

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE **ANTI-RACIST?**

WORKBOOK

Building anti-racism and anti-oppressive capacity through reflective learning, empathetic interpersonal engagement, institutional analysis, and active structural transformation.

Warren Chalklen, PhD



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First Edition

By Warren Chalklen, PhD

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Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Part 1: What Does it Mean to be Anti-Racist?</i>	3
Activity 1 - Examining Unconscious Bias and Oppression	3
Activity 2 - Apathetic, Non-Racist and Anti-Racist	4
Activity 3 – LIPS Framework.....	4
Activity 4 - Spaces of Action.....	6
<i>Part 2 – Building Anti-Racist Relationships</i>	7
Activity 1 - Respectful vs. Disrespectful Conversations.....	7
Activity 2 – Reflect.....	8
Activity 3 – Ask: Crafting Your Questions	9
Activity 4 - Connect	10
Activity 5 – Expand: Relate your experiences in a way that may expand their perspective.....	10
<i>Part 3 - Combatting the Roots of Institutional and Structural Racism</i>	13
Activity 1 - Unpacking Institutions	13
Activity 2 - Linking Multiple Levels of Racism	13
Activity 3 - L-I-P-S	14
Activity 4 - Root Cause Analysis	15
<i>Part 4 – Intersectionality & Anti-Racism</i>	16
Activity 1 - What are your identities?.....	16
Activity 2 - Intersectionality.....	17
<i>Further Resources</i>	18
Reference List.....	19

Introduction

Why anti-racism? Why now?

“In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist” – Angela Davis

This workbook is a tool of love and justice. It was birthed in the wake of George Floyd’s murder. It stems from the collective energy of many people who found themselves at once burning with the fire of justice that came out from the trauma of confronting yet more police brutality. In this complex cauldron we encountered a spectrum of people. While some had only just become aware of the presence of racism in America and around the world, others had been fighting intersectional oppression their entire lives. As these multiple groups coalesced, we saw a beautiful tapestry of humanity, united in diversity. But, we also observed a breakdown in communication, white saviorism, shaming, the burdening of Black people with the “work,” and the reality that well-intentioned people, especially white people, can perpetuate racism even when we think we are dismantling it.

Anti-racism, as opposed to non-racism, is measured by the extent to which the presence of racism is being challenged or maintained. We developed this workbook for those who are “new” to the work, and for those who have an acute sense of their practice. It is designed to equip you with skills to help think through an anti-racist lens, practice from an equitable foundation, and build socially-just relationships. For white folks especially, this workbook is useful to think about, and practice how we can dismantle the systems that have unfairly advantaged us at the expense of our fellow human beings around the world.

My story and my limitations

My experience of growing up in a mixed-race family through the transition from formal to informal apartheid in South Africa shapes my understanding of the world. When I was twelve years old, our family was evicted from our home after my father lost his job. We reached out to family and friends for shelter. I overheard a family member tell my father that all of us were welcome except for my Black sister. In that moment I became acutely aware of racism and how it impacted our family throughout my life. As a White man, I experienced privilege by the people, systems and informal policies that surrounded us while simultaneously observing how those same people, systems, and policies actively dehumanized my sister.

My conviction to dismantle racism and the fact that I have a Black sister does not abdicate me from benefitting or colluding with the system of racism. I am always a work in progress despite my deep relationships with Black people, my experience as a teacher, and my doctorate degree in curriculum and instruction with a focus on racial equity. I acknowledge the privilege that my race, class, and gender bestow upon me in this work. With deep humility, I also recognize the limitations of my perspective. Nevertheless, I offer this work, a product of a collaboration, for the purpose of building a just practice as we learn together.

This work is not original. The struggle of Black, Indigenous, non-Black people of Color and White activists for justice has laid the foundation for all anti-oppressive work. This workbook is merely a conduit for the brilliance of those listed below and encourages every reader to seek and read the original texts mentioned throughout this book. List of scholars referenced throughout this work:

- David Campt
- Angela Davis
- Ibram Kendi
- W.E.B Du Bois
- Barbara Love
- Kimberlé Crenshaw
- Kwame Tume
- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva

How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is designed to be used in conjunction with the four part webinar series, *What Does it Mean to be Anti-Racist?* It contains activities and exercises to deepen your understanding of concepts and practices. The primary purpose of this text is to help you advance in the process of developing an anti-racist and anti-oppressive posture. Each part is designed to build on the previous set of skills, language, and tools. Through this workbook, you will reflect on areas of internal growth; learn how to engage in necessary anti-racist conversations with those who may be skeptical about racism; identify and analyze institutions such as workplaces for racist practices; and integrate anti-racism into the broader anti-oppressive concepts and practices.

Special Thanks

My deepest gratitude to Dr. Norvella Carter for instilling in me a seeking posture. Thank you to Stephanie Leichtle, Sarah-beth Stillwell, Richie Stillwell, Christiana Sherill, Sydney Maluleke and Khutso Dithejane for pouring your energy and experiences into this text and the accompanying webinar.

Part 1: What Does it Mean to be Anti-Racist?

Every person has work to do, what does that look like for you?

In this module you will learn about:

- The links between unconscious bias and other forms of oppression, including racism.
- Whiteness, Blackness, racism and anti-racism

You will learn how to:

- Examine and critique whiteness using white skin privilege as an example.
- Differentiate between apathetic, non-racist, and anti-racist.
- Apply a framework to identify racism in an encounter.
- Describe anti-racism action areas (internal, interpersonal, institutional, structural).

Activity 1 - Examining Unconscious Bias and Oppression

Key terms

Bias - Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

Oppression - The state of being unjustly treated or controlled.

Every person has biases, those conscious and subconscious categorizations of people, places, and objects. Name three biases you have become aware of throughout your life.

Were any of these biases harmful or potentially harmful to others? If you don't have any, can you think of any biases that others may have that could cause harm to others?

How would you describe the links between bias and other forms of harm such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia etc.?

Activity 2 - Apathetic, Non-Racist and Anti-Racist

Key terms

Apathetic - Beliefs and behaviors that frame the world as “race-neutral.”

Non-racist - There is an end point to doing the work of anti-racism.

Anti-racist - A continual process of working on oneself and with others to unmask, challenge, and dismantle racism.

Categorize each statement as apathetic, non-racist, or anti-racist in the space below.


Statement	Apathetic, Non-Racist or Anti-Racist?
“Racial differences will get better over time”	
“I’m not racist, I don’t see color”	
“How is my race impacting this experience and what work do I need to do?”	
“I have no more racism work to do”	
“I’m not racist, I have Black friends”	

Activity 3 – LIPS Framework

LIPS is a framework to help you identify the presence of racism in any given situation through language, institutions, policies and symbols.

1. **Language** - Describes power distribution.
 - a. Ex. African American vs. American.
2. **Institutions** - A way of (dis)organizing social patterns of behavior.
 - a. Ex. police force vs. police service.
3. **Policies** - Any course of action or procedure by an individual or group with power that determines actions, decisions, and priorities, that affect others. *A lack of policy is also a policy.*
4. **Symbols** - Anything that carries meaning to a specific society or culture. These often represent the perspectives of those with power.
 - a. Ex. “Founding Fathers.”

Use the LIPS framework to deconstruct the cartoon below.

World War II Cartoon	LIPS framework
 <p>Dr. Seuss Copyright, 1944, Marshall Field The Company, Inc.</p> <p>(Source: http://www.openculture.com/2014/08/dr-seuss-draws-racist-anti-japanese-cartoons-during-ww-ii.html)</p>	<p>Language → How is language being used to distribute power in this picture?</p> <p>Institutions → How are institutions being used to shape this interaction?</p> <p>Policies → How are existing or non-existent policies shaping this situation?</p> <p>Symbols → How are non-verbal aspects shaping this outcome? (i.e. sketch lines, geographic location)</p>

Activity 4 - Spaces of Action

Transformative anti-racist actions broadly fit into four categories: internalized, interpersonal, institutional and structural. List out action steps you plan to take in each quadrant below.

Quadrant of Action	Your Action Steps
Internalized - Private beliefs, prejudices and ideas that individuals have.	
Interpersonal - The expression of racism between individuals.	
Institutional - Discriminatory treatment, policies and practices, within organizations and institutions.	
Structural - System in which public policies, institutional practices and other norms perpetuate racial group inequality.	