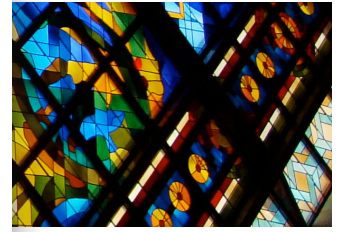




40 DAYS OF ENGAGEMENT on Anti-Racism



Twelve Steps toward Ending White Supremacy

DAY 9



Learning

Originally written as part of a series for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2021. The author wishes to remain anonymous.

I have a strong distaste for the word racism and I'll tell you why: my race is not the problem. Brown and Black bodies are living proof that we are survivors. Racism is a form of violence done to Brown and Black bodies, and if we as a society want to heal from it, the focus needs to be on holding the oppressors—White People and systems—accountable for their violent ways and leading them towards transformation and healing. Therefore, when we talk about dismantling White supremacy, decolonizing, ending racism, and all that other good stuff, we should also add another step that asks White people to be that much more engaged in creating a world that is safe for non-White people.

Let's reflect for a moment on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. A major part of that process was to have residential school survivors go before a panel of commissioners and tell their stories of abuse and trauma. While compensation hearings for the abuse they endured were private, they were forced to speak publicly about childhood traumas to determine what societal restitution might look like. Despite the fact that Canada and the churches apologized, the perpetrators were still protected and their identities will never be known. Many of the former students were hurt and

Racism is violence and the healing of our society needs to happen with White people. To heal, White Canadians must acknowledge the truth that the problem of racism begins (and ends) with them.

angered that their abusers never publicly acknowledged the abuse. Nor did White Canada hold the individuals to account through criminal charges.

The culture of White supremacy lies about big and small things—to maintain its position of authority, to avoid rejection or judgment, and to keep up appearances. It has created a society that tolerates racism and that does not demand an end to violence, oppression, hoarding of wealth, and unfair land distribution practices.

When I first started to think about adding this step, the active engagement of White People, to current anti-racism measures, I looked up some of the steps that are required in treatment programs for other ailments. I know there are people who agree with the 12-Step Program and many who don't, but humour me for a second and take a look at the "12-Steps" from Violence Anonymous:

1. We admit we are powerless over violence—that our lives have become unmanageable.
2. We believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood God.
4. We make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We are entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings.
8. We list of all persons we have harmed, and are willing to make amends to them all.
9. We make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continue to take personal inventory, and when wrong promptly admit it.
11. We seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we carry this message to others, and practice these principles in all our affairs.

And what if we asked the following 12 steps from White people who are seeking to heal from their own White supremacy?

1. We admit that we have been active participants in racism and that many non-White people are suffering because White people don't want to let go of their power.
2. We believe that race is a social construct; it's not real and the power that White people hold is destructive.
3. We will unlearn supremacist behaviour and truly believe that Creator does not place White people above all others.
4. We will make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We will admit to Creator, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We are entirely ready to work with ourselves, Creator, and a mentor to remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly ask Creator to help us remove any White supremacist ideologies and beliefs.
8. We will make a list of all the Black and Brown people we have harmed, and will make amends to them all.
9. We will make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when doing so would injure them or others.

10. We will continue to take personal inventory; when we will admit when we were wrong.
11. We will seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with Creator, as we understood Creator, praying only for knowledge of Creator's will for all peoples and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we will carry this message to other White people, and practice these principles in all our affairs.

It seems a bit laughable to expect all of these things from White people, eh? I say it's about time that we cut the crap and do away with the White people's diversity training of "you have to train us so that we won't oppress you" model. We are missing a few critical steps in anti-racism education, and the first one is for everyone to understand that race is not the issue—White supremacy is the root cause of racial oppression. The other step that I think is missing is asking White people to sit down, take personal inventory, and speak their truths out loud.

How else might they begin to change?

How else can they become a kinder and a gentler people if they don't start taking some accountability?



Faith Reflection

Alana Martin

God,

We, as White people, admit to having active participation in racism and grasping to power that is destructive.

We commit to unlearning supremacist behaviour by searching ourselves, our history, and our actions.

We come before you, ready to work on ourselves and humbly ask you to remove our White supremacist ideologies and behaviours.

Through our list making of people we've harmed, we let the reality of our actions confront and change us.

And may they find their own healing in this broken world.

We commit to a life of mistakes, but of trying our best, to doing little harm and to being humble when we mess up.

We commit to bringing others along the journey with us.

With you.

For the safety, life, and future of others is on the line.

Amen.



Children's Activity

Canada is a diverse country and is home to millions of people.

In spite of its diversity, Indigenous and racialized peoples, as well as many minority people, have not been treated equally and equitably. European settlers came and stole land from Indigenous peoples. Settlers also made new laws that allowed them to control where Indigenous peoples lived, made ceremonies illegal, and forcibly took Indigenous children away from their families. This enactment of White supremacy

was an act of genocide. Canada also enslaved Black peoples and indentured racialized peoples.

Many incidents of anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism and violence continue in our communities. The realities of White supremacy in this country means that some people still do not believe that people of all racial identities deserve the same amount of love, kindness, and human rights; this causes Indigenous and racialized people to continue to live with violence and racial trauma.

How might you talk with children about White supremacy and its reality in Canada? How would you intentionally raise children who actively work against racism and work towards dismantling White supremacy? This [article](#) has some ideas. Add your own ideas and engage children in conversations about racism and White supremacy.



Group Commitment

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The book [Me and White Supremacy](#) by Layla Saad outlines a 30-day challenge and learning experience where anyone with White privilege (or White-passing privilege) confronts their internalized racism and privilege. By doing so, they can begin to change and become accountable to the anti-racist fight.

As a group, family, or individual, work through the 30-day challenge. Each day requires reading, reflecting, and action. The author makes it very clear that you are not just reading and learning through this resource—you are DOING the work required of anyone with White or White-passing privilege.

Through that concrete learning, take a personal inventory of past failures, harms, biased ideology, and beliefs, and take accountability through making amends and changing your ways of relating to the world.



Advocacy

Alana Martin

One of Black Lives Matter's biggest demands is to defund police departments and allocate the money to services that will support and empathize with marginalized people in order to ensure the safety of all citizens.

[Defund the Police](#) has more information and resources to help you learn more. You can also search for your specific region and write a letter to your local representative.

This education and action directly relates to Steps 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 from the “12 Steps for White People Seeking to Heal from Their Own White Supremacy.”

