

## Some Privileges of Racial Power

I am reasonably confident that even in the face of an affordable housing crisis, I can find a neighborhood where I can afford to live, with reasonable assurance that my neighbors will be neutral or pleasant toward me.

I can see many people of my race widely represented in virtually all communication media, in positive and often powerful roles.

When I read or hear about our national heritage or “Western Civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.

I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials in school that testify to the existence and contributions of my race.

I can readily find a hairdresser or barber in my community who knows how to deal with my hair.

Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can be sure that my skin color will not detract from my appearance of financial responsibility.

In my community I can easily buy books, posters, greeting cards, and magazines from nearly every retailer of these items that feature people of my race.

I can take a job with any employer without wondering – or worrying about my co-workers thinking – whether I got the job because of my race.

I am free of implications that my shape, my bearing, or by body odor are reflections of my race.

When I express concern about racism, I tend to be credited with empathy or even charity, generosity, and love for my neighbor, rather than thought of as self-interested – unless, of course, I am totally discounted as being “out of date” or “living in the past.”

If I need legal, medical, or other professional help, I can be sure to find a competent professional of my own race within reasonably close distance and that my race will not work against me.

I can be late to a meeting without having my tardiness attributed to my race.

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

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

I can appear unkempt, I can fail to promptly answer letters or emails, or I can curse and be obnoxious without having people attribute these choices to the morality, poverty, or illiteracy of my race.

I am rarely or never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group, or assumed, in my opinions or behavior, to represent my racial group.

Even in an age when diversity is often affirmed publicly, I can remain oblivious to the language and customs of persons from cultures other than my own without penalty or sanction.

With exceptions that remain rare, I can be fairly certain that if I demand to speak the highest authority in an institution, I will be facing a person of my race.

If I am stopped by a traffic police officer or audited by the IRS, I can be pretty sure that I have not been racially profiled.

I can consider a vast range of options – social, political, professional, or imaginative – without needing to ask whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.

I have no difficulty finding a convenient house of worship whose leaders, and all (or virtually all) members, share my racial identity, and where the founders of my faith are portrayed in art as if they could be related to me.

I can generally be assured that my children will learn about history and culture from the point of view that affirms power for people who look like me.

Credit: Inspiration for these come from “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” by Peggy McIntosh, its adaptation by the Episcopal Peace and Justice Network in “White Racial Awareness Process: Facilitator Guidelines”, and further developed by Paul Kivel in [Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice](#). Please do not reproduce without permission.