

Racism Hurts Everyone – Costs to White People

We often think of racism in terms of its terrible effects on people of color. These are undeniable. While there is no comparison with the effects of racism on people of color, white people are also dehumanized by racism. White people experience various material benefits and psychological advantages as a result of the system of racism, however, racism is not in white people's interest in any genuinely human way. Understanding racism fully means continuing to learn about the horrible effects of racism on people of color today, and understanding the costs of racism to white people as well.

For instance, white people often:

- Experience a sense of being cut off from people of color – of not belonging with, or being welcomed by, people of color (who are a majority of the world's population)
- Have stereotypes, prejudices, and negative thoughts about people of color, and feelings of superiority enter their minds against their will
- Are deeply pained by learning about the suffering and inequities experienced by people of color as a result of racism
- Feel hopeless and powerless to create a just society in the face of racism
- Feel guilty about the history of racism and current racism
- Fear making mistakes and being seen as racist
- Have their integrity eroded and their sense of goodness and self-worth undermined by their failures to stand up against racism
- Experience unjustified fears of people of color
- Are separated from other white people by feelings about race
- Are separated from working class and poor people of color, who are their natural allies, and with whom they could join forces to force a more equitable distribution of wealth in our society
- Experience unfounded fears of what people of color may do to white people when they have the power to exact revenge or retribution for racism
- Miss out on the benefits of deep human relationships with people of other "races" and cultures, and all that can be learned and enjoyed in such relationships

What would you add to the list?

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The position of supremacy is inherently dehumanizing to individuals in the dominant group, in addition to the terrible costs to the subordinated group. Our full humanity can only be realized in full community with other human beings - in situations of reciprocity, equity, fairness, and mutuality.

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