**Biased Attitudes That Perpetuate Racist Dynamics and**

**Structural Racism**

Review the list of attitudes below. As you read:

* Check off any you have heard from white people.
* Circle the number of any that you have personally thought or believed at any time in your life.

\*After you’ve read through the list and marked it, follow the directions below the list for additional reflection.

**Some/Many People, Particularly White People, Tend to Believe (consciously and unconsciously):**

1. I have “earned” everything I have. All white people have.
2. There is no such thing as white privilege.
3. White privilege was made up to make white people feel guilty.
4. Racism is a relic of the past; we are living in a post-racial society/world.
5. The few people who still have racist attitudes and behaviors are fueled by hate and intend to cause harm to People of Color.
6. If an occasional microaggression occurs, white people should stay quiet and let the Person of Color respond.
7. If People of Color just worked harder and “pulled themselves up by their bootstraps” they could succeed, too.
8. We should be “color-blind” and not talk about race. It is divisive.
9. Most People of Color are under-educated and haven’t yet had the opportunity to develop the critical skills and competencies needed to succeed.
10. White people are generally smarter, more competent, more polished/professional, better leaders, and more deserving than People of Color.
11. Many People of Color only have the capacity and work ethic to be in lower-level, service roles.
12. People of Color tend to “play the Race Card” and call white people racist to avoid developmental feedback and being held accountable for doing their jobs.
13. Many People of Color are not qualified and get hired to fill a quota over deserving

white candidates. They don’t have the experience and credentials for the job.

1. Many People of Color get promoted into positions of power because of their race, not their competence and capacities. They didn’t earn it fairly.
2. Many People of Color are lazy and can’t be counted on to get the job done well.
3. People of Color are generally less productive and quick to make excuses for their lack of performance.
4. People of Color over-exaggerate when they “complain” about the daily indignities they say they experience. These things happen to white people, too.
5. Many People of Color are looking for a free handout and special privileges they didn’t earn.
6. People of Color don’t appreciate all we have done for them.
7. There is no systemic racism anymore.
8. The current societal and organizational norms, practices, and values are fair for everyone.
9. People of Color should conform and assimilate to organizational culture, norms, and practices.
10. People of Color should dress and act “professional” and “appropriate” at all times which means looking, sounding, and acting more like white people (tone, language, expression of emotions, dress, hair, posture, compliance with directions, obey authority figures, etc.)
11. We need to hire and promote people who are a “good fit” for the organization.
12. Good, loyal white people are overlooked and not promoted when we have to “promote from within the organization” and meet our “racial diversity goals.”
13. Many People of Color can be loud, too direct, argumentative, and unprofessional.
14. People of Color who always talk about race are divisive and often trouble-makers.
15. Many People of Color these days are too “uppity” and don't know their place.
16. People of Color are too sensitive and take offense to most anything white people say and do.
17. Many People of Color are angry all the time and aggressively attack white people for the smallest, unintentional misstep. They are looking for things to confront.
18. Most People of Color blow things out of proportion and claim there is systemic racism every time a white person makes a joke or uses the wrong term.
19. People of Color need to decide what we should call them and stick with it. It is too hard to keep up.
20. White people can’t do anything right. People of Color will always find fault with what we do.
21. People of Color should give us grace when we make an honest misstep and didn’t intend to say anything racist.
22. Many People of Color are racist against white people.
23. White people experience reverse racism from People of Color.
24. White people have to be extremely careful about what they say or People of Color will file a grievance.
25. People of Color are always looking for a reason to file a lawsuit so they can cash in and not work.
26. People of Color overlook all the progress we have made and only harp on what they still think is wrong.
27. People of Color need to “get over it” and stop using the past as an excuse for their lack of success.
28. People of Color believe they should be given more money, promotions, etc., without having to work for them.
29. People of Color segregate themselves.
30. Many People of Color are hard to work with.
31. It is often hard to understand what many People of Color are saying.
32. People of Color need to be more articulate when speaking if they want to be understood and respected.
33. People of Color will stick together even when they are wrong.
34. People of Color should share their experiences and teach white people about dynamics of race and racism.
35. White people’s main role in addressing racism is to just be quiet, listen, and learn from People of Color. People of Color are the only ones who can address racism.
36. It is better to stay quiet about race/racism than to get it wrong.
37. White people should never confront, disagree or question what a Person of Color says about race or racism.
38. As a white person, if you want to address racism, go do service work in communities and countries which are primarily People of Color.
39. People of Color make it so uncomfortable to talk about race.
40. White people should just sit back and give them the space to talk.
41. If I say anything, they get mad; if I stay silent, they are angry. We’re damned if we do, damned if we don’t.
42. We can’t say anything anymore without being called a racist.
43. People of Color should appreciate when white colleagues are trying.
44. White colleagues deserve to be given the benefit of the doubt and acknowledged for their “good intent”. There is no need to constantly harp on the impact to People of Color.
45. People of Color should welcome the chance to work with clients of color, mentor employees/students of color, and serve on organizational diversity committees. It is good for their career.
46. I understand racism since I am \_\_\_\_ (a member of a marginalized group, e.g., a woman, LGBTQ, Jewish, someone with a disability, someone who grew up poor, etc.)
47. I understand racism because \_\_\_ (I am married to a Person of Color; I have Biracial kids; We adopted a Chinese baby; I grew up in a predominantly Black and Latinx neighborhood; My best friends are People of Color, etc.

**After you’ve marked the list**:

* Add any additional common unproductive, possibly racist attitudes of white people.
* How do white people tend to react out of these types of beliefs?
* How could you effectively engage others, particularly white people, who have these biases and beliefs?

Then, thinking about the items that you circled in the list (the views you have personally held at some point), answer the following questions:

1. When did you first hear each of these attitudes? When did you come to believe each of them?
2. Who benefits from these racist attitudes and beliefs? How?
3. When have you reacted out of any racist attitude or belief (even if unconsciously)? What was your probable negative impact on People of Color and Indigenous Peoples? The team? On organizational goals?
4. As you think about the reality of the impact of your attitudes, actions, and inactions, what emotions come up for you?
5. What is the pay-off when you believe this racist attitude? How have you benefitted from holding onto these racist beliefs and attitudes? For reacting based on them?
6. How have your racist beliefs and attitudes driven your behavior, interactions, and decision making?
7. How could you stop yourself and interrupt this type of thoughts the next time one arises?
8. How can you shift each racist thought in the moment? How can you strategize ahead of time if you anticipate that you may fall into a particular racist attitude again?

**Compiled by: Kathy Obear,** **Kathy@drkathyobear.com**[**www.drkathyobear.com**](http://www.drkathyobear.com)

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