

# Racial Justice Challenge

## Welcome

## Welcome to the Racial Justice Challenge.

### Day 1:

#### Beginning the Conversation

This week is intended to provide a supportive space to learn, share information, and take action toward racial justice. We are excited to share that there are over 2000 participants from all over the United States (and some international representation), ranging from middle schoolers to retirees! We're glad you are joining us on this journey. Some things to consider:

### Day 2: How to be Antiracist, not "Not Racist"

- **Working toward racial justice is hard, important work.**

You may feel joy, excitement, and a sense of purpose. However, you may also experience pain, anger, shame, confusion, or denial about ways in which your lives affect, and are affected by, racial inequity. Let's try to spend this week sitting with any discomfort we feel and moving forward with our antiracist practice.

### Day 3: Moving Beyond a Single Story

- **We all will make mistakes** - it's inevitable. But, let's commit to learning from our mistakes, and to continue this work with care and accountability.

### Day 4: Examining Race in the Media

- **Given the subject matter of this program, you may feel upset or overwhelmed.** For example, you may notice that you or someone you know has been contributing to racial inequity (whether consciously or unconsciously), or you may realize that your participation in this program is a painful reliving of experiences you have had with racism. Wherever possible, we encourage you to listen to Layla Saad who, in her book *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*, states: "You have to decide what is going to be the anchor that

### Day 5: Create an Antiracism Action Plan

keeps you committed to this work, whether it is a commitment to antioppression and the dignity of BIPOC, your commitment to your own healing, your commitment to being a better friend or family member to BIPOC, or your commitment to your own personal or spiritual values" (p. 20). When you're feeling upset or overwhelmed, consider why it is so hard, and what your anchor(s) may be.

- **This is long, enduring work that will go well beyond this week.** As part of this challenge, we will create an antiracist action plan for the rest of 2020. We hope this helps us all stay connected and committed to this work.

This program was designed by Madelyn Woods, PhD student in Earth and Climate Sciences, Anila Karunakar, Director of the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, and Jen Bonnet, Social Sciences and Humanities Librarian, all at the University of Maine.

The University of Maine recognizes that it is located on Marsh Island in the homeland of the Penobscot Nation, where issues of water and territorial rights, and encroachment upon sacred sites, are ongoing. Penobscot homeland is connected to the other Wabanaki Tribal Nations — the Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Micmac — through kinship, alliances and diplomacy. The university also recognizes that the Penobscot Nation and the other Wabanaki Tribal Nations are distinct, sovereign, legal and political entities with their own powers of self-governance and self-determination.

Have questions about this challenge or about any of the tasks? Don't hesitate to contact Jen Bonnet.

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### Day 1:

### Beginning the Conversation

### Day 2: How to be Antiracist, not "Not Racist"

### Day 3: Moving Beyond a Single Story

### Day 4: Examining Race in the Media

### Day 5: Create an Antiracism Action Plan

## Welcome to Day 1 of the Racial Justice Challenge.

Today, we begin a conversation about racial justice. We will learn about some of the issues that contribute to racial inequity and consider why it can be hard to talk about race. As Emmanuel Acho notes, "[I]f you want to know how you can help, how you can stand with us, how you can stand with me, you must first educate yourself so you know exactly what you're standing for and why you're standing," from *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man*.

### 1. Let's Get Started.





- **Read What is White Privilege Really**, from Teaching Tolerance. (~15 minutes)
- **Listen to (or read) this National Public Radio interview with Layla Saad**. Saad is the author of *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*. (16 minutes)
- **Then, consider ways that your worldview may be white-centered**. Note that white centering is not just a white person phenomenon - Layla Saad writes about her own white centering as a black woman in *I built a white feminist temple. And now I'm tearing it down*. (5-10 minutes)

*NOTE: This challenge took place August 3-7. Comments are now disabled, but please reflect on the questions in the board and scroll through participants' responses.*



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**JENNIFER BONNET** 6D

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**How might your worldview be white-centered? For our educators, how might your teaching be white-centered?**



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## 2. Understand Why it's Hard to Talk About Race

- **Watch this brief interview, What Happens When I Try to Talk Race with White People**, with Reni Eddo-Lodge who wrote, *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*. (3:25 minutes)
- **Watch this short clip, A Conversation With White People On Race**, from *The New York Times*. (5:35 minutes)
- **Watch Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man**, with Emmanuel Acho. (9:37 minutes)

## 3. Actions You Can Take Today

- **Go to [blacklivesmatter.com](https://blacklivesmatter.com) to better understand the Black Lives Matter movement and the issues they're trying to address. Then, sign up for their email**

**notifications to continue learning.** Listen to what they say they are trying to accomplish and what they need from us.

- **Borrow or buy** Layla Saad's *Me and White Supremacy* and Reni Eddo-Lodge's *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*, **and start reading!** For those looking to borrow, request these books at your local or university library. For those looking to buy, order from bookstores run by people of color, like these Black-owned bookstores.
- **Create an antiracism self-care plan, using this template.** Open the template, click on "File" (upper left corner), and then click on Download, to create a personal copy. The National Museum of African American History and Culture reminds us:

"We each bring our own beliefs, experiences, and feelings to our anti-racist work – a work that is difficult and demanding. Our ongoing commitment to actively think about and take action against racism, combined with a sense of urgency and deep caring, adds pressure and stress to our daily lives. The emotional impact of this work is real, therefore it is vital that we all practice “self-care” to benefit our overall health and quality of life."



#### 4. BONUS Actions

- **Listen to this episode of the Black Girl in Maine Podcast.** Shay Stewart-Bouley, author of the Black Girl in Maine blog, and **Debby Irving**, author of *Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race*, discuss niceness, "white women tears," discomfort, and making antiracism personal. You can find Irving's book at your local or university library.
- **Learn about commonly used terminology as we continue this conversation - see, for example,**

## **the Racial Equity Tools Glossary and *The New York Times*' Where did BIPOC Come From?.**

**You have completed Day 1 of the Racial Justice**

**Challenge!** Keep what you learned today in mind as we move into tomorrow's topic, How to be Antiracist, not "Not Racist." See you soon!

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### Day 1: Beginning the Conversation

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### Day 5: Create an Antiracism Action Plan

## Welcome to Day 2 of the Racial Justice Challenge.

Today, we turn to the concept of antiracism. According to **Dr. Ibram X Kendi**, founding director of Boston University's Center for Antiracist Research, "I want to eliminate the concept of "not racist" from our vocabulary. We're either being racist or antiracist." He goes on to say, "The heartbeat of racism is denial... An antiracist is someone who is willing to admit the times in which they're being racist and who is willing to recognize the inequities and the racial problems of our society and who is willing to challenge those racial inequities by challenging policies."



**Let's get started by learning about and sharing ways in which we can practice antiracism.**

**1. Watch Dr. Ibram X Kendi's TED talk/interview: The difference between being "not racist" and being antiracist. (50 minutes)**

The difference between being "not racist..."





### 3. Actions You Can Do Today

- **Choose two antiracist actions to complete from those shared by participants in the discussion board above.**

OR

**Visit 97 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice, which is a list of things that *anyone* can do and is focused on combating anti-black racism in particular. Complete 2 of the tasks on that list.** Action items are regularly updated, so revisit this site often!

- **Borrow or buy books** like Kendi's *How to be an Antiracist*, and Dr. Anneliese Singh's *The Racial Healing Handbook: Practical Activities To Help You Challenge Privilege, Confront Systemic Racism & Engage in Collective Healing*, and **start reading!** For those looking to borrow, request these books at your local or university library. For those looking to buy, order from bookstores run by people of color, like these Black-owned bookstores.



### 4. BONUS Actions

- **Consider your own identity.**
  - Take the Implicit Bias Test on Race called Race IAT, and learn about your own inherent biases.
  - Then, use this working document for aspiring racial justice advocates to understand where you are personally in your journey to be antiracist and learn about ways in which you can progress.
- **Read Guidelines for Being Strong White Allies, from Racial Equity Tools.**
- **For educators: Consider ways you can engage in antiracist education, and implement one or two of them in your teaching this fall.** Some resources

**in your teaching this fall. Some resources**

include Interrogating Your Discipline, and Other Ways Into Anti-Racist Teaching, Teaching Race: Pedagogy and Practice, and Teaching Ideas and Resources to Help Students Make Sense of the George Floyd Protests. Find examples of antiracist actions described or enacted in popular media that might connect with students and start conversations, like this brief discussion of reparations from *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*, or this interview with Ramy Youssef and Patrisse Cullors on *Late Night with Seth Meyers*.

If you teach at predominantly white institutions, inform yourself of best practices when few students in your classes or programs are people of color. Some resources include How Should I Talk about Race in My Mostly White Classroom?, *Teaching Race: How to Help Students Unmask and Challenge Racism* (find a copy at your local or university library), and Moving Beyond the Privilege Walk (which encourages us to be mindful of the activities we use that can center white people's learning at the expense of marginalized groups).

**You have completed Day 2 of the Racial Justice**

**Challenge!** Remember Kendi's comments about racism when he refers to 'racist' as an action, an inaction, or an idea, not a person, and that change is possible. Join us tomorrow when we'll expand our ideas of what people's stories can tell us about who they are and what makes them thrive.

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**2. Spend time *reflecting* on ways in which you have acted or thought in a racist way, and on how you may be part of racist systems or institutions. Then, consider ways in which you are or could be antiracist. (5-10 minutes)**

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## **What are ways that you are or could be antiracist?**

These can be big or small.

### **Communicate by speaking and listening**

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Communicate by speaking and listening

I think as I have come to learn more about other other people's experiences with racism and bigotry, it has become both an important,

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# Racial Justice Challenge



## Welcome

## Welcome to Day 3 of the Racial Justice Challenge.

### Day 1:

We begin with **Chimimanda Ngozi Adiche**, who stated in her TED Talk, *The Danger of a Single Story*: "The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story." She goes on to say, "The consequence of the single story is this: it robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult."

### Beginning the Conversation

### Day 2: How to be Antiracist, not "Not Racist"

### Day 3: Moving Beyond a Single Story

**Let's get started.** Stories help us connect with one another and build empathy. Today's tasks are focused on growing our set of stories by listening to people of color with a wide range of lived experiences.

### Day 4:

### Examining Race in the Media

## 1. Listen to Adiche's TED talk. (18:33 minutes)

### Day 5: Create an Antiracism Action Plan

## Podcasts

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie  
**The danger of a single story**

The danger of a single story, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

## 2. Actions You Can Take Today to Move Beyond a Single Story



## All My R

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- **Listen to a podcast episode, from the podcast carousel on the left side of this page.**
- **Choose something to read from the lists below.**

- If You Really Want to Unlearn Racism Read Black Sci-Fi Authors, and Don't Just Read About Racism—Read Stories About Black People Living, and I Am a Book Critic. Here's What Is Wrong With "Black Lists" — and What Is Good.
- The Best Latino Books, According to Latinx Writers
- Rachel Cargle's Community POC Reading Recommendations. You can make suggestions for this list.
- Decolonize Your Bookshelf With These Books by Native American Writers
- 25 Books by Asian-American and Pacific Islander Writers to Read Right Now
- 56 Books By Women and Nonbinary Writers of Color to Read in 2020



- **Choose something to watch that “show[s] POC as lead characters and in their full humanity,”**

adapted from yesterday's action list: Queen Sugar, Insecure, Dear White People, The Carmichael Show, Blackish, Grownish, Atlanta, 2 Dope Queens, Black Panther, A Wrinkle in Time, Get Out, Girls Trip, Mudbound, How to Get Away with Murder, Scandal, The Cloverfield Paradox, Sorry to Bother You, Blindspotting, BlackKkKlansman, Little, If Beale Street Could Talk, Queen and Slim, A Black Lady Sketch Show, PBS' Great Performance of Much Ado about Nothing, YouTube videos of Amber Says What, Babysitters Club, One Day at a Time, Fresh off the Boat, Crazy Rich Asians, Jane the Virgin, Killing Eve, Nora from Queens, Sex Education, Superstore,



Pose, Hamilton, The Lovebirds, Never Have I Ever, Dawnland, Smoke Signals, Skins, American Gods, and Crash, are a few.

- **Follow people on social media with the intention of listening and learning** (adapted from this list). For example: Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi, Alicia Garzia, bell hooks, latinxreads, Tara Houska, Jillian Mercado, Rebecca Nagle, Luvvie Ajayi, Rachel Cargle, Ava DuVernay, Laverne Cox, thenewjimcrow, DeRay Mckesson, YoNasDa Lonewolf, Ibram X. Kendi, Layla F. Saad, Adrienne Keene, Killer Mike, and Reshma Saujani.





**The suggestions above are a few of the approaches one might take. Below are other ideas that participants shared during the challenge week.**

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## How can we move beyond a single story?

Are there people or organizations you suggest we read, listen to, watch, or follow?

### **YA Literature**

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YA Literature




YA Literature

One of the best courses I've taken was in YA Literature. I learned so much about BIPOC people and myself.

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### 3. BONUS Actions

- **Go back to Day 2 and pick a new action to complete**, either from the antiracism discussion board or from [this list](#).
- **Follow people of color in your field or profession, invite them to speak at conferences in your field or profession, and cite their work.** Citing people of color adds voices and stories to our work (and worldview) that have been missing and/or underrepresented.
  - **For professionals:** See The Imperial Scholar: Reflections on a Review of Civil Rights Literature  and #CommunicationSoWhite for additional insight into racial disparities in the academic context of citation.
  - **For anyone on social media:** Remember to credit ideas through links and direct quotes so that people reading your posts can follow up on topics that inspire or intrigue them.
- **Recommend stories created by POC** to people in your broader social circle/network.

**Nice job! You have completed Day 3 of the Racial Justice Challenge.** Take a few breaths, and join us tomorrow when we look at issues of race in the media.

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### Day 5: Create an Antiracism Action Plan

## Welcome to Day 4 of the Racial Justice Challenge.

Today, we turn our attention to representations of race and ethnicity in various media, with examples of underlying bias and racist ideas.

### Let's get started.

**1. Grab a pen and paper or open a document on your device. Read this news story, and reflect on these questions.** (5-10 minutes)

- What is your first thought when seeing/reading this?
- Examine that thought. Do you really believe it? How much do you believe it?
- Where does this thought stem from? Fear, anger, confusion, compassion, pity, etc.?
- Is this thought racist or antiracist? If racist, how can you combat this type of racist thinking? If antiracist, how can you act on it?



**2. Read this version of the same story, and reflect on the following questions.** (5-10 minutes)

- Why is this version different?
- In what ways might news stories shape our perception of an issue?

**3. Watch *Indigenous People React To Indigenous Representation In Film And TV*.** (15:23 minutes)

~~SOURCE CAN SOMETIMES REVEAL THAT THERE IS MORE TO IT THAN~~  
we first thought, and can help us share a more complete, accurate picture of the issue we're exploring.

Using this method, we find that the quote from this meme is from a *60 Minutes* conversation in 2005 that Freeman discusses several years later. Freeman has spoken about certain policies that are racist, has discussed the death of Freddie Gray and the "terrorism we suffer from the police," and has recently offered to amplify the voices of people who have experienced racism (see some of his recent posts about Black lives here). Thus, the meme is misleading as a *single story*. This illustrates how context matters - there is more to Freeman's position on discussing racism than the one quotation in the meme suggests.

**Further questions to consider:** Were you able to identify Ted Nugent's agenda (who shared the meme), and/or the agenda of the Free Thought Project (whose website is listed at the bottom of the image)? Note: An agenda doesn't mean the information is untrue or incorrect, but may mean that it's incomplete. In what ways might we share a more nuanced post on social media that doesn't oversimplify a complex issue like how to address racism?

**You have completed Day 4 of the Racial Justice**

**Challenge!** Join us tomorrow as we finish strong with an antiracist action plan for the rest of 2020.

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## Indigenous People React To Indigenous ...







How can we be critical and thoughtful consumers of media? 

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# How can we be critical and thoughtful consumers of media?


## Unfair comparison

### Unfair comparison

The two articles should not be compared or rather presented as two versions of the same thing. The first article was written before the second. The second article had the benefit of more time to uncover

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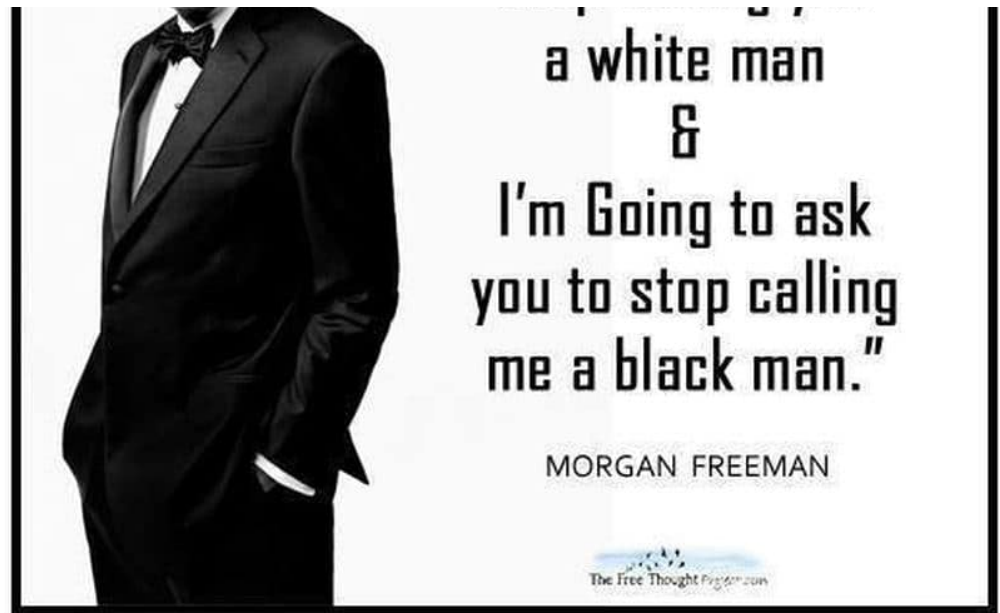
## 4. Actions You Can Do Today

- **Choose an action to complete from participants' responses to the media consumption question above.**
- **Go back to Day 2 and pick a new action to complete,** either from the participant antiracist action board or from [this list](#).
- **Borrow or purchase books like Alma Garcia's *Contested Images: Women of Color in Popular Culture* and start reading!** For those looking to borrow, request these books  at your local or university library. For those looking to buy, order from bookstores run by people of color, like these Black-owned bookstores.
- **Read *How can TV and movies get representation right?* and if you have time, listen to *The Media's Reckoning With Racism*.**

## 5. BONUS Action

This Morgan Freeman meme has been circulating widely on social media.









**Consider ways this meme is problematic.** We provide a few ideas further down the page, but first consider your own responses to the meme.

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## How is the Morgan Freeman meme problematic?

Feel free to do some Googling.

### Ammunition

Ammunition

Morgan Freeman is a much-admired, multi-talented actor. This has

given him a tremendous amount of power and influence over others (regardless of race) when he speaks. Several people in my life who are not yet looking at their racism have used his words as a defense for

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One approach to evaluating this meme is to use **the SIFT method** for assessing information we encounter online.

- **Stop**

Pause for a moment, and ask yourself, Do I recognize this website or source of information? Do I know the reputation of the site or the creators of the information I've found? Am I familiar with their reputation for making sensible claims? If any of your answers are no, or if you're not sure, continue with the rest of SIFT to get a sense of what you're looking at before you actually dive into it.



- **Investigate the source**

Ask yourself, Where is this information coming from? What kind of credentials, expertise, or insight does the person or organization have who created this information, and what's their agenda? Taking a few minutes to figure out where this post originated will help you better understand its significance and trustworthiness.

- **Find trusted coverage**

Sometimes we may not be able to readily determine the credibility of a source, or we may be unsure if what we've found is good information. Thus, we can look for better coverage than the original source we came across. One approach is to look around and see if we can corroborate a claim in other reliable sources by simply searching in Google.

- **Trace claims to their original context**

Tracing a claim, quote, image, or video back to its original source can sometimes reveal that there is more to it than



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### Day 5: Create an Antiracism Action Plan

### Welcome to Day 5 of the Racial Justice Challenge.

This is our final day together. We'll be creating an antiracist action plan for the rest of 2020.

### Let's get started.

**1. Use this template to design your antiracist action plan. A copy is also embedded below.** Either print a copy, or download a copy by clicking on "File" (upper left corner), and then "Download."

As you think about your priorities, revisit the resources shared each day of this challenge, the ideas and suggestions shared by participants throughout the week, and consider the vision you have for yourself. Example topics for a plan might include:

- Continuing conversations on race and racism with others
- Working on self-improvement and becoming antiracist
- Combating racism in your professional practice
- Donating to antiracist organizations and efforts, with money or time
- Combating racial disparities in the education system
- Combating racial disparities in the health care system
- Combating racial disparities in the prison system
- Immigration reform

## Racial Justice Action Plan

Adapted from [Jen Hofmann's](#) Americans of Conscience Checklist Action Plan worksheet

**1. Based on your [reflections on Day 2](#), what are specific ways you can be antiracist when you notice that you are thinking or acting in a racist way?**

**2. What are the top three things you are going to commit to changing, tackling, or dismantling going forward?**

**a.** Which issues matter most to you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**b.** What goal(s) do you want to accomplish this year?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**3. Identify why the issues you listed above matter.** Why do the issues above matter to you more than others? What values do you have that inform your priorities?







**Part of a successful action plan is making room for self care, and regaining momentum when you are feeling burnout.**

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## What are strategies you use to keep or regain momentum?

### Participating with a Public School Educator Lens

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Participating with a Public School Educator Lens  
Thank you for providing this framework for learning/thinking/taking action. Thank you also to everyone who has shared on the comment boards. For me, our sharing has been the most important part of this experience.


I have participated this past week as a long-time public school educator (librarian)/school librarian educator/education advocate. When completing my antiracist action plan, I reflected further on the outstanding racial/social justice work students and communities are doing across the country. If you share my lens, this book review may inspire you further: Lift Us Up, Don't Push Us Out! <https://tinyurl.com/slblog080320>

⋮

### Staying Informed

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Staying Informed  
To keep momentum, I want to stay engaged with current events, and take action to support important issues including contacting my legislators

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**2. Remember that you will make mistakes.** In *How to Become a Better Anti-Racist Ally, Including Owning Your Mistakes*, the author notes, "How to recognise your own mistakes to become a better anti-racist ally will require work," and "It's important to accept that you might not always get it right."

**THANK YOU** for participating in the Racial Justice Challenge. We have learned so much from you, and appreciate your ideas and insights for this important, ongoing work. We look forward to continuing this work with you!

# Racial Justice Action Plan

Adapted from [Jen Hofmann's](#) Americans of Conscience Checklist Action Plan worksheet

**1. Based on your [reflections on Day 2](#), what are specific ways you can be antiracist when you notice that you are thinking or acting in a racist way?**

**2. What are the top three things you are going to commit to changing, tackling, or dismantling going forward?**

a. Which issues matter most to you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

b. What goal(s) do you want to accomplish this year?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**3. Identify why the issues you listed above matter.** Why do the issues above matter to you more than others? What values do you have that inform your priorities?

**4. Working backwards, what are the steps you will need to take to achieve these goal(s)?** Make a list of tasks that you need to complete in order to achieve your goal(s). Breaking large tasks into small ones can help make your work feel more manageable.

**5. Organize your list of tasks into a timeline that has specific, realistic actions.**

Without specific timeframes and deadlines, some tasks may never get completed. And, a visual representation of your plan is often helpful. **Then, schedule time in your calendar to be active.** Include times to take action, and set up alerts if you find that those are helpful as reminders.

**6. Create a [self care plan](#).** Doing antiracism work may make you feel joy, excitement, and a sense of purpose. However, you may also experience pain, anger, shame, confusion, guilt, or denial about ways in which your lives affect, and are affected by, racial inequity. What are your “anchors” as you work through these feelings? Self nourishment is a crucial part of antiracist action because it helps you maintain long-term resourcefulness.

**7. Find out who to contact.** For example, look up names, addresses, emails and phone #s of the following:

- [House rep:](#)
- [Senator 1:](#)
- [Senator 2:](#)
- [Governor:](#)
- [State legislator 1:](#)
- [State legislator 2:](#)
- [State elections office:](#)
- [Local election official:](#)

If your priorities involve organizations or individuals outside of politics, see if you can locate their contact information to have at the ready (e.g., schools, clubs, social media handles, companies).

**8. Get ready to write and thank.** Thank people and organizations who do work you appreciate. They also benefit from encouragement and support for their energy and labor.

- a. Get a pile of postcards (or sheets of 110lb cardstock to [make your own](#)).
- b. Stock up on stamps: Get a book or two of [postcard stamps](#).
- c. Email addresses.

**9. Have a conversation with beloved others about the actions you want to take.** If you want to do your actions with others, be sure to invite them. Sometimes taking action with others can help us stay motivated and inspired, and holds us accountable.