

HOW DOES RACE SHAPE THE LIVES OF WHITE PEOPLE?

1. The author traces some of the specific ways that her life has been shaped by racism. Consider your own socialization. In what specific ways has your life been shaped by racism? (If you are white, try to answer this question without mentioning people of color).
2. Identify at least three ways that *white racial belonging* has been conveyed to you in the last week (you might start by opening your wallet and looking at the bills there).
3. What are the earliest racial messages you can recall? Try to move beyond what you were openly told and work to identify *implicit* messages.
4. In what settings have you experienced the expectation of white solidarity/racial silence? How has that expectation been communicated to you? How have you responded? What consequences have you faced or fear you will face by breaking with white solidarity?
5. The author describes the power of segregation. She argues that this segregation is “active.” What does this mean?
6. Discuss how various patterns of segregation across your lifespan shape your racial frame.
7. If you are white, which of the patterns discussed in this chapter have you seen in yourself? Which of the patterns challenge you the most? Why?
8. Consider some aspects of your identity other than race (i.e., gender, sexuality, religion, class, ability, nationality, age). How does race shape how you experience these identities? For example, how might being white shape how you experience disability? Poverty? Gender identity and expression?
9. If you are a person of color, how have you witnessed white people enacting *white solidarity*?
10. The author states that white ignorance is not simply a matter of not knowing; it is a highly effective response that protects white investments in racism and thus is actively maintained. Discuss this statement.
11. What does the author mean when she says that white people are not, in fact, racially innocent? How can we know much about race if we have lived separately?