



HOW TO BE AN ANTIRACIST: Ibram X. Kendi, PhD.

“There is no neutrality in the racism struggle. *Racist*’ is not a pejorative. It is not the equivalent of a slur. It is descriptive.” (Kendi 2019)

How to be an Antiracist Concepts as discussed by Kendi

- Structural and institutional racism or what Kendi describes as racist policies exist. Kendi prefers *racist policies* to structural racism.
- There is a difference between not being a racist to being an antiracist. When we state “I am not a racist” it is part of Jim Crow, assimilation, and segregationist viewpoints. *I am not a racist* therefore this policy cannot be racist, even though the impact can be racist.
- According to Kendi, we all have a role in maintaining or dismantling racist systems and policies that are based in self-interest. Being an antiracist is to actively work to transform these systems.
- Higher Education as well as other social systems are embedded with structural racism and practices that privilege some groups while negatively impacting others.
- Recognize how our own positionality and intersectionality (sex, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, class, etc.) informs our perspectives, opinions, and reactions to antiracism work. We all have our own worldview that can hold racist, sexist, or transphobic views.
- Power defense: The illusion and disempowering idea that Black people cannot be racist because they have no power. This shields people of color from doing the work of antiracism since they are powerless. This frees people of color to uphold and maintain racist policies, which can lead to oppressing your own race for personal gain and power. The powerless defense strips Black policy makers, leaders, and managers of their power, responsibility, and ability to work for change.
- Self-selected separation is not segregation. The antiracist desire to separate from racists is different from the segregationist desire to separate from Blacks. Separatism can be an act of survival in a racist environment.
- Kendi compares racism to metastatic cancer. It is malignant and needs to be removed before healing can begin.

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.