No
OR

Yes

Bye!

Recommend ways to continue learning - Embracing Equity