

“Whiteness” costs

The subtle fears that underlie racism also include these, consciously or unconsciously, fed by media and associates:

- that what I have is unearned;
- that I might lose it if I don’t protect it;
- that I am in danger of having some of what I have stolen by others less privileged;
- that my safety, even my life, may be in danger at the hands of someone who is not considered “white”;
- that people who are not “white” will attain a majority e’er long and reverse the long American history of privilege and discrimination;
- that people not “white” can see the shallowness of my soul, the ways in which I continue to celebrate my “white” privilege while pretending to openly renounce it, and how I let blatantly racist images, stereotypes and scapegoating periodically drift through my mind.

Some other prices we pay for “white” privilege include:

- However we may disdain it, we are always inseparable from the system of oppression and beneficiaries of it.
- Until we demonstrate otherwise, we are often seen by people who are not “white” as an active, potentially aggressive oppressor.
- We are limited in our capacity to build healthy interracial relationships without explicitly addressing what our culture has done to our social context.
- We are trapped in denial through our normative relationships with other “white” people who resist talking about race.
- In most cities, working with many if not most realtors, I am likely to find it difficult to locate a comfortable home in my price range in a noticeably mixed-race neighborhood.
- My children and I are deprived of a healthy breadth of programming that accurately depicts people whose “racial” identity is other than “white.”
- We are routinely misled by associates, media and other institutions into assumptions that devalue other “racial” groups and inherently define ours as supremacist and racist.
- It is likely that my children will be denied fully accurate interpretations of “American” history and will receive limited and often misleading information about other national and cultural groups throughout the world – and, especially, about how the USA has acted toward them historically.
- My comfort with commercial arrangements – at my bank, my barbershop or hairdresser, my regular retail outlets, et al – tends to lead me to doubt stories that I hear about discrimination experienced by people not considered “white” at the hands of these suppliers.
- I am prone to overlook the lack of diversity in resources available from a wide range of suppliers and publishers.

- I am likely to find prejudicial stereotypes about people who are not “white” emerging into my consciousness periodically even if I work hard to be deliberately, actively antiracist.
- If a person who is not “white” acquires a job that I had sought, the possibility of a less-qualified affirmative action choice is very likely to occur to me, and I am highly prone to use it to scapegoat my failure.

- Inspired by Robert Jensen, *The Heart of Whiteness*