

Resources for White People

We ask everyone who comes through our doors to actively participate in co-creating the most welcoming, inclusive and socially-aware environment in which to practice meditation and learn from our programs and teachers. This is our **Radical Inclusivity** practice.

As a white person entering our multiracial sangha, we offer you some tips for how to open yourself to the experience of community so that you convey that you see, hear, value and respect other people. And in the section further down, we offer you a few more resources if you would like to learn more about how being white has affected your perspective on life and how it affects our sangha.

Tips for white people in racially mixed settings

- Listen carefully to what people of color say about their experience. Notice if you are tempted to assume that you have had the same experience or that you have an answer to a question they might be asking. Just listen and take in as much as you can.
- Be conscious of how much space you are taking up in a conversation. We want everyone to participate, not just the few people who feel comfortable taking the stage. Consider pausing to give space for people of color to speak first.
- Understand that there will not be automatic trust between you and a person of color. Many people of color have had very painful experiences with white people and don't want to repeat them. They will need to get to know you before they can trust you.
- If a person of color tells you that something you said or did offended them, apologize, tell them that you will try to learn from this and change your behavior. Don't dismiss the impact you had by focusing on how you didn't intend for it to come across that way. If you have questions about what happened or what to do, you can email us at WhiteandAwakening@eastbaymeditation.org and we will try to help.

Refrain from

- Making personal comments about anyone's physical appearance. Don't ask to touch anyone's hair.
- Commenting on people's speaking style, word choice, accent, or other aspects of how they express themselves, even if you consider your comment positive.
- Touching or hugging anyone without asking.
- Asking personal questions that imply non-belonging, e.g., *Where are you from? What (race) are you? How did you learn to speak English so well?*
- Saying that you have had the same experience as a person of color; chances are that you haven't.
- Suggesting that if people simply work hard they will be successful. Racism creates barriers to education, employment, healthcare and housing. These barriers are real.

- Expecting people of color to educate you about racism. People of color often have the experience of being expected to explain their experiences of racism to white people.

Classes on Whiteness and White Privilege

We offer two in-person classes at EBMC for white people wanting to increase our understanding of whiteness and white privilege and to build our skills at engaging in a multicultural sangha.

- **Interconnected and White** — an introductory class for white practitioners relatively new to the concepts of whiteness and white privilege. We offer it once per year; please email admin@eastbaymeditation.org
- **White and Awakening in Sangha** — a more in-depth 6-month program, also offered once per year.

From sangha members who participated in White and Awakening in Sangha

"The experience of participating in WAS was profound and continues to be part of my awareness every day in ways I wouldn't have predicted. The contemplation on my whiteness was held in a safe, supportive community with teachers who allowed space for me to be challenged." — EBMC Sangha member Sam W.

"Deepening my understanding of the privilege that accrues to me being born as a white person is essential to both my spiritual practice and my desire to act with compassion in the world. The program and leadership of White and Awakening in Sangha provided the perfect container and support for deep investigation. As a result, I've been able to take action in my community to respond to racism and join with others in continued study and discussion of white supremacy. I highly recommend this program." — EBMC Sangha member Catherine S.

Other Resources

As a white person, you may or may not have a lot of knowledge about the experience of people of color. Many of us grew up in mostly or all white neighborhoods, went to mostly or all white schools, work in mostly or all white organizations for mostly or all white bosses, and read books and watch TV about mostly or all white people.

As a starting point, it can be useful to understand that many people of color actually live in a very different world than we do as white people; a world that we may know very little about. And, that we have been led to believe that our experience is "normal," when in fact it is one of many experiences. A lot of oppression and violence is directed toward communities of color that we, as white people, are not directly aware of. We have not been in their shoes or gone through what they have gone through.

- [Black Parents Explain How to Deal with the Police](#) — video, 7 minutes
- [There's No Scientific Basis for Race: It's a Made-Up Label](#) — article, 20 minutes

On white privilege

- [Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person](#) — article, 8 minutes
- [How White Privilege Affects 8 People of Color on a Day-to-Day Basis](#) — article, 10 minutes
- [What Is White Privilege, Really?](#) — article, 12 minutes
- White Benefits Checklist — available as a separate document

When you get it wrong

- [Getting Called Out: How to Apologize](#) — video, 8:36

A more detailed look at race in America

- [Race: The Power of an Illusion](#) — 3 hours
- [Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible](#) — 50 minutes
- [Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity](#) — 75 minutes

Doing things differently

- [10 Simple Ways White People Can Step Up to Fight Everyday Racism](#) — article, 10 minutes
- [Your Kids Aren't Too Young to Talk About Race: Resource Roundup](#) — a collection gathered by Katrina Michie
- [The Maturation of a White Ally](#), by EBMC Teacher Mushim Ikeda — article, 10 minutes

If you have questions or are interested in learning more, please email us at WhiteandAwakening@eastbaymeditation.org

East Bay Meditation Center · 285 17th Street, Oakland, CA 94612 · eastbaymeditation.org
 Originally published at <https://eastbaymeditation.org/about/radical-inclusivity/resources-for-white-people/>