

10
ways

Whites and Blacks

can bridge the

Racial Divide



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10 Ways Whites Can Bridge The Racial Divide

1

Realize your *conscious* biases and pray for revelation of your *unconscious* prejudices toward black people. Racism is learned and you have the capacity to let go of it if you desire to do so. You must be honest with yourself and reject the belief that a person's character, capability, or conduct is determined by race.

2

Recognize the advantages and privileges you enjoy by simply being *born white*. Do not apologize for it but do understand that in every major aspect of society (*employment, criminal justice, housing, health care, education, and politics*), blacks suffer disadvantages and lack of privileges simply for being *born black*.

3

Resolve to put down your broad stereotyping brush. Start with a clean slate for understanding each black person on an individual basis. Reject the ideology of white superiority in which white skin, culture, and habits are the gold standard, and that anyone who does not look and act according to it is deemed inferior or unacceptable.

4

Respect black folks' pain and plight. Their stories of inequities and injustices are real *and* recurring—which makes it hard for them to let go of the anger. Do not minimize their struggles or offer trite solutions based on your "white privileged (*advantaged*)" lens.

5

Reject self-imposed "white guilt"—as well as the shame others attempt to put upon you. You are not personally responsible for the atrocities of your ancestors.

6

Repent for the times you may have indeed engaged in behavior disadvantageous to blacks but have now experienced a white awakening. Seek ways to add value to blacks within your realm of influence.

7

Research the history and current economic status of blacks. Get the facts on their plight rather than relying on biased media or bigotries that may have been handed down from their oppressors.

8

Reach out to people of color to gain understanding of their dreams and challenges. Simply state, "I want to understand the black experience. Tell me your story." They will likely be heartened by your caring concern.

9

Run toward opportunities to be involved in local and state government efforts that aim to bridge the racial divide. Attend city council and townhall meetings; be a proactive ally. Sitting silently on the sidelines implies a certain level of consent to injustices and allows racism to run rampant. Offer financial and other support to worthy black empowerment causes; put your money where you say your heart is.

10

Recruit other whites to join your efforts in being a cheerleader or leader for "liberty and justice for all." This is not the time to "*ostrichize*"™ yourself (bury your head in the sand) to avoid being *ostracized* by your family, friends, or associates.

10 Ways Blacks Can Bridge The Racial Divide

1

Refuse to be stuck in the pain of past and present injustices. Forgive and let go of any anger or desire for revenge. Unforgiveness is an emotional cancer that can metastasize to every other part of your life. Rather, focus on the faith, wisdom, mental toughness, and resilience that racism has forged in you. Let these results inform how you recount your experiences to your children and grandchildren, lest you unwittingly pass down a legacy of hatred of all whites.

2

Resist the temptation to paint all whites as prejudiced or evil. Surely you have benefited from the goodwill and favor of a white person in some way or another. Be fair and do not get racial amnesia as you review your accomplishments to date.

3

Remember that racial healing is a two-way street that starts with building relationships. Take advantage of various opportunities to interact with whites at work, in the community, and in other venues. Do not segregate yourself to avoid social discomfort. Do not wait for whites to initiate contact--even at church. You will find that whites and blacks share the same common desires for their lives--good health, financial stability, strong family connections, and peace of mind.

4

Review your financial status and determine if you are on course to achieve your financial goals. Do you need to ask for a raise, enhance your skills, improve your image, etc.? If your white boss has passed you over for a raise or promotion, do not stew in anger. Rather ask what you need to do specifically to receive it next time. Never underestimate the power of "likeability"--so watch your attitude and do not carry a chip on your shoulder. Nobody wants to work with an "angry black." Stay positive and maintain a strong work ethic.

5

Reassess your strategy for interacting within the white culture. Adjust to their norms, when necessary, to gain credibility and influence. This does not mean that you must reject your cultural heritage; you simply choose not to make it the focus of attention--lest you hinder your access. You must be able to come to the table to put forth--and weigh in on--issues that matter to blacks. And, when you find yourself the only black or one of the few, consider how you can use your position to make a difference for other people of color.

6

Rally other blacks to vote, especially in local and state elections as they have the most impact on the quality of your daily lives. Also encourage them to be proactive in community policing programs as well as law enforcement appreciation efforts. The majority of policemen take their responsibility seriously. The bad apples ruin the reputation of all of them, just as law-breaking blacks frustrate your struggle for unity and empowerment--and reinforce white stereotyping.

7

Recommend *specific* ways to whites that they can support, intervene, or provide other forms of assistance to credible black causes. Many of them are sincerely looking for guidance as to how they can improve the black experience.

8

Raise the exposure and expertise of other blacks by using your platform, experiences, and education to empower those in your sphere of influence. This can take the form of mentoring, leading seminars, etc.

9

Reflect the right example spiritually, relationally, financially, emotionally, and morally in *all* of your circles of interaction (family, job, community, etc.). Your positive role modeling will have the most significant influence on current and future generations who will shape our culture.

10

Reignite your hope for a better future. Progress has been made, albeit slowly. Protest peacefully and productively. Change is coming.