

Movement for Race Equality

If we want to mark this moment in time as the beginning of significant change in our society (the end of racism as we know and see), it needs to be more than changes in policy and laws. We need to create a movement that changes the way we interact on a human, person-to-person basis. This movement must change our mind-set to enable us to interact with the world around us in a different way. It must help us to overcome our inherent biases about race and ethnicity.

I believe the movement's mind-set should be predicated on simple principles, which are the foundation of positive human relationships. What follows are five principles/values, with which you are all familiar, that are essential for us to achieve true social transformation. The difference - we must be present to their importance in our daily life and everyday interactions.

1. Tolerance - an open attitude toward those whose opinions (political, social or otherwise), beliefs, practices, racial or ethnic origins are different than yours. **Teaching Tolerance**, an American organisation, describes it very well – "...a way of thinking and feeling—but most importantly, of **acting**—that gives us peace in our individuality, respect for those unlike us, the wisdom to discern humane values and the courage to act upon them."
2. Patience – to seek to understand before judging and before being understood. Our patience must help us avoid provocation without responding in anger. We must show forbearance when under strain. This will not be a quick process but an evolution, which will be achieved through our perseverance and commitment. We have to spend more time listening to one another not talking over each other.
3. Inclusion – invest time and effort into a relationship with someone different than you. Segregation across our social interactions is prevalent today. Segregation in our communities, our schools and the workplace based on race, religion, and class is more prevalent today than 30 years ago. This has made the process of social exclusion easier to achieve. Social exclusion provides the building blocks for structural racism in our society. I implore you to reach out across these barriers. Build friendships with those that are different than you and welcome them into your community, into your workplace and into your social groups. Stand up and be a role model to those around you.
4. Education – People of colour do not have an obligation to speak to you about race. Be sensitive and try to mostly listen if the opportunity arises. Luckily, there are lots of resources available on the internet and as books. In most cases, these should be your first point of call for gleaning a basic understanding. A fantastic starting point is John Greenberg's website "[Citizenship and Social Justice.](#)" I would also encourage you to read John Metta's piece (easily searched on the internet) "When you walk into the valley: On allies asking to be taught about race." As for books, I recommend the following three books as a starting point: "Why I'm not talking to White People...About Race" by Reni Eddo-Lodge (my favourite); "British: On Race, Identity and Belonging" by Afua Hirsch; and "Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire" by Akala.

5. Activism – Simple steps for making a difference and driving the movement:

1. Learn to recognize and understand your own privilege
2. Examine your own biases and consider where they may have originated
3. Intervene whenever you witness a racist situation
4. Find out how your workplace plans to expand opportunities for people of colour.
5. Give visibility to the work of people of colour.
6. Adopt an intersectional (that all forms of deprivation are connected) approach to social justice.
7. Support and attend events that celebrate different cultures.
8. Get involved with culturally diverse organisations
9. Don't expect to be rewarded for not being racist.

In conclusion I will let Dr Martin Luther King Jr. have the final word, “Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

How can we walk this journey together?