

Speaking of Racial Justice



Bias is the tendency to take a side for or against something based on a belief you already had, or a prejudice. It interferes with us making a fair judgement.

Implicit (unconscious) **bias** is the attitude or stereotype that affects our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. It operates outside of the person's awareness and can be in direct contradiction to a person's espoused beliefs and values. Studies show that racial implicit bias in an individual reflects the racial biases of the community in which that individual resides and does not necessarily reflect whether the individual acts in a racist manner.

For example: Police shootings of black people are more prevalent in communities with high racial implicit biases. (Hehman, Eric)

For more information see the podcast:

Hidden Brain (NPR) - The Air We Breathe, June 12, 2020. <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/531587708>

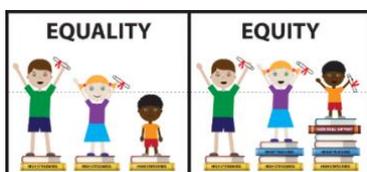
Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex. It involves restricting members of one group from opportunities or privileges that are available to members of another group. Prejudice is the opinion or viewpoint; discrimination is the action that brings the prejudice to life through the choices we make.

For example, discrimination in the job market: A researcher sent pairs of college men to apply for 350 entry-level jobs in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. One team was African American, and one was White. The teams had identical resumes, except for one difference—on each team, one of the men said that they had served 18 months in jail for drug possession. Not surprisingly, men without a prison record were 2 to 3 times more likely to receive a callback from the job. However, there was also a significant racial difference—white men with a prison record were more likely to be offered a job than African American men who had a clean record!

Resulting Action: Because of this research study, Congress was asked to fund a \$300 million program to provide mentoring and other support to help former prisoners to get jobs. (Pager, D. (2003). "The Mark of a Criminal Record", American Journal of Sociology 108(5): 937-975)

"Equality is treating everyone the same. But **equity** is taking differences into account, so everyone has a chance to succeed." *Small Great Things* by Jodie Piccoult p. 427.

For example: it might be a great idea to provide computers and internet to every home in the neighborhood (aka equality), but equity would take into account what is happening in each home—maybe some homes already have working computers and internet access. And maybe some households need access to free WiFi, a communal space to work or even have someone come over to teach them how to navigate a computer. At the end of the day, equity in this venture would mean creating the *opportunity* for everyone to have access to computers and internet in a way that makes sense individually.



Juneteenth: a blending of the words June and nineteenth – is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. It is also called Emancipation Day or Freedom Day.

HISTORY: In 1863, during the American Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared more than three million slaves living in the Confederate states to be free. The Emancipation Proclamation only prohibited slavery in the states of secession, not in the border states so at the end of the Civil War, slavery still existed in Kentucky, New Jersey, and Delaware. The Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution was passed by Congress 31 January 1865 and ratified 6 December 1865 declaring, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”

FREEDOM FOR SLAVES IN TEXAS: White slaveowners in Texas knew about the proclamation for freedom for the slaves in 1863, but it took more than two years, before the news reached African Americans living in Texas. It was not until Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, that the state’s residents finally learned that slavery had been abolished. Union General Gordon Granger read the federal order effectively telling the story of liberation for African Americans in our country. When the state’s residents finally learned that slavery had been abolished the former slaves immediately began to celebrate with prayer, feasting, song, and dance.

FIRST OFFICIAL CELEBRATION: The following year, on June 19, the first official Juneteenth celebrations took place in Texas. The original observances involved church-centered community gatherings in Texas including prayer meetings and the singing of spirituals. Celebrants wore new clothes as a way of representing their newfound freedom. Within a few years, African Americans in other states were celebrating the day as well, making it an annual tradition.

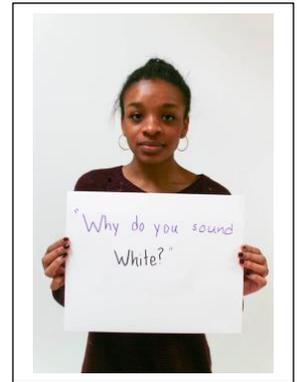
JUNETEENTH BECAME A HOLIDAY in Texas in 1980, and a number of other states subsequently followed suit. In June 2005, Michigan Governor Jennifer M. Granholm signed legislation officially designating the third Saturday in June as Juneteenth National Freedom Day in Michigan. Organizations such as the National Juneteenth Observance Foundation are seeking a Congressional designation of Juneteenth as a national day of observance. Forty-eight of the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia have recognized Juneteenth as either a state holiday or ceremonial holiday, a day of observance (Hawaii and South Dakota do not). The day is also celebrated outside the United States, with organizations in a number of countries using the day to recognize the end of slavery and to celebrate the culture and achievements of African Americans.



A microaggression is a subtle behavior – verbal or non-verbal, conscious or unconscious – directed at a member of a marginalized group that has a derogatory, harmful effect. While microaggressions are sometimes conscious and intentional, on many occasions microaggressions may reflect the perpetrator’s implicit biases about marginalized group members. They are often given in what is intended to be a compliment but is heard as an insult given the presence of systemic racism.

For example:

- Saying to a Black person, "I don't see you as Black."
- Clutching your purse when a person of color walks by.
- Saying to a Black person, "Wow, you are so articulate."
- Blacks asked where they are going when pulled over by police in an affluent neighborhood where break-ins have recently occurred.
- Microaggressions can contribute to a campus climate where individuals who are members of marginalized groups may feel unwelcome or doubt their place at the institution.



Prejudice refers to a preconceived opinion or feeling toward a person based solely on their affiliation with a group. It often casts an unfavorable light on someone simply because they're a member of some ethnic group, religion, or organization.

For example: White people are viewed as individuals where the bad behavior of one white person does not reflect on the merits of the group. By comparison, African Americans and other people of color are not afforded that privilege. The actions of an individual are more likely to be considered the actions of the group.

Privilege: The black civil rights activist and one of the founders of NAACP W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963) was among the first people to describe the effects of privilege: when a person lives with certain advantages based on an aspect of their identity such as skin color, gender or sexuality. If you have privilege, you might not even be aware of it. For example, you've probably heard the term "white privilege". White Privilege refers to the fact that white people are more likely to get job interviews, loans and even access to better schools than their nonwhite peers. (New York Times, August 30, 2020)

For More Information: Book: *Waking Up White* by Debby Irving; Podcast: "Into an American Uprising: White Accountability", <https://www.msnbc.com/podcast/american-uprising-white-accountability-n1224191> June 3, 2020

Racism is a system of advantage based on race. David Wellman, *Portraits of White Racism*

Racism occurs when a racial collective prejudice is backed by the power of legal authority and institutional control. Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility*

Racism is a powerful collection of racist policies that lead to racial inequity and are substantiated by racist ideas. Ibram X. Kendi, *How to be an Anti-racist*

For example: Black youth are twice as likely to be arrested for crimes in school as white kids, over 2.5 times as likely to be arrested for curfew violations as white kids, twice as likely as white kids to be arrested for all crimes, and much more likely to be held in detention than white kids, according to the Sentencing Project.

Learn More: Maya Wiley: Racial Justice (Apple Podcasts)

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-oath-with-chuck-rosenberg/id1461312941?i=1000477383756>