

<https://dissonanttimes.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Racism.mp3>

I go to the altar in my heart and light the candle, asking Spirit to bless my writing about racism in community. Mother God, Parent Earth, and all that is Love, please help me tell the truth, now and every day of my life. Thank you.

admit it

Community is where I live. I can't get out of community—people are everywhere. So I might as well admit I live in community and behave in a respectful, collaborative way.

That means I have to live with people who are racist. Almost every white person will deny it. Almost nobody thinks they're racist. They might say, "Well, everyone's a little bit racist," to excuse themselves.

"How dare you think I'm racist! My ancestors suffered in the great potato famine! We were poor. My grandpa did an extraordinary feat. How dare you think my life has been easy!" they say. They believe their whiteness doesn't count because of a loophole of suffering. As if white people never experience harm.

We are hurting from the suffering of having our needs unmet,

living in a culture that abandons people and trivializes nurturing. We have this white culture of capitalism that tries to destroy huge parts of us and asks us to deny our basic needs. We're hurt by exploitative workplaces, dysfunctional systems, failed healthcare, and our own loneliness.

Many white people can't take the shame they feel for their whiteness, on top of everything. How dare you ask them to do any work around race. They're already doing too much.

me personally

I learned how to love from Mexican-American women only: my mom, her mom, my aunties. My dad was white, and my mom was Mexican-American. I'm mixed.

I can only relate as a Mexican-American person. My family is my joy. I was considered crazy-dangerous and heavily sedated on psych meds for 12 years for the ways I view the world, which are not white.

My spirituality is not white. I didn't ask for Jaguar to save me when I was dying; Jaguar came to me.

I can speak as a white person; I can code switch all day—I went to grad school. My real voice has a central California accent. You should hear my vowels when I'm comfortable.

Is race part of my difficulty navigating the world? Yes, race is part of the difference that makes me illegible.

Can I talk about race? I will talk about race with anyone.

illegible

My status is questionable: I'm lying, whether I say I'm white or not-white. No answer is correct.

But my gender and sexuality are also confusing. Is my non-medical-interventioned non-binairiness really trans? My disabilities are confusing, mostly invisible. So we can just put me in the Confusing Box, and set me over there.

My spouse Ming, on the other hand, is Asian-American. There's no quibbling about that. So when I live in community with my spouse, racism is a household concern. Race is a daily topic.

making the white lady uncomfortable

I could leave the community where my spouse Ming and I live these days. But there's no way to leave other people. Probably we'd end up in another community, an apartment complex, or in a neighborhood in a rural area. I'd rather know and love my neighbors—love at least a few of them—than ignore my neighbors antagonistically.

Even if Ming and I got a place out in the country, we'd start to know the people we ran into at farmers market. There are overlapping circles, layers, and flavors of community.

Ming is gentle and kind. They model the model minority. Of the few POC here, Ming is not making the white lady uncomfortable. Ming can codeswitch into her world like gliding onto a dance floor. Ming is amazing when they move their hips.

what is racism

There's the flat out "I am better than Those people," or "I love America, and Those People are trying to take America away from me."

What about the "Black people are ok—I just want them nowhere near me."

Or the complicit ones who go along with their racist parents for the money, or with their racist spouse, maintaining fake family peace at the expense of justice.

I think of the sad Racism Wife. She tells herself, "I'm not the one doing it, so this doesn't count." But she feeds racism sandwiches, breakfasts, beautiful dinners. She does racism's laundry. She lets racism fuck her often, and she carries the children of herself and racism into the complicated future. Pity those kids who will grow up and need to transform so much bullshit.

Or pity the rest of the world who will endure the violence of the racist children, as they take and take, oblivious to who they are harming.

liberal

The main racism I see in community is like this: A white person is living in a white world, and everyone should be like them. Anything different is suspect, maligned, or invisibilized in favor of a white way of being.

We see it in tone policing. Spicy food is a challenge. Black people are too loud, wear revealing clothing that's too sexy, and how dare anyone have a different accent.

It's hard to put my finger on it, when a white way of seeing the world, doing spirituality, eating, and loving is the default. Power in groups can be subtle— no one's hitting another person over the head with a hammer. But being talked over and ignored by white people is the norm. We can't prove it's because of race, but how did the boss get to be the boss?

Probably you're familiar with women and non-binary people carrying the emotional load in relationships, families, workplaces, and community. Well, people of color do as well, and queers. When a white cis-man in our community was bugging Ming over and over, asking Ming for hours of sympathy in a conflict situation, making demands on Ming's time in an

unbalanced way, I objected.

“Sweetheart, why are you doing all this for him?” I asked. “What is he doing for you? Does he know how queers and POC are used for emotional labor?” No, of course not. “Do you want to point out what he’s doing to you?”

The bitter white guy was not afraid to take and take. There was no limit on his demands of Ming, until Ming couldn’t give anymore. The white guy demonized Ming and blamed Ming, in the conflict situation, to the point of harassment. Oh crap, I was right.

big world

When two people are interacting and one person feels uncomfortable, the discomfort is not always the fault of the person who “caused” the discomfort. What if the recipient of the offensive vibe didn’t do enough to broaden their world? They might have spent too much time holed up in their own whiteness, feeding themselves white culture and white media.

Truly, there are all kinds of people. Like caring for disabled people makes access better for everyone, caring for people of all different races makes life better for all of us. The ramp helps us all.

Consideration of all different kinds of people isn’t charity. It’s basic. And diversity is enlivening. Maybe you’d enjoy

more life breathed into you. The tight-lipped repression of white people is famous. We can have more than that.

what to do

Please read books written by people of color. Also follow instagrams.

If you listen to podcasts, please make sure at least half are from people of color. Or if 85% of people globally are POC, aim for 85%.

Please seek out enrichment like TED talks from people of color. Seek wisdom that's not passed through a white filter.

Please listen to Filipinx rappers who tell the truth about race like Ruby Ibarra and Bambu.

Please listen to Snotty Nose Res Kids, Halluci Nation, and other Indigenous sound-makers who speak the truth about race.

When you buy art, can you buy art from people of color?

When you shop for presents or go out to a restaurant, can you favor POC owned businesses?

Please be friends with people of color and show up for them. Sometimes text them first—don't put all the planning on them.

If no people of color will be your friend, please give money to POC's requests for funds.

Please fall in love with all kinds of people. Consider expanding your type.

Learn to listen in a way that lets in more than you're expecting to hear.

Cultivate the insight that sometimes, you might be wrong. Practice saying you're wrong. When you're driving, in the bathroom, talking with your friends.

"Oh, I'm wrong. I realize now that I was wrong. I used to think that, and now I think this other thing." Model that anyone can be wrong, and it's ok.

If you pray, ask Spirit to teach you humbleness. Not servile, absolute, or weepy, but appropriate humbleness— insight about how you sort into the scheme of things. You know some things; you're woefully uninformed about other things. That's real. There's always more to learn.

Learn how to apologize. Learn how to fail. Risk making mistakes and model that too.

Get curious about ways of being other than your own. Ask Spirit to bless you with curiosity.

Don't expect others to come to you. Practice meeting people in the middle. You can't measure that with any metric, but it's important for justice.

community

Community is where we play out our dramas. We reenact what happened in our families of origin, and we clumsily try out new values.

We carry our problems into community with us—our fears and hurts. They are interwoven with our skills and big dreams. Let's be realistic about who we are.

Please don't say, "I wasn't taught how to be anti-racist!" and throw up your hands. Like solving any problem—brainstorm ideas, pick three appealing ideas to try, outline some finite steps, then evaluate in a month whether it's helping. Repeat. Read an essay. Ask a friend who knows more than you do.

Maybe no one ever taught you how to problem solve in your own

life either. Well, there's no time like the present. We are somewhat in control of what we do. Let's teach ourselves.

Racism is terrifying to white people—the accusation, the possibility of getting canceled—the whole topic which is a huge morass. But racism to POC is terrifying because of the risk of death. Being beaten to death during a traffic stop, being diagnosed with schizophrenia and sedated into oblivion, your child being shot while they play. Those fears are not the same. Let's talk about it way more, for the benefit of all of us, but especially for those who have the most to lose.

Community is a place of judgment and scrutiny, but community is also a place of second chances. Like with grandchildren who don't know the ways you were harsh and unapproving with your own children—they just see the joyful way you push them on the swing, take the candy, and smile. We can choose love now. Nothing is stopping us.

thank you

I thank Spirit for blessing our conversation, and blow out the candle on the altar in my heart.

Strawberry Pancake Fae Nopales is a queer disabled artist who lives in community—a witch in the tradition of madness. Find berry at listeningtothenoiseuntilitmakesense.com, ilikeyourstims.com, and on instagram as [@xtrikeslutsx](https://www.instagram.com/xtrikeslutsx).