

Personal reflection on race in america



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My Past, My Present, OUR Future!

“Dad, why are black’s so different from us?” The sounds no man ever wants to hear. About two years ago, I failed as a father, a mentor, and a coach. Not to just anyone in this world, I neglected my eight-year-old sons cry for help. I was outraged by such a question, for I hadn’t raised him to think in such a manner. Twenty to thirty seconds passed us by, I remember my finger pointing at him, raising my voice, and telling him he had no right to look down on someone else. I led him into the bathroom and turned on the light, and I said, “take a good look in that mirror because that’s the only man you have the right to judge, and only God can judge another man.” My son put his head between his feet and walked back to his room, saying nothing at all.

While this story has haunted me for the past two years, it’s the focal point on my journey to becoming a better father, mentor, and coach. The perfect dad does not exist; we must strive to learn from our mistakes in hopes of becoming something better than we were before. In my reflection of this course some of the essential discussions that impacted my life will be emphasized. I will also cover my thoughts and feelings before the class and how a thorough understanding has changed me personally over the past seven weeks. While I might be a small piece of the puzzle, I believe this is a start to a society working towards racial democracy, possibly without racial categories, in hopes of making a more desirable and ideal American dream for all.

My Learnings through the Course

Abraham Lincoln once said, "achievement has no color." Over 155 years have passed, and society still fights the same adversity today. Racism can impact our communities, both directly and indirectly. In life, we are born with ascribed characteristics that can't be changed, such as ethnicity, gender, and even our region of starting point or social status. Through the process of socialization, we build invisible barriers between other groups and us by the differences we are taught. Recognizing social inequalities do exist and that racism must be exposed allows all individuals equal opportunities. Through identifying system constraints that limit one's success, we have made significant gains as a society for continued efforts to better multicultural and racial competency.

America is fully invested in the white culture, but yet we have little understanding of white privilege and how we have used our power to rule other races and ethnicities. As we benefit from these actions, it's lost in our subconscious thought process how others are limited for our uneven success. Even more so, we never take the time to understand other races or ethnicities. Each of us plays a substantial part in tackling issues that make minority groups feel inferior to whites today.

Our society is now in the second stages of structural assimilation, and other social groups are continuing to acquire better jobs, higher incomes, and more education. Residential patterns, club memberships, friendships cliques, and intermarriage remains very low outside of formal social settings such as work and school. While white people today have a lot more involvement with other races and ethnicities than previous eras in our history, it still is very minimal and casual comparatively speaking. What each of us can do on the <https://assignbuster.com/personal-reflection-on-race-in-america/>

micro-level to stop the social boundaries that block our relationships with other races is seek to treat no individual differently. We must stop basing our relationships as neighbors, church members, close friends, or marital partners on the color of our skin or the hate in our hearts.

Today, it's impossible to drive from one town to the next without witnessing the invisible barriers that keep us segregated. Neighborhoods are still predominantly white or black, churches are the same, which follows in our friendships and family. Through the process of assimilation, other races and ethnicities evolved into our society, but we never have conquered our fear and opened our hearts to their community. To overcome these hurdles, we need to understand the social boundaries that limit one's success even though our formal relations have grown, such as work and school settings. By allowing ourselves to see the patterns of our behaviors, we can make changes that reduce our subconscious actions today.

While our country has made significant gains in tightening the gaps that promote and reinforce black inferiority, we still suffer from disparities within employment, housing, and economic wealth. These issues are due to top-down aversive racism, where our society and government avoids and ignores these issues at all costs because they benefit from white privilege and power. To continue attacking these issues, we must put more control on these disparities. There is still minimal legal oversight on employers and their hiring process, which discriminates one's access to employment and the wages in which they receive. Discrimination in the housing market remains the silent but pervasive barrier that creates the most significant gaps between minorities and whites today. In the rental and housing market,

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whites receive different treatment and services in housing searches, which separates individuals still by the color of their skin. Government-funded loans could assist with integration that supports us with more opportunities for becoming neighbors, friends, and family. If our governmental processes overcome the adversity, we see today through job discrimination and our housing markets, I think the economic gaps will fix themselves over time. While we still have a long road ahead of us, the most protruding portion is continuing our journey.

Thoughts and Feelings before the course and how they changed through the course

A few weeks after my son asked me that question, a letter was sent home in his backpack, discussing a series of events that had occurred over the past month. Jaylin, an African-American in my son's class, had been a victim of hate violence and racial bullying. I could hardly read the letter as the tears poured from my face knowing I failed again as a father, mentor, and coach. As I sat my son down at the table, and we discussed the letter, the only thing I still remember is him saying, " but dad, you didn't let me talk?" He wanted to know why two of his friends were beating Jaylin up and what he should do, but because of my actions, he did what everyone else in his class did and turned away. I could have stopped this, I could have changed this, but my failure to listen pushed my son further away.

While the last ten years of being called dad have brought me life's greatest happiness, it was learning from my mistakes that gave me hope I could be better than I once was. This can be applied to the same principles of human

society, as striving for perfection can only be defined by accepting our past, through our present understanding, in hopes of reshaping the future. Today, we seek to remember the past better than it was, the present worse than it is, which leaves no room for growth.

As I heard my son's bedroom door close after having him look at himself in the mirror, I was hurt that he felt this way inside. I was mad at myself for my leadership in his life let him down. Upon reading that letter, I was shattered that I let my ego talk instead of listening. My son did exactly what I asked, by avoiding the situation and not judging anyone involved. I let an eight-year-old boy be punished because of the color of his skin, and I made my son watch. While this story has haunted me for two years, I felt like I could hide it deep inside me forever, but that's what racism is, and how our society tells us to handle our problems by burying them. The past seven weeks have driven me to a higher understanding of the human race, and I won't be confined by my wrongful doings. By accepting my past, through my present experiences, only I have the power to change my future.

Throughout the course of history, America, much similar to my dealings with my son, suffered from two distinct stages but yet led us on a journey of intense inner hatred and inhumane practices for particular races and ethnicities. The first stage was our self-ignorance, which later transitioned to our inner fear. By our ignorance, we have determined our pre-judgments of other individuals through cultural and biological differences. Skin color, hair, physical features, along with cultural differences such as language, religion, ethnicity, all developed the negative values that built the fundamentals of hate and racism. At an early age, we developed traits to allow us to

associate certain groups and characteristics together. Anytime someone is different from us, it's by our human instinct that we judge them off our lack of knowledge and their ascribed characteristics. Ascribed characteristics we can't be changed, such as ethnicity, gender, and even our region of starting point or social status. By separation and segregation of different racial and ethnic groups, we have prevented the vision of interacting positively. By our ignorance of other races and ethnicities, we create hate and racism on the pre-determined notion based on limited knowledge.

Fear is a much deeper issue than ignorance and what we suffer from today. Fear attacks the problems of privilege and power. This is our post-judgments and how we view issues even after evidence presents itself that disproves our pre-judgments. Fear is what allows us to overlook evidence and carry out the same post-judgments when they are knowingly wrong. Today, the superior race is defending their privileges culturally, socially, politically, and economically by limiting the opportunities of inferior races. When the powers we achieved through ignorance are threatened by newfound evidence, we become fearful of others taking our power and privilege. It is the fear-based society in which we live today that lays the framework for the second stage of hate and racism towards minority groups. While it starts with our ignorance from pre-judgments towards others based on cultural and biological differences. It never ends because of the fear of losing the privileges and power that were created off our pre-determined ignorance.

My thoughts before this course and how they changed throughout this course to me is no different from the stages of American society. Life before this class was centered on the path of least resistance and the road I always

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strived to follow. I always believed that if the issue didn't involve me, I should not stick my nose where it doesn't belong, but that is a primary reason why racism is unchanging today. As you can see from my son, I passed my failing words of wisdom on to him. When you witness acts of racism, big or small, turning away is never the solution. It was through my ignorance that I failed to listen over being heard.

Upon reading the letter, my life quickly transitioned into a constant uproar. I was in fear for what I had done, what I had taught, and a fear my son would follow the same suit by what he had witnessed. When I took my son's voice away, I held all the power in my hand. Even though I won the battle that night, I know now that I lost the war. America is structured in the same manner by the dominant whites holding majority stock in all powers still to this day, we have stripped the voice of other racial groups from their hands and still control them to this day.

In reflection of my coursework, I found this story brought on more heartbreak. I was angered in myself for never letting my son speak, and how I answered him that day. In part, I lived in fear that I failed through my leadership, but I never attempted to make right on my wrongful doings. I buried this story, never to revisit it, nor try to coach my son again on racial barriers, before this class. I feared my failures as an outcome of my teachings. Instead, I avoided it.

I learned from this class that as individuals, if we don't support those in need, they quickly feel as if they are, in fact, the outcast. Just as if we don't step in, the people partaking in these acts of racism feel untouchable. To

fight racism, it takes a stand, all races, all minority groups, fighting together to overcome these struggles. Prejudice is a learned behavior and can only be broken through positivity. We watched some compelling videos that showed me who I have been for thirty-two years of my life. The *What Would You Do* videos showed us firsthand how, as a society, we are surrounded by these situations. When we hold beliefs regarding the character of a group, these are expressed through prejudice ideas. Just like me, some of the witnesses did not speak up in the store as they did not feel it was their place because people are followers, not leaders; they feared retaliation from the store and worker. They worried it would create more problems for the victim and themselves. Typically, when we witness bias acts based on fixed mental images as expressed in the store, we don't act out until someone else does because most people are natural followers. Followers don't feel it is their place because we are taught at an early age how to avoid conflict rather than overcome conflict. Other customers in the store could be regular customers or needing a specific item; this could minimize their efforts as they don't want any ill-natured repercussions for standing up for someone else. I also think people believe that this can cause more problems for themselves and the victim as they could have to testify in court, missing work, and adding to the issue.

I believe this resistance will counteract modern racism and erode the very discrimination we face today. To move forward, I think teaching our children and youth of correct behaviors and understanding of race before they begin to act out is the next step. Being proactive instead of reactive is always the best way to change the outlook of a generation on widespread racial issues.

When we work to educate ourselves more on the real-world situations that arise, we can be prepared to counter-attack these. Understanding what racism is, whom it impacts, and not letting these actions happen around us puts us one step closer to an anti-racism environment where everyone can live equally and feel safe.

What Racial Democracy Entails for the U. S., Racial Categories or not, is this Ideal today?

Over the course of history, the U. S. has been the chomping grounds for some of the worst crimes ever witnessed. War, violence, and hate, yet, we seek a world of peace and racial democracy. To date, our blood has been spilled on the belief of racism. Racism is a focus on dividing humans into different social groups based on their culture, biological, or mental capacities. The differences of other social groups are composed by their genetic composition and cannot be changed, which makes them inferior to the dominant race. By defining the superior race, it's a justification to unequally distributing society's most considerable resources such as wealth, power, and social standing. These concepts are ingrained in our minds, woven in our society, and eroding the very principles of a world in harmony.

America today is nothing more than an amusement park named " Racism." There is only one way in and no way out. We have multiple rides if you like thrills, some of the people's favorites are slavery, immigration, Civil War, Jim Crow era, civil rights movement, discrimination, and stereotypes. If you get hungry, we have all different types of stuff to pick from, but some of the best are African-Americans, Native-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Hispanics. If

you are thirsty, some of the crowd-pleasers are Jewish, Muslim, Italian, Irish, and back by popular demand is illegal immigrants. We hope you enjoy your stay, and I know we promised you a melting pot composed of a diverse background of ethnic groups that overtime evolves as one cultural group. However, in reality, once you walk through those gates, you are never getting out, and based on your racial category, you may be stuck riding the same roller coaster forever. Just like every roller coaster, there will be some ups and downs along the way, sometimes it might even try and break down mid-ride, but don't you worry we will get it back up and running in no time. So, buckle up and enjoy the ride.

America doesn't have to end this way; our past doesn't have to define us, as we never envisioned this type of social disparity. When we find the ability deep within our hearts to listen over being heard, learn to recognize weakness before power, we can start to respect and appreciate all individuals as equals. The road to unity is a path very few have successfully followed because it's not through tolerance. Tolerance has no power to heal in our society today. Tolerance is leaving one another alone, living segregated through invisible barriers. It leads to the differences we believe today, that encourage our hatred and racism. Nowhere in this concept of tolerance is there power to pull us away from racial categories. To live in a racial democracy, we have to erode the racial barriers that are woven into our society that give privileges and power to the dominant race and separate us from equality.

If America wants to live in peace in a world without hate and racism, we have to remove the fear-based society we live for today and work towards a love-

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based society. We all are in search for love and acceptance, but our egos our misguiding us down a road of emptiness. Racial democracy can only be found through our self-love and acceptance, but its most significant characteristics would be seen through sharing and supporting one another. Instead of competition, society would be more focused on learning and individual growth to bring out the very best in every one of us.

Trust and hope have been sacrificed at the expense of wealth and greed. To achieve a world of racial democracy without racial categories, you must learn to love yourself for who you are. Fear no longer can drive our wants and expectations on the basis that someone might not like us or because we did not live up to their assumptions. Racial democracy means we eradicate the preconceived notion of self-criticism and start believing in a higher power of self-love. The reward is ultimate freedom, independence, and yet part of a more significant community. As a society, we would find prevailing success by our inner peace and happiness, not from fear of rejection or loneliness.

Racial categories are degrading our nation through the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy and should be eliminated from our way of thinking. When we falsely define a situation, we produce a form of behavior that makes the wrongly identified transition into reality. By saying blacks are not as brilliant as whites, we transition into a systematic way of thinking that believes the false accusations. Employers chose whites over blacks for highly ranked positions, teachers will focus less on supporting a black student in need and discourage him from taking further challenging classes, and white parents will not want their kids going to the same schools for fear they will teach downward. There is an old philosophical saying, " I am what I am because of <https://assignbuster.com/personal-reflection-on-race-in-america/>

what we all are.” It is a more in-depth understanding that we are all connected through higher consciousness, but as we grow up with separation and individuality, we forget our inner connection.

Racial democracy is ideal for not only America but the world population and the greater good of humanity. Once you love yourself, this love cannot be contained. It will pour into society, filling those around you, and the benefits will be seen by how the world shines back on you. Jaylin didn't choose to be black, nor did he want to be the victim of racism. My son saw no colors until he was eight years old. Now he has witnessed two boy's happiness from another one's pain. The fear of my son's race and dominance being engrained in his mind will haunt me forever. Jaylin and my son don't deserve to see one another as different; the idea of racial democracy is what America owes them.

References

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