

Empowering Students for Environmental Justice

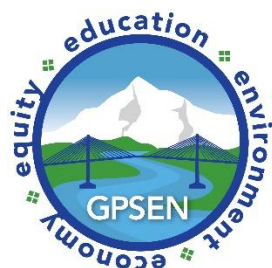
A Facilitator's Guide



Created for the
Greater Portland Sustainability Education Network (GPSEN)

By
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2019



**GREATER PORTLAND
SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION NETWORK**
A Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development

Empowering Students for Environmental Justice Workshop

Summary: Learning about environmental, social, and economic sustainability issues can be overwhelming, especially when considering how to create solutions to pressing problems. “Empowering Students for Environmental Justice” is designed to deconstruct historical impediments to successful social justice efforts, empower participants through reimagining society and their role in it, and suggest methods for meaningful engagement with the community.

Goals: As a Train-the-Trainer model, this handbook provides insight on concepts that must be understood by trainers so that they do no more social harm. It is intended that participants will gain a greater understanding of intercultural communication through compassionate empathy. We hope that this training will increase participants’ confidence to be social justice warriors.

Structure: These insights will be conveyed through a combination of short lectures, video presentations, Talanoa Dialogue style group conversations, and group activities. The training will comprise three sections of focus: **Educate, Empower, Engage.**

Recommended Resources: See the reference section below for additional background.

Suggested Timeline:

9:30 – 10:00	Registration and Refreshments
10:00 – 10:15	Introduction
10:15 – 11:00	Group introductions, Community Agreements, and Workshop Summary
11:00 – 12:00	Educate - Learn history, concepts, and examples of environmental injustice
12:00 – 12:40	Lunch
12:40 – 1:50	Empower - Examples of solutions
1:50 – 2:00	Break
2:00 – 2:45	Engage - Opportunities for Actions
2:45 – 3:00	Closing Activity
3:00 – 3:30	Clean-Up

Educate ~ Empower ~ Engage

Workshop Schedule

Welcome to Workshop (5 mins)

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### **Land Acknowledgement (2 mins)**

We would like to start this event by acknowledging that the room we are in rests on the traditional village sites of the Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, bands of the Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla and many other Tribes who made their homes along the Columbia River. Multnomah is a band of Chinooks that lived in this area.

We thank the descendants of these tribes for being the original stewards and protectors of these lands since time immemorial. We also acknowledge that Portland, OR has the 9th largest Urban Native American population in the U.S. with over 380 federally recognized tribes represented in the Urban Portland Metropolitan area. We also acknowledge the systemic policies of genocide, relocation, and assimilation that still impact many Indigenous/Native American families today.

We are honored by the collective work of many Native Nations, leaders and families who are demonstrating resilience, resistance, revitalization, healing and creativity. We are honored to be guests upon these lands. Thank you, and thanks also to our colleagues at the Portland State University Indigenous Nations Studies Program for crafting this acknowledgement.

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Introduction of Presenter (3 mins)

Kevin Thomas, a Ph.D. candidate in urban studies and planning at Portland State University, has been working to better link PSU's diversity and cultural services with sustainability programs and efforts on campus and in the community. Currently serving as the Interim Coordinator for the Pacific Islander, Asian & Asian American Cultural Center and a Healing Feathers Advocate in the Indigenous Nations Studies Department, he co-chaired PSU's Social Sustainability Month, which featured more than 15 panel discussions, film screenings, and other events on the topics of social justice, equity, and diversity, and their connections to environmental issues.

Activity One: Introductions (approx. 25 mins [varies by size of groups]):

Form two circles:

1 minute per person:

- What was a favorite food from childhood?
- When was the first time you noticed an unjust world?
- What was your first form of activism?

Rotate left after each person.

Activity Two: Community Agreements (unique to our group – 10 mins):

Describe:

- One Mic
- WAIT – Why Am I Talking
- Confidentiality
- Well Intentioned
- Take Space – Make Space
- What is learned here leaves here

Open up for other suggestions

Activity Three: Review the Summary, Goals, and Structure of the training (10 mins)

Activity Four: Educate (1 hour):

Theme - Understand the issues and history of environmental justice. To become better communicators, you have to know what you are talking about.

Watch Videos 1 – 5 (24 mins)

Facilitate conversations between each video about lessons and reactions.

Discussion Questions:

- How does viewing this film make you feel?
- How does viewing this help you better understand this subject?
- What lessons from this can help you in your real life? Explain.

Lunch (40 mins)

Activity Five: Empower (1 hour, 10 mins):

Theme - Learn about forms of resistance.

Watch videos 6 - 8 (32 mins)

Facilitate conversations between each video about lessons and reactions.

Discussion Questions:

- How does viewing this film make you feel?
- How does viewing this help you better understand this subject?
- What lessons from this can help you in your real life? Explain.

Break (10 mins)

Activity Six: Engage (45 mins):

Theme - Change your worldview and expand your horizons. Discover opportunities for actions

Watch Videos 9 – 10 (11 mins)

Facilitate conversations between each video about lessons and reactions.

Discussion Questions:

- How does viewing this film make you feel?
- How does viewing this help you better understand this subject?
- What lessons from this can help you in your real life? Explain.

Highlight local organizations (see list below)

Closing Activity (15 mins):

Close with Video 11 - Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner (7 mins)

Facilitate closing conversation and final reflections.

Key Concepts to Explore:

Critical Race Theory (CRT) - A theoretical framework in the social sciences that uses critical theory to examine society and culture as they relate to categorizations of race, law, and power. It began as a theoretical movement within American law schools in the mid- to late 1980s as a reworking of critical legal studies on race issues and is loosely unified by two common themes: First, CRT proposes that white supremacy and racial power are maintained over time, and in particular, that the law may play a role in this process. Second, CRT work has investigated the possibility of transforming the relationship between law and racial power, and more broadly, pursues a project of achieving racial emancipation and anti-subordination.

Decolonize Sustainability – The idea that the sustainability movement is too Euro-centric and privileged. The notion that rather than reinvent the wheel with respect to the environment why not just ask the people who have lived here for thousands of years and did not mess up the place on how to properly care for nature and communities. Whenever you use the term decolonize you must have an Indigenous component.

Do No More Harm – Healing. The trainer must heal first before healing others.

Equity Lens – The Equity and Empowerment lens (with a racial justice focus) is a transformative quality improvement tool used to improve planning, decision-making, and resource allocation leading to more racially equitable policies and programs.

Historical Trauma - As used by social workers, historians, and psychologists, refers to the cumulative emotional harm of an individual or generation caused by a traumatic experience or event.

Imposter Syndrome – is a psychological term referring to a pattern of behavior where people doubt their accomplishments and have a persistent, often internalized fear of being exposed as a fraud. This may be extrapolated to include why some POC do not see themselves as environmentalists. Many interpret that as a white person's pursuit. Likewise, engaging with outdoor wilderness.

Indian vs. Native American – Both terms are incorrect nomenclature yet both terms are used. Indigenous is a more academically acceptable term (In Canada the term is First Nations). The terms Indian and Native American are used by many Native organizations and are considered acceptable. Indian technically means someone from India and was applied because early European explorers were lost. Native American is incorrect because Indigenous people were not native to America but rather their own sovereign nations. In the over five hundred indigenous languages from this continent there is no word that suggests a unified identity; that was imposed by Europeans as well.

Knowledge vs. Wisdom – Knowledge is being aware of something and having information. Knowledge is really about facts and ideas that we acquire through study, research, investigation, observation, or experience. Wisdom is the ability to discern and judge which aspects of that knowledge are true, right, lasting, and applicable to your life.

Male Privilege - Male privilege is a concept within sociology for examining social, economic, and political advantages or rights that are available to men solely on the basis of their sex.

Misplaced Pathologizing – Pathology is the science of causes and effects of diseases. Pathologize is the practice of seeing a symptom as indication of a disease or disorder. An example of Misplaced Pathologizing is blaming high school students of color for failing rather than look at the systemic failure of the educational model. Exp. Native American students still traumatized by Boarding School Program.

POC – People of Color – Generally used to refer to anyone who does not identify as European American or white. The term encompasses all non-white people, emphasizing common experiences of systemic racism. An issue is that some deemed POC do not consider themselves POC. Another issue is that white is also a color but has been normalized in society to be neutral.

Social Sustainability - Social sustainability is the least defined and least understood of the different ways of approaching sustainability and sustainable development. Social sustainability has had considerably less attention in public dialogue than economic and environmental sustainability. There are several approaches to sustainability. This concept has to do with our quality of life and therefore is more difficult to quantify.

Sustainability - The process of maintaining change in a balanced environment, in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations.

Talanoa Dialogue - The Talanoa Dialogue is based on the Pacific concept of “talanoa” - storytelling that leads to consensus-building and decision-making. The process is designed to allow for participants to share their stories in an open and inclusive environment, devoid of blame, in the hopes that others can learn and benefit from their ideas and experiences.

Trauma-Informed Critical Pedagogy – This teaching and learning methodology means taking the time and care to incorporate the myriad of cultures and experiences of your students into your classroom and to create a safe space for learning and healing to occur.

White Privilege - White privilege is the societal privilege that in some countries benefits white people over non-white people, particularly if they are otherwise under the same social, political, or economic circumstances.

United Nations' Agenda 2030 - Sustainable Development Goals

(Adopted September, 2015)



People We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

Planet We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

Prosperity We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.

Peace We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

Partnership We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalised Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Target 4.7 – Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development

UNESCO Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD and ESD for 2030

UNESCO launched the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD (2014-2019) and the post-GAP ESD for 2030 plan (2020-2030). Countries and RCEs were asked to help implement the GAP and, now, ESD for 2030, using the [UNESCO Roadmap for Implementing the Global Action Programme on ESD](#) and [Education 2030: Part II, Education for Sustainable Development beyond 2019](#), utilizing five Priority Action Areas:

1. Advancing policy by mainstreaming ESD
2. Transforming learning and training environments through whole-institution approaches
3. Building capacities of educators and trainers
4. Empowering and mobilizing youth
5. Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level

For more information, go to www.gpsen.org.

Key Resources

Web Resources:

Greater Portland Sustainability Education Network (GPSEN)
<http://gpsen.org/>

Videos:

- (1) "Environmental justice, explained" [3:34]
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dREtXUij6_c
- (2) "A Brief History of Environmental Justice" [3:36]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30xLg2HHg8Q>
- (3) "Earth Day 1970 Part 10: Earth Week 1 of 3 Philadelphia (CBS News with Walter Cronkite)" [9:04]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6grUk-lcLM&t=76s>
- (4) James Baldwin Video – "Baldwin on Dick Cavett" [3:32]
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fZQQ7o16yQ
- (5) "Here's how Flint's water crisis happened" [4:28]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTpsMyNezPQ>
- (6) "Farmworkers sue EPA over exposure to dangerous pesticides" [2:08]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a25Hs8FaWAc>
- (7) "TEDxTC - Winona LaDuke - Seeds of Our Ancestors, Seeds of Life" [16:36]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHNlel72eQc>
- (8) "TEDxGreatPacificGarbagePatch - Van Jones - Environmental Justice" [12:58]
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WMgNIU_vxQ
- (9) "Vine Deloria Jr. on Technology's Toll" [1:56]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-XGnk4VbeA>
- (10) "Two Spirits in Native American Culture" [8:55]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vp389Y4M9o>
- (11) "Statement and poem by Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, Climate Summit 2014 – Opening Ceremony" [6:50]
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mc_IgE7TBSY&t=32s

Articles & Print Resources:

Bonta, M., & Jordan, C. (2007). Diversifying the American Environmental Movement. In E. Enderle (Ed.), *Diversity and the Future of the U.S. Environmental Movement* (pp. 13-32). New Haven, CT: Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

"Communities of Color In Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile Research Series" (2012). Coalition of Communities of Color

Deloria, Vine, Jr. (1969). "Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto." Univ. of Oklahoma Press.

"Diverse segments of the US public underestimate the environmental concerns of minority and low-income Americans" in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. (2018).
<https://www.pnas.org/content/115/49/12429>

Flores, David; Kuhn, Karmon. (2018). Latino outdoors: Using storytelling and social media to increase diversity on public lands. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*. 36: 47-62.

Freire, Paulo. (1968). "Pedagogy of the Oppressed." New York. Bloomsbury Press.

"Latinos and the Environment" <https://earthjustice.org/features/poll-latino-opinion>

McIntosh, Peggy. (1988). "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" in "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies."

Sze, Julie. "Asian American Activism for Environmental Justice." In *Peace Review* 16:2, June (2004), 149-156.

"The Racist History of Portland, the Whitest City in America." *The Atlantic Magazine*. (2016).
<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/07/racist-history-portland/492035/>

Recommended Events:

City Repair's Village Building Convergence

May 31 – June 9, 2019

Locations vary

<https://villagebuildingconvergence.com/>

"Forgotten Portland History: Chinese Vegetable Farmers of Portland"

Sun, June 16, 2019, 1:00-2:30

Multnomah County Library, Northwest Meeting Room, 2300 NW Thurman St., Portland, OR

Local Environmental Justice Organizations:

Center for Diversity and the Environment (CDE) - Environmental Professionals of Color (EPOC)

We harness the power of racial & ethnic diversity to transform the U.S. environmental movement by developing leaders, catalyzing change within institutions, and building alliances.

<https://www.cdeinspires.org/>

City Repair Project/Village Building Convergence

The Village Building Convergence is the annual placemaking celebration and permaculture teaching event sponsored by Portland, Oregon's very own City Repair. May 31 – June 9, 2019.

<https://villagebuildingconvergence.com/>

Cully Park Project

They transformed a former landfill into a new 25-acre park for Portland's most diverse, park-deprived neighborhood. Cully Park is a catalyst for neighborhood improvement and a symbol of what the Cully neighborhood can be. Includes an inter-tribal gathering garden. <https://letusbuildcullypark.org/>

Metro

Metro focuses on parks and nature, with many paid internships. They are working with a new equity lens.

<https://www.oregonmetro.gov/>

OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon

OPAL is committed to "Organizing People / Activating Leaders". They help build power for environmental justice and civil rights in our communities, including an emphasis on youth and transportation.

<http://www.opalpdx.org/>

Portland Underground Graduate School

Check out their Environmental Justice 101 course.

<https://www.pugspdx.com/>

State of Oregon: Environmental Justice Task Force

"Environmental justice communities" include minority and low-income communities, tribal communities, and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes.

https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policy/environment/environmental_justice/Pages/default.aspx

Verde

Verde serves communities by building environmental wealth through Social Enterprise, Outreach and Advocacy.

<http://www.verdenw.org/>

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

Peggy McIntosh

"I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group"

Through work to bring materials from women's studies into the rest of the curriculum, I have often noticed men's unwillingness to grant that they are overprivileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. They may say they will work to women's statues, in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can't or won't support the idea of lessening men's. Denials that amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages that men gain from women's disadvantages. These denials protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened, or ended.

Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that, since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there was most likely a phenomenon of white privilege that was similarly denied and protected. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.

I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is like to have white privilege. I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks.

Describing white privilege makes one newly accountable. As we in women's studies work to reveal male privilege and ask men to give up some of their power, so one who writes about having white privilege must ask, "having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?"

After I realized the extent to which men work from a base of unacknowledged privilege, I understood that much of their oppressiveness was unconscious. Then I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive. I began to understand why we are just seen as oppressive, even when we don't see ourselves that way. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence.

My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. My schooling followed the pattern my colleague Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work that will allow "them" to be more like "us."

Peggy McIntosh is associate director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. This essay is excerpted from Working Paper 189. "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies" (1988), by Peggy McIntosh; available for \$4.00 from the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley MA 02181. The working paper contains a longer list of privileges. This excerpted essay is reprinted from the Winter 1990 issue of Independent School.

Daily effects of white privilege

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions that I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographic location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can tell, my African American coworkers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place and time of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.
3. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
7. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
9. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
10. I can be pretty sure of having my voice heard in a group in which I am the only member of my race.
11. I can be casual about whether or not to listen to another person's voice in a group in which s/he is the only member of his/her race.
12. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
13. Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.

14. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
15. I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.
16. I can be pretty sure that my children's teachers and employers will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others' attitudes toward their race.
17. I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color.
18. I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty or the illiteracy of my race.
19. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
20. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
21. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
22. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
23. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
24. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to the "person in charge", I will be facing a person of my race.
25. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
26. I can easily buy posters, post-cards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys and children's magazines featuring people of my race.
27. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance or feared.
28. I can be pretty sure that an argument with a colleague of another race is more likely to jeopardize her/his chances for advancement than to jeopardize mine.
29. I can be pretty sure that if I argue for the promotion of a person of another race, or a program centering on race, this is not likely to cost me heavily within my present setting, even if my colleagues disagree with me.
30. If I declare there is a racial issue at hand, or there isn't a racial issue at hand, my race will lend me more credibility for either position than a person of color will have.

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31. I can choose to ignore developments in minority writing and minority activist programs, or disparage them, or learn from them, but in any case, I can find ways to be more or less protected from negative consequences of any of these choices.
32. My culture gives me little fear about ignoring the perspectives and powers of people of other races.
33. I am not made acutely aware that my shape, bearing or body odor will be taken as a reflection on my race.
34. I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking.
35. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having my co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of my race.
36. If my day, week or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it had racial overtones.
37. I can be pretty sure of finding people who would be willing to talk with me and advise me about my next steps, professionally.
38. I can think over many options, social, political, imaginative or professional, without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.
39. I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race.
40. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
41. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
42. I can arrange my activities so that I will never have to experience feelings of rejection owing to my race.
43. If I have low credibility as a leader I can be sure that my race is not the problem.
44. I can easily find academic courses and institutions which give attention only to people of my race.
45. I can expect figurative language and imagery in all of the arts to testify to experiences of my race.
46. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.
47. I can travel alone or with my spouse without expecting embarrassment or hostility in those who deal with us.

48. I have no difficulty finding neighborhoods where people approve of our household.

49. My children are given texts and classes which implicitly support our kind of family unit and do not turn them against my choice of domestic partnership.

50. I will feel welcomed and "normal" in the usual walks of public life, institutional and social.

Elusive and fugitive

I repeatedly forgot each of the realizations on this list until I wrote it down. For me white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own.

In unpacking this invisible knapsack of white privilege, I have listed conditions of daily experience that I once took for granted. Nor did I think of any of these perquisites as bad for the holder. I now think that we need a more finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege, for some of these varieties are only what one would want for everyone in a just society, and others give license to be ignorant, oblivious, arrogant, and destructive.

I see a pattern running through the matrix of white privilege, a pattern of assumptions that were passed on to me as a white person. There was one main piece of cultural turf; it was my own turn, and I was among those who could control the turf. My skin color was an asset for any move I was educated to want to make. I could think of myself as belonging in major ways and of making social systems work for me. I could freely disparage, fear, neglect, or be oblivious to anything outside of the dominant cultural forms. Being of the main culture, I could also criticize it fairly freely.

In proportion as my racial group was being made confident, comfortable, and oblivious, other groups were likely being made unconfident, uncomfortable, and alienated. Whiteness protected me from many kinds of hostility, distress, and violence, which I was being subtly trained to visit, in turn, upon people of color.

For this reason, the word "privilege" now seems to me misleading. We usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned or conferred by birth or luck. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work systematically to over-empower certain groups. Such privilege simply confers dominance because of one's race or sex.

Earned strength, unearned power

I want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you, or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society. Others, like the privilege to ignore less powerful people, distort the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored groups.

We might at least start by distinguishing between positive advantages, which we can work to spread, and negative types of advantage, which unless rejected will always reinforce our present hierarchies. For example, the feeling that one belongs within the human circle, as Native Americans say, should not be seen as privilege for a few. Ideally it is an unearned entitlement. At present, since only a few have it, it is an unearned advantage for them. This paper results from a process of coming to see that some of the power that I originally say as attendant on being a human being in the United States consisted in unearned advantage and conferred dominance.

I have met very few men who truly distressed about systemic, unearned male advantage and conferred dominance. And so one question for me and others like me is whether we will be like them, or whether we will get truly distressed, even outraged, about unearned race advantage and conferred dominance, and, if so, what we will do to lessen them. In any case, we need to do more work in identifying how they actually affect our daily lives. Many, perhaps most, of our white students in the United States think that racism doesn't affect them because they are not people of color; they do not see "whiteness" as a racial identity. In addition, since race and sex are not the only advantaging systems at work, we need similarly to examine the daily experience of having age advantage, or ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.

Difficulties and angers surrounding the task of finding parallels are many. Since racism, sexism, and heterosexism are not the same, the advantages associated with them should not be seen as the same. In addition, it is hard to disentangle aspects of unearned advantage that rest more on social class, economic class, race, religion, sex, and ethnic identity than on other factors. Still, all of the oppressions are interlocking, as the members of the Combahee River Collective pointed out in their "Black Feminist Statement" of 1977.

One factor seems clear about all of the interlocking oppressions. They take both active forms, which we can see, and embedded forms, which as a member of the dominant groups one is taught not to see. In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth.

Disapproving of the system won't be enough to change them. I was taught to think that racism could end if white individuals changed their attitude. But a "white" skin in the United States opens many doors for whites whether or not we approve of the way dominance has been conferred on us. Individual acts can palliate but cannot end, these problems.

To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these subject taboo. Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist.

It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculturated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that

democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people props up those in power and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already.

Although systemic change takes many decades, there are pressing questions for me and, I imagine, for some others like me if we raise our daily consciousness on the perquisites of being light-skinned. What will we do with such knowledge? As we know from watching men, it is an open question whether we will choose to use unearned advantage, and whether we will use any of our arbitrarily awarded power to try to reconstruct power systems on a broader base.

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