

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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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

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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.	

Part 2 – Building Anti-Racist Relationships

*We can't have the conversation because we don't have the conversation.
How we have the conversation determines whether it is anti-racist.*

In this module, you will learn how to:

- Examine why and how people can do the work of anti-racism.

You will learn how to:

- Practice Dr. David Camp's R-A-C-E method to productively engage in sensitive conversations about race.

Activity 1 - Respectful vs. Disrespectful Conversations

Think about a conversation when you felt disrespected and a conversation when you felt respected. Use the table below to compare the characteristics of disrespectful vs. respectful conversations.

	Describe the situation	Listening	Empathy	Key words, phrases or actions	Outcome of the conversation
I felt <u>disrespected</u> in the conversation					
I felt <u>respected</u> in the conversation					

The R-A-C-E Framework

Reflect - What is my strategy going into the conversation?

Ask - What questions can I use to explore the beliefs and experiences of the person?

Connect - What part of what they are saying can I find connection with?

- You will tell a story to connect.

Expand - How can my experiences relate and expand their understanding of race/racism?

- You will tell a story to expand.

Activity 2 – Reflect

How prepared am I for the conversation?

- Have I practiced?
 - Identifying my trigger words.
 - Practicing my stories (more on that later)
- Am I ready now that it is here?
 - Center yourself, breathe and listen. (Your insides may boil. That's ok. Sit in it.)
 - Listen for the connection points, not your trigger points.
 - Think about what words could potentially trigger this person (e.g., white privilege).
- Remember the goal
 - The goal is to open the space for the next conversation.

1. Write down a statement that may trigger you in a conversation about race and one that would prompt you to use the R-A-C-E framework.
-
-

2. Preparing for the conversation:

- a) Before entering into a conversation, list your potential trigger words (those words that cause a reaction in you that might make the conversation unproductive).

-
-
-
-

b) List potential trigger words for the person you will be speaking to. I have included an example:

- white privilege
-
-
-
-

Activity 3 – Ask: Crafting Your Questions

Shift from beliefs to the experiences that are animating the beliefs

- Your goal is not to rebut but to listen.
- *Ask questions that shift the person into storytelling*
 - They may share an experience that happened to them that formed the basis of their beliefs.
 - Decide how far you want to push.
 - Make a strong effort to let them know you are not judging them (even if you are).

Based on the statement, what questions could you ask that shift the person from belief to experience underpinning that belief? As you are crafting the questions, think about the possible answers and the stories that you might be able to expand upon.

Questions	Possible Stories You Could Relate with to Connect and Then Expand

Activity 4 - Connect

- Communicate some form of alignment with an element of the other person's experience and use that as a bridge.
- Share a story that may align with an element of the other person's story.
- If you have yourself thought the same way, share that without framing it as weird or stupid.
- *You are not telling them that what they are saying about race is true, you are saying that you can relate to something they have said.*

From the list of stories above, choose one and write it out. Remember, the story must connect with the theme of the other person's story.

Activity 5 – Expand: Relate your experiences in a way that may expand their perspective

Have one or two stories in mind before going into the conversation.

Situation	Moment of Expansion	Takeaway
What was happening at the time that provoked this situation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● I half agree...● I used to feel that way...● But I later realized...● Why I see it this way is...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● How does your experience tie into the experience of the other person?● Where are the contradictions?

Write down a second story to expand the person's perspective:

Example Script

My friend Amanda recently posted the following statement on social media.

“Not all police are bad, it's just a case of bad apples coming into contact with misbehaving Black people.”

I have decided to engage in a conversation with her for the first time using the R-A-C-E framework.

Amanda	<i>Not all police officers are bad, there are just a few bad apples that come into contact with misbehaving Black people.</i>
Reflect	
Warren	Have I practiced? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are my trigger words?• How can I ensure that I open up space for the next conversation?
Ask	
Warren	I'm curious to understand more. I've heard a lot of people saying that they either trust or don't trust the police based on their personal experiences. What has been your experience of law enforcement?
Amanda	Well, once I was pulled over by an officer for being on my phone in a school zone. The officer issued me a ticket and I went on my way. I thought he treated me fairly.
Warren	That's really interesting. What I heard you say was that being treated fairly is really important to you. Can you tell me more about that?
Amanda	Well, I grew up as the youngest of five kids and my mom would treat us fairly. When we did wrong we knew there were consequences for our actions. I feel like that is what made me who I am today, if I do wrong then there must be consequences. That's the kind of parent I am to my kids.

Connect

Warren

It sounds like you have an awesome mom who left a legacy for you and your children. I really appreciate hearing about your perspective.

I know what you are talking about:

Story #1:

Growing up in South Africa, I can tell you that my mom was really strict with us. She would also always tell us that if she let too many things slide then we would not understand how to take care of ourselves, I can definitely relate. I feel like a lot of who I am today is because she made sure I understood that lesson. I can really see at least a small window into what your experience is.

Expand

Warren

Story #2

I remember as a kid in South Africa over ten years ago I had two Black friends who I am still very close with today. We stayed over at each other's houses. One time we were supposed to be home by 11pm but our bus was delayed. So when we got to the bus stop, which was a block from my house, we decided to run to make sure we got home before 11pm otherwise my mom was going to let us all have it.

The next thing I knew the police pulled up, slammed my friends onto the ground with guns in their faces and I was being questioned about whether I knew I was being chased by two black men. Which was weird to me because we were running in a group. I had to convince the officers that we are friends and explain the situation.

And so I realized at that moment that the only difference between my friends and I was the color of our skin. It had nothing to do with our behavior or what we did not do. What mattered was how the officers perceived us and treated us.

So both things can be true. That police officers can arrest those who commit crime and also, they can target people unfairly because they think they are criminals.

What do you think of that? Could you see a world in which that happens?