



## HOW TO BE AN ANTIRACIST: Ibram X. KENDI

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

#### My Racist Introduction

“There is no neutrality in the racism struggle.” What did Kendi mean by this? Are there experiences that you have been in where you have seen non-racist neutrality lead to racist outcomes?

#### **Reflections Questions**

1. *Kendi writes, “‘Racist’ is not a pejorative. It is not the equivalent of a slur. It is descriptive.” What is the benefit of reclaiming the term “racist” as a descriptive term?*
2. *Why is colorblindness a problem in the antiracism struggle?*

#### Chapter 1: Definitions

##### **Terms defined**

1. **Race** ... means descent,” from the beginning, to make races was to make racial hierarchy. French poet Jacques de Breze first used the term “race” in 1481.
2. **Racism** is powerful collection of racist policies that lead to racial inequity and are substantiated by racist ideas.
3. **Racist** is one who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inactions or expressing a racist idea.
4. **Antiracist** is one who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea.
5. **Racial inequality** is when different racial groups do not share the same level of power in a society.
6. **Racist policy** is any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups.
7. An **antiracist policy** is any measure that produces or sustains racial equity between racial groups.
8. **Policy** means written and unwritten laws, rules, procedures, processes, regulations, and guidelines that govern people.
9. **Racist policy** is more tangible and exacting, and more likely to be immediately understood by people, including its victims, who may not have the benefit of extensive fluency in racial terms.
10. **Institutional Racism** Racist policies have been described by other terms: “institutional racism,” and “systemic racism: for instance. But those are vaguer terms than “racist policy.”
11. **Racial discrimination** is an immediate and visible manifestation of an underlying racial policy.
12. **Racist power** has commandeered the term “**racial discrimination**,” transforming the act of discriminating on the basis of race into an inherently racist act. But if racial discrimination is defined as treating, considering, or making a distinction in favor or against an individual based on that person’s race, then racial discrimination is not inherently racist.
13. **Racist idea** - A racist idea is any idea that suggests one racial group is inferior or superior to another racial group in any way. Racist ideas argue that the inferiorities and superiorities of racial groups explain racial inequities in society. There is no such thing as a not-racist idea, only racist ideas and antiracist ideas.
14. **Antiracism** is a powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity and are substantiated by antiracist idea.
15. **Race neutral/race-conscious** is the construct of race neutrality actually feeds White nationalist victimhood by positing the notion that any policy protecting or advancing non-White Americans towards equity is “reverse discrimination.” (p. 20). That is how **racist power** can call affirmative action policies



that succeed in reducing racial inequities “**race conscious**” and standardized tests that produce racial inequities “**race neutral**.”

16. **White privileges** are the relative advantages racism affords to people identified as white, whether white people recognize them or deny them.

### Reflection questions

1. Do you believe racism exists in systems, policies, and structures?
2. Have you ever been called a racist? How did it make you feel?
3. How do you intend not to become defensive if someone calls our racism?
4. How has this chapter changed or reinforced your perceptions regarding racism?

## Chapter 2: Dueling Consciousness

### Terms defined

1. Whites have their own **dueling consciousness** and he distinguishes between two racist ideas, assimilationist, and segregationist.
2. **Assimilationist ideas** reduce people of color to the level of children needing instruction on how to act. Assimilationist ideas suggest that a racial group is temporarily inferior. Assimilationists believe that persons can be developed.
3. **Segregationist ideas** hold that people of color cannot be developed to White standards.  
Segregationist ideas suggest that a racial group is permanently inferior.
4. **Antiracist ideas** are based in the truth that racial groups are equals in all the ways they are different, assimilationist ideas are rooted in the notion that certain racial groups are culturally or behaviorally inferior, and segregationist ideas spring from a belief in genetic racial distinction and fixed hierarchy.

### Whites Dueling Consciousness

	Racist belief	Racist ideas	Racist policies
<b>Assimilationist</b>	Certain racial groups are culturally or behaviorally inferior: People of color <b>can</b> be developed. [paternalistic]	racial group is <b>temporarily</b> inferior	Geared toward developing, civilizing, and integrating a racial group.
<b>Segregationist</b>	Genetic racial distinction and fixed hierarchy: People of color <b>cannot</b> be developed.	racial group is <b>permanently</b> inferior	Geared toward segregating, enslaving, incarcerating, deporting, and killing.



<p><b>Antiracist</b></p>	<p>Racial groups are <b>equal</b> in all the ways they are different</p>	<p>To be antiracist is to emancipate oneself from the dueling consciousness. (p. 33-34). Knowing there is no such thing as <u>the</u> American body, only American bodies, racialized by power. (p. 34)</p>	<p>Geared toward reducing racial inequities and creating equal opportunity. (mass equalizing)</p>
--------------------------	--	---	---

**Reflection questions**

1. Discuss an educational policy and link it to one of the two racist ideas discussed in this chapter.
2. What do you think Kendi means by, "Knowing there is no such thing as the American body, only American bodies, racialized by power?"
3. In the so-called post-racial era what terms replaced the word racism?

**Chapter 3: Power**

**Terms defined**

1. **Power** is a construct of collected or merged difference that lives socially.
2. **Racist power** and self-interest have always been the root problem of racism.
3. **Racist policies** are undergirded by powerful economic, political and cultural self-interest.
4. **Racist ideas** justify racist policies to redirect the blame for their era’s racial inequities from those policies and onto people.
5. Race creates new forms of power. The power to process distinct individuals, ethnicities, and nationalities into monolithic races.

**Reflection questions**

1. How can you embrace the fact of racial identity without being a racist?
2. Racism was born as a form of power. It is a currency that benefits those who control it. What is one way in which racist power has hurt or benefited you?
3. Do you believe that racist power can benefit you in the short-term but might hurt you in the long run? Why or why not?

**Chapter 4: Biology**

**Terms defined**

1. **Biological racist** One who is expressing the idea that the races are meaningfully different in their biology and that these differences create hierarchy of value.
2. **Biological antiracist** One who is expressing the idea that the races are meaningfully the same in their biology and that there are no genetic racial differences.
3. **Racializing** creates hierarchies of value which serves the core mandates of race.
4. **Microaggressions** coined by Harvard psychiatrist Charles Pierce in 1970, the constant verbal and nonverbal individual abuses racist White people unleash on Black people wherever we go, day after day.



Kendi believes that microaggression is used because, in a “post-racial” era, this term replaces “racism” which went out of fashion. Racism has become the R-word, like the N-word is used for the word it replaced.

5. **Macroaggressions** of racist violence and policies can be applied to a group of people,
6. **Microabuse** instead of microaggression is Kendi’s preferred term because “abuse” accurately describes the action and its effects on people: distress, anger, worry, depression, anxiety, pain, fatigue, and suicide.
7. **Ethnic racism**, like racism itself, points to group behavior, instead of policies, as the cause of disparities between groups
8. To be **antiracist** is to view the inequities between all racialized ethnic groups as a problem of policy.

### **Reflection questions**

1. What is meant by the Black child is ill-treated like an adult, and the Black adult is ill-treated like a child?
2. The face of ethnic racism bares itself in the form of a persistent question: Where are you from?
3. Nicholas Wade in his 2014 bestseller, *A Troublesome Inheritance*, argued that there is a genetic component to human social behavior. How can you reconcile this claim with the concepts you learned in this Kendi’s book?

## **Chapter 5: Ethnicity**

### **Terms Defined**

1. **Ethnic Racism:** A powerful collection of racist policies that lead to inequity between racialized ethnic groups and are substantiated by racist ideas about racialized ethnic groups.
2. **Ethnic Antiracism:** A powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to equity between racialized ethnic groups and are substantiated by antiracist ideas about racialized ethnic groups.
3. **Immigrant Self-Selection:** Individuals with an exceptional internal drive for material success and/or they possess exceptional external resources.
4. **Migrant Advantage:** Immigrants and migrants of all races tend to be more resilient and resourceful when compared with the natives of their own countries and the natives of their new countries.

### **Reflection questions**

1. *What ways can you mitigate ethnic racism?*
2. *How does ethnic racism differ from racial racism? Is there a difference?*
3. *What do you do if you experience a racial or ethnic joke? Will you avoid, fight, or flee?*
4. *Have you experienced a situation in which you are someone else was lectured down? How did you handle the situation?*

## **Chapter 6: Body**

### **Terms Defined**

1. **Bodily Racist:** One who is perceiving certain racialized bodies as more animal-like and violent than others.
2. **Bodily Antiracist:** One who is humanizing, deracializing, and individualizing nonviolent and violent behavior.
3. **Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act:** the largest crime bill in the history of the United States and consisted of 356 pages that provided for 100,000 new police officers, \$9.7 billion in funding



for prisons and \$6.1 billion in funding for prevention programs, which were designed with significant input from experienced police officers.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. *After reading this chapter, did it change your perspectives on how the Black Body is viewed as dangerous or violent?*
2. *How can we help others change their perspectives on the perceived threat that the Black body poses?*
3. *What role does the family play in reducing violence against black children?*
4. *Communities and groups can get a bad reputation without the positive elements included. Can you describe elements of your own community that get an undeserved reputation?*

### **Chapter 7: Culture**

#### **Terms defined**

1. **Cultural Racist:** One who is creating a cultural standard and imposing a cultural hierarchy among racial groups.
2. **Cultural Antiracist:** One who is rejecting cultural standards and equalizing cultural differences among racial groups.
3. **Ebonics:** The word was originally coined in 1973 by African American social psychologist Robin Williams. His intention was to give a name to the language of African Americans that acknowledged the linguistic consequence of the slave trade and avoided the negative connotations of other terms like “Nonstandard Negro English.”

#### **Reflection questions**

1. *What makes African American language seem improper and Standard English proper and the standard? Do you think this practice is correct?*
2. *In what ways have, you racialized Black Culture?*
3. *How does the dominant culture continue to expect all other cultures assimilate and what are the consequences of that type of attitude and behavior?*
4. *The author felt he would not make any connections because he could not play basketball. Do you recall being isolated because of your inability to join a group? What did you do about it?*

### **Chapter 8: Behavior**

#### **Terms Defined**

1. **Behavioral Racist:** One who is making individuals responsible for the perceived behavior of racial groups and making racial groups responsible for the behavior of individuals.
2. **Behavioral Antiracist:** One who is making racial group behavior fictional and individual behavior real.
3. **Behavior:** defines the inherent human traits and potential that everyone shares.
4. **Post-traumatic slave syndrome:** Black “infighting”, materialism, poor parenting, colorism, defeatism, rage-these “dysfunctional” and “negative” behaviors as well as many others are in large part related to trans-generational adaptations associated with the past traumas of slavery and on-going oppression.



### **Reflection questions**

1. *Can you separate a person's culture from their behavior?*
2. *How does our behavior contribute to racism?*
3. *What is an expectation that you were unfairly held to meet and did this affect your performance or engagement?*

### **Chapter 9: Color**

#### **Terms Defined**

1. **Colorism:** A powerful collection of racist policies that lead to inequities between Light and Dark people, supported by racist ideas about Light and Dark people.
2. **Color Antiracism:** A powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to equity between Light and Dark people, supported by antiracist ideas about Light and Dark people.
3. **Anti-Dark colorism:** follows the logic of behavioral racism, linking behavior to color.

#### **Reflection Questions**

1. *Have you noticed colorism or an aversion to darker skin?*
2. *In what ways do you think skin color plays a role in racism?*
3. *How do you view your own skin? Do you feel comfortable in it?*
4. *What is one-way assimilation is it different than an antiracist state?*

### **Chapter 10: White**

#### **Terms defined**

1. **Anti-White Racist** is someone who classifies people of European descent as biologically, culturally, or behaviorally inferior or conflates the entire race of White people with racist power.

#### **Reflection Questions**

1. *In what ways does White hegemony set the standard for the way Blacks and others must conform? Do you believe that Whites benefit from current systems, structures, and policies? Why or Why not?*
2. *Why do you think it is difficult for White people to speak on race?*
3. *Do you believe that hate exists towards another race? Do you think it is conscious or unconscious, explicit, or implicit?*

### **Chapter 11: Black**

#### **Terms Defined**

1. **Powerless Defense** is the illusionary, concealing, disempowering, and racist, idea that Black people can't be racist because Black people don't have power.

#### **Reflection Questions**

1. *It is often said that Blacks cannot be racist because they lack power. Do you believe this is true? Why or why not?*



2. *In what ways, can you use your power for positive racial gains and for ending racist policies?*

## **Chapter 12: Class**

### ***Terms Defined***

1. A **Class Racist** is someone who racializes the classes, supporting policies of racial capitalism against those race-classes, and justifying them by racist ideas about those race-classes.
2. **Antiracist Anticapitalists** are people who oppose racial capitalism.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. *Racism and capitalism coexist together. In what ways do you think economic disparity perpetuates racism?*
2. *Regardless of your race, have you ever looked down upon someone because of their social-economic class or blamed them for their circumstances?*

## **Chapter 13: Space**

### ***Terms Defined***

1. **Space Racism** is a powerful collection of racist policies that lead to resource inequity between racialized spaces or the elimination of certain racialized spaces, which are substantiated by racist ideas about racialized spaces.
2. **Space Antiracism** is a powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity between integrated and protected racialized spaces, which are substantiated by antiracist ideas about racialized spaces.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. *How does space perpetuate racism?*
2. *Do policies, such as urban planning, maintain racist spaces, and inequality of opportunity?*
3. *Can you name other policies that perpetuate racism?*
4. *In what ways has racial spacing affected you personally or someone you know?*

## **Chapter 14: Gender**

### ***Terms Defined***

1. **Gender Racism** is a powerful collection of racist policies that lead to inequity between race-genders and are substantiated by racist ideas about race-genders.
2. **Gender Antiracism** is a powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to equity between race-genders and are substantiated by anti-racist ideas and race-genders.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. *Did you ever experience or witness the intersection of gender racism? How did it affect you?*
2. *An example of gender racism is the stereotype trope of the Angry Black Woman. Have you seen this in action, either by experience or witnessing this occur? How did it make you feel?*
3. *How can we work to minimize gender racism?*



## **Chapter 15: Sexuality**

### **Terms defined**

1. **Queer Racism** is a strong collection of racist policies leading to inequity amongst race-sexualities.
2. **Queer antiracism** is the phenomenal gathering of antiracist policies leading to equity amongst race sexualities for authentication by antiracist ideas on race-sexualities.

### **Reflection questions**

1. *In what ways can you be a successful queer antiracist?*
2. *Can you be antiracist and homophobic or transphobic at the same time?*
3. *In what ways can you begin to create processes and procedures that protect homosexual, non- binary, and Tran's individuals?*

## **Chapter 16: Failure**

### **Terms defined**

1. **Activist** is someone with a known record of power and policy alterations.
2. **Racial history** tied to failed solutions and policies.

### **Reflection questions**

1. *What role does political, economic, or cultural self-interest play in creating and sustaining public policy?*
2. *How can you tap into your antiracist power to change systems and work for change?*
3. *How can you persuade others to create just policies that do not adversely affect and endanger people of color?*
4. *Strategies for mitigating racism often fail, why? What can we do to achieve a different outcome?*

## **Chapter 17: Success**

### **Attributes of a successful antiracist**

1. Stop saying, "I am not racist."
2. Admit racism exists and is ascribed to you.
3. Be truthful about the racist ideas you support and express.
4. Own the source of your racial knowledge information acquisition.
5. Own your own definition of antiracism.
6. Act, work to change policy, donate time and money to activities that try to change antiracist policies and structures.
7. Be proud of your antiracist power struggles and advocacy.
8. Be an antiracist in the face of other racial bigotries.
9. Be open with your struggles with antiracist ideas.
10. Not easily fooled into generalizing individual negativity.
11. Not fooled into believing misleading statistics or data blaming people for racial inequality.

### **Reflection questions**

1. *Can you commit to being an antiracist?*
2. *What can you do to convince others to be antiracist?*
3. *Can you own up to your own assumptions regarding racism and structural racism?*



## **Chapter 18: Survival**

### **Resources/Research Center**

Antiracist Research and Policy Center, American University

### **Reflection questions**

1. *What actions will you take because of reading *How to be an Antiracist*?*
2. *Can we end racism, if yes, how?*
3. *How can we incorporate this work here at our own university?*