

THE GOOD/BAD BINARY

1. What does it mean to say that racism is “a structure, not an event”?
2. The author suggests that one of the most effective barriers to talking about racism with white people is the good/bad binary. How have you seen this binary underlying common white responses to charges of racism? How might you respond when the binary surfaces in discussions about racism?
3. If you are white, share some examples of the good/bad binary in your own responses to suggestions that you are complicit with racism.
4. When the author challenges the idea that we are all unique and therefore cannot be generalized about, what thoughts and feelings come up for you? How might these thoughts and feelings function?
5. The author lists two types of narratives that are commonly used by white people to deny complicity with racism: *color-blind* and *color-celebrate* (p. 77). Which narratives have you used yourself, or still use? If you could speak back to yourself with the voice of the author, how would you counter the narrative?
6. How can a white person still enact racism in a close relationship with a person of color? Doesn't the close relationship itself prove that the person is *not* racist? Explain how and why enacting racism in a close relationship with a person of color is not only possible but inevitable.
7. If you are white, when was the last time someone challenged you to look at an aspect of yourself related to racism? How did you feel? How did you respond? What insights did/can you gain from the exchange? If no one has ever challenged you (or not in a very long time), what might that tell you about how whiteness shapes your life?