

# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR FAMILY ABOUT RACISM A GUIDE FOR WHITE PEOPLE @JENEROUS

## 1) START WITH THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INTENT AND IMPACT.

Many white people say we aren't racist. What we mean is that we don't intend to be racist. Our intent is irrelevant if the IMPACT of our actions still harms someone. Our intent is irrelevant if the IMPACT of our actions perpetuates a racist system.

INTENT VS. IMPACT is Anti-Racism 101. It reminds us that, as white people, racism is not about us.

## 2) WATCH YOUR TONE

As white people we don't get to tell Black people how to talk to us about their own oppression (This is called "tone-policing". Look it up.

But when we talk to other white people about race, we are obligated to speak in away that maximizes EFFECTIVENESS - even if that takes more energy from us.

The information we have to communicate is more important than our feeling.

## 3) TELL STORIES OF YOUR OWN PRIVILEGE

Tell your family member a story of a specific way your white privilege has protected you.

This is also a great opportunity for you to reflect on and better your understand your own privilege.

We learn by teaching.

## 4) SHARE SOME OF YOUR OWN F\*CK UPS

Admitting that you've been wrong before helps normalize personal growth. It makes it easier for your family to reflect on their own failures and move from there.

Share specific times when you messed up and explain why those actions were wrong.

Vulnerability is strength.

## 5) MAKE IT OKAY TO ASK QUESTIONS

Ask your family if they have any questions about racism. Note this may bring up stuff you don't know yet either. One time, my family asked me about 'Black on black crime' I didn't know how to respond so I googled it. Then I found an article in The Root that explained why it isn't a thing.

My family and I learned together.

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##### 6) HOST A BOOK CLUB LITE

If someone is already resistant to learning about racism asking them to read a whole book won't work... yet

Instead, ask them to join you in an activity that involves less commitment & a discussion afterwards.

Some activity ideas:

- Unpacking The Invisible Knapsack - essay by Peggy McIntosh
- 'The Racial Wealth Gap - 15 min documentary of Explained on Netflix
- Seeing White Podcast by Scene on Radio

##### 7) KEEP ASKING "WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?"

Find a race related statistic that both of you agree to be true (EX: 'Black people are jailed for weed more often than white people are').

Next ask your family member why they think this statistic is true. Then keep asking "Why?" to every follow up question until the answer is "racism".

##### 8) PLANT A SEED OF DOUBT

For white folks, unlearning racist systems means flipping everything we know on its head. That is a big deal, which is why we'll start with a small goal.

Goal: Get your family member to start questioning their existing logic around ONE TOPIC. It could be Black hair, cultural appropriation, the prison system, representation, affirmative action, etc.

If they say 'Hmmm... I've never thought about it that way,' you're making progress.

##### 9) COMMIT TO THE IDEA THAT IS IS POSSIBLE TO CHANGE SOMEONE'S MIND

Remember your own anti-racism journey is proof.