

21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge

2018 Daily Prompts

In designing the prompts and resource list for this year's Racial Equity Challenge, we aimed to create opportunities to go deeper with the prompts and conversation and to look at different promising solutions. For that reason, especially for those who are in more of a beginning stage in this work, we suggest that you prepare for the Challenge:

- **Familiarize yourself with [this glossary of terms](https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary) from Racial Equity Tools.** The glossary includes links to additional resources related to the terms that are listed. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>
- **Reflect** on your intentions around participating in the Challenge. *Where do you want to be in your thinking and your action by the end of these 21 days?*

Theme for Week 1: Grounding Ourselves in the Reality of Racism in Our Food Systems

1. Personal Racial Identity: How do you think about your racial identity and its relevance to your work/volunteerism/studies in the food system?

Identity matters. Who we think we are and who others think we are can have an influence on how we navigate the world, think about possibilities, take action, etc. Consider if and how you think about your own racial identity. Do you think about its relevance to your work/volunteerism/studies in the food system. What comes up for you? As a resource, you can reference [this compilation of different racial identity formation models](#) to see what rings true for you. Or watch one or more of the [short videos](#) from the New York Times on racial identity in America.

http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/Compilation_of_Racial_Identity_Models_7_15_11.pdf

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/your-stories/conversations-on-race>

2. History of Race and Racism in the Food System: What is the history you hold in your head (and heart and body) about our current food systems?

History matters. How we tell history matters. What and who we include or do not include matters. Who writes and tells history matters. An important step in working for equity and liberation is grounding ourselves in the histories of injustice that underpin the dominant food system. Consider what you have been formally and informally taught about how our modern food systems have evolved, who was involved, who benefited and who did not, etc. Visualize what food systems in this country looked like 150 years ago, and how this changed over time.

Then, if this is your first time participating in the Challenge, consider reading [this backgrounder](#) from Food First, or if you have already read this, consider [this more](#)

[recent piece](#) from National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) What are your reactions? How does your reading affect how you think about your work/volunteerism/studies in the food system?

<https://foodfirst.org/publication/backgrounder-dismantling-racism-in-the-food-system/> · <http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/racial-equity-in-the-farm-bill/>

3. The Colonization of Indigenous Land Rights and Food Ways: How does colonization continue to exist in our food systems and how can you support decolonization and celebrate indigenous rights and food ways?

There is a growing call for and [movement towards decolonization](#) of our food systems for equity and liberation. A first step in this process is acknowledging the colonization and revocation of indigenous land rights and food ways in this country, which have had devastating impacts. What is the history of the place where you currently live and/or work? Who inhabited the land prior to the arrival of Europeans? What happened to those indigenous peoples and their practices? What is happening to them now?

Another step is to find ways to support, honor, celebrate, and learn from the resilience of indigenous people and their practices in ways that are not culturally appropriating. What might this look like in your community and work? For some ideas, check out [this article and podcast from The Table Underground](#) (featuring Mohegan Anthropologist and Food Solutions New England [Network Leadership Institute](#) participant Rachel Sayet).

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/decolonize/im-dreaming-about-a-modern-world-that-doesnt-erase-its-indigenous-intelligence-20180219> ·

<https://thetableunderground.com/the-table-underground/2017/11/14/th-true-story-of-thanksgiving-t3lpw> · <http://www.foodsolutionsne.org/leadership-institute>

Also explore these Native food sites:

- [Garden Warriors Good Seeds](http://gardenwarriorsgoodseeds.com/) <http://gardenwarriorsgoodseeds.com/>
- [Indigenous Food Revolutionary](http://indigenousfoodrevolution.blogspot.com/) <http://indigenousfoodrevolution.blogspot.com/>
- [Cooking Healthy in Indian Country](#) [YouTube channel] https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-FO0kB6QpcuB5dnr_coS6Q
- [I-Collective](https://www.icollectiveinc.org/) <https://www.icollectiveinc.org/>

4. Disaggregate the Data!: Are you analyzing data by race and ethnicity in your work/volunteerism/studies? When you do, what story does this tell and how are you responding?

As the title of [an article](#) by Living Cities' Nadia Owusu states, "Disaggregating data is the foundation of equity." Until we parse out indicators and opportunities by race, many may remain blind to or in denial of structural inequities. This can be hard work, not just in the disaggregation but in the consideration of the hard truth the numbers tell. [Another recent article](#) shows once again that when you disaggregate, race is a greater predictor of social mobility than class or education.

Meanwhile, Feeding America issued a [summary sheet](#) (September 2017) that compares African American hunger and poverty to other Americans. If you visit the interactive [Feeding America Map the Meal Gap site](#), you can see how your state or county is doing.

Data does reveal persistent, systemic food and health care inequities. Data can be the force that informs – that tells us a story of what currently is, confronts us to address structural inequities, and connects head and heart to compel us to work towards more authentic food system equity.

Consider these recent readings and resources on poverty, food, and health inequities. How do these resources impact your understanding of poverty, food, and health inequities? How do you make sense of the stories that data tells? How might you use this data to mobilize others?

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/nadia-owusu/disaggregated-data-is-the_b_12048034.html ·

<https://www.theroot.com/new-research-proves-that-all-things-being-equal-nothing-1823892660> ·

<http://www.feedingamerica.org/assets/pdfs/fact-sheets/african-american-hunger-fact-sheet.pdf> · <http://map.feedingamerica.org/>

5. Levels of Racism: Are you seeing and addressing how racism operates at different levels?

[Dr. Camara Jones](#) had been one of FSNE’s beloved teachers with respect to developing ways of seeing racism in action (her [“Allegories on Race and Racism”](#) TEDTalk is a great resource). Dr. Jones says that in order to address racism effectively, we have to understand how it operates at multiple levels.

Often what people think of first and foremost is interpersonal racism. Only seeing this level means that we fail to see the full picture that keeps the system of racism in place. We invite you to read this [blog post](#) by Cynthia Silva Parker which gives an overview of four levels of racism and the need for a systemic approach to seeing and addressing oppression. And if you have not seen it already, check out [this short video](#) from Race Forward about the levels and the importance of looking at systemic, not simply individual, racism.

Which levels of racism do you experience, observe, think about, and/or address in your work/volunteerism/studies? Does having racism broken into these levels create new awareness for you and opportunities for action? If so, what comes up?

http://www.msm.edu/about_us/FacultyDirectory/CommunityHealthPreventiveMedicine/CamaraJones/index.php · <https://youtu.be/GNhcY6fTyBM> ·

<http://interactioninstitute.org/undoing-racism-by-design/> ·

<https://youtu.be/LjGQaz1u3V4>

6-7. Weekend Reflection: After week one of the Challenge, what do you see and/or know that you did not previously?

Permaculturist and tracker Joel Glanzberg once said, “Often the most fruitful and important question is, “What are we not seeing?”” And Margaret Heffernan, author of [Willful Blindness](#), makes the point that we cannot solve what is not seen or named.

If we do not see racism in action, or pretend not to see it, then it is surely not going to be solvable. Is there anything that you see now, or are willing to see, after this first week of the Challenge that you had not previously when considering race and racism in food systems? How does this impact how you think about your work/volunteerism/studies in food systems?

https://www.ted.com/talks/margaret_heffernan_the_dangers_of_willful_blindness

Part of grounding in the reality of racism is not simply about thinking, but also grounding in our emotional reactions. As you reflect on this week’s prompts and resources, what feelings come up? What can you learn from that?

Theme for Week 2: Solutions at Different Levels

8. Trauma to Healing (Internalized Oppression and Internalized Racial Superiority): How can you contribute to shifting consciousness about and transformation around the internalized and traumatizing impacts of racism?

Research has linked racism to psychological distress, physical health problems, depression, anxiety, and trauma. The internalization of bias and oppression can cause great distress to minds, bodies, and spirits. As [Dr. Monnica Williams](#) has written: “*What we really need is a large-scale shift in our social consciousness to understand the toll this takes on the psyche of victims so that even small acts of racism become unacceptable. We need those who witness racism to speak out and victims to be believed.*”

We invite you to read [this short article](#) by Dr. Williams and consider the place of healing in your food system-related work/volunteerism/studies. You might also read [this short post and watch the embedded video about the internalization of privilege](#).

Do you currently focus on healing in your food systems work/volunteerism/studies? If so, what does that look like? If not, might you? What steps can you take to help shift consciousness about and transformation around the traumatizing impacts of racism?

A great place to turn for ideas and supports is [this resource list](#) of racial reconciliation and healing tools, processes, and case studies from Racial Equity Tools.

<http://www.mentalhealthdisparities.org/williams.php> ·
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/culturally-speaking/201509/the-link-between-racism-and-ptsd> · <http://interactioninstitute.org/blinded-by-privilege/> ·

<http://www.racialequitytools.org/act/strategies/racial-reconciliation-and-racial-healing>

9. Interrupting Inter-personalized Racism: How can you stand up to and eliminate subtle and overt racist behaviors?

Racism exists in perhaps its most obvious forms in interpersonal situations, when someone or a group of people says or does something that demeans or otherwise harms someone else based on their racial identity. This can happen by intent and also out of ignorance. It can be subtle and it can be extreme. Should there be any doubt that this kind of racism still very much exists, you can watch [this video](#) (warning that there is graphic language and the examples might be disturbing).

We all have opportunities to interrupt these behaviors to keep them from perpetuating harm.

[This blog post](#) speaks to steps for interrupting racism with love when facilitating. You can also watch [this short video](#) by Jay Smooth - "How to Tell Someone They Sound Racist." If you did not participate in last year's Challenge, you might want to watch "[Trip to the Grocery Store](#)" from *Cracking the Codes* that offers an example of how privilege was leveraged to interrupt interpersonal racism. [And this link](#) goes to handouts with checklists (primarily for white people) where you can note behaviors that you have observed around you and may have exhibited yourself and ways to address these.

What can you do to break these cycles of interpersonal racism? What have you done that has been effective? Can you think of a time you did not interrupt racism? How might you approach it differently next time? How can you enlist others?

<https://youtu.be/TytX0hgWcCO> ·
<http://interactioninstitute.org/love-while-challenging-racist-behavior/> ·
<https://youtu.be/b0Ti-gkJiXc> · <https://youtu.be/GTvU7uUgjUI> ·
<https://bit.ly/2KkCTg3>

10. Institutionalized Racism: How can you advance racial justice in your organization, community, school, and other institutions?

Racism and white privilege can be deeply embedded in organizations and institutions in both formal and informal ways. This can be the situation even when the majority of people in the organization are people of color. A first step to changing this is to become aware of how racism and white privilege operate in different domains of organizational life.

We invite you to consider this [organizational assessment tool](#) from Western States Center, as well as [this tool](#) to check for readiness to move a racial justice agenda forward in an organization. (There are separate sheets for predominantly white organizations, predominantly people of color organizations and multiracial organizations.)

In addition, [this \(2 minute\) video](#) speaks to building public institutional capacity to pursue equity and authentic engagement.

What comes up for you as you consult these resources? Where is there work to be done in your organization, community, or school? How might you move this forward?

<https://www.westernstatescenter.org/tools-and-resources/Tools/assessing-our-organizations-RJ> · <http://racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/westernstates3.pdf> · <http://interactioninstitute.org/equity-and-urban-planning-build-institutional-capacity-and-culture/>

11. Addressing Structural Racism Through the Power of Narrative: How are the food system-related stories that you take in and tell perpetuating the status quo or advancing justice?

Stories wield tremendous power in our world, work, and lives. As writer Chimamanda Adichie has said: “Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can also repair that broken dignity.” We encourage you to watch the first five minutes of Adichie’s TED Talk [“The Danger of the Single Story.”](#)

At Food Solutions New England, we have benefitted from the work of The Storytelling Project, which identifies different kinds of stories that can be used to advance or prevent justice: stock stories (maintain the unjust status quo), concealed stories (accounts of those who are marginalized), resistance stories (stories of anti-racist struggles), and counter-stories (ways to interrupt the status quo and create transformational alternatives). For more about these different kinds of stories, see pages 7-9 of [The Storytelling Curriculum](#).

Reflect on the stories that circulate in your work/ volunteerism/studies and who and what these promote. Are they advancing justice? Are they uplifting those who are marginalized? Are they inspiring new possibilities for equity and mutual liberation?

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story · http://www.columbia.edu/itc/barnard/education/stp/stp_curriculum.pdf

12. Addressing Structural Racism by De-Centering Whiteness: How can we dismantle white supremacy and appropriately leverage privilege for racial justice?

Work for racial justice in our food and other systems must include naming and de-centering whiteness, white privilege, and white superiority/supremacy.

As [various historians have pointed out](#), the invention of the concept of whiteness in our country has been used to divide groups (including poor white working class people and people of color) and to justify inhumane acts, *unearned* privilege, and power structures. Ultimately this dehumanizes everyone and erodes our social fabric.

It is important not just to name [white privilege](#), but also the power that is used to preserve white privilege - white superiority/supremacy. One way to do this is to understand that there is a continuum of white superiority that is not simply about what may come to our minds as the most extreme forms. We suggest looking at [this framework](#) to get a better idea of the continuum.

Another important step is to understand how white cultural norms dominate many of our workplaces and educational institutions. [Here is one take](#) on what that can look like. As you read through these standards and norms, what are your reactions? Which antidotes (see **bold text** in the article above) resonate with you or have you seen implemented?

If you are a person of color working to de-center whiteness in yourself, check out Chapter 5 of [this resource](#) to explore the impact of internalized racial oppression on people of color at the internal, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural levels.

And there are other ways that white people can show up as “accomplices” (as opposed to allies) in the struggle for racial justice. See some ideas on [this site](#). Which have you used or seen used? What else would you add?

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/how-wealthy-americans-divided-and-conquered-the-poor-to-create-the-concept-of-race/2016/04/19/2cab6e38-0643-11e6-b283-e79d81c63c1b_story.html?utm_term=.3c77adec15b2 ·

<https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/on-racism-and-white-privilege> ·

<https://movetoamend.org/sites/default/files/ContinuumOfInternalizedSuperiority.pdf> · http://www.cwsworkshop.org/PARC_site_B/dr-culture.html ·

<https://community-wealth.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/report-potapchuk.pdf> · <https://www.whiteaccomplices.org/>

For more on whiteness, white privilege, and superiority/supremacy, check out these resources:

- [Robin DiAngelo video TED Talk https://vimeo.com/147760743](https://vimeo.com/147760743)
- [Seeing White podcast](http://podcast.cdsporch.org/seeing-white/) (episodes 31-33)

13 – 14. Weekend Reflection: After the second week of the Challenge, which solutions to racial injustice in our food systems seem most promising and powerful?

As you consider different solutions we have explored so far for addressing different levels of racism, which ones jump out that you want to use or lean into more? Are there others that come to mind or that you are using?

Again, considering the solutions we have explored the past week, which ones or combination thereof might best address *multiple* levels of racism and speed progress towards equity and liberation in our food (and other) systems?

Theme for Week 3: Getting to the Roots of the Problem and Opportunity (Land, Liberation, Real Democracy, Dignity, and Belonging)

15. Getting to the Roots: How are you getting at the roots of land and labor justice in your work for racial equity in the food system?

This week we consider ways that we can get at the deeper roots of racism and inequity in our food systems. Leah Penniman of [Soul Fire Farm](http://www.soulfirefarm.org/) reminds us that our food systems are largely based on stolen land and labor. What can we do to fix that?

We suggest that you read the first half of Penniman's article [Four Not So Easy Ways to Dismantle Racism in the Food System](http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/4-not-so-easy-ways-to-dismantle-racism-in-the-food-system-20170427), focusing on the first two infographics ("Uphold Everyone's Right to Land" and "Honor the People Who Grow[/Catch/Raise] Our Food").

Consider the two solutions suggested for each of these. What might you take up in your food systems-related work/volunteerism/studies? What might that look like? What would it take? What other solutions are you trying or would you suggest to uphold everyone's right to food and honor those who grow and catch what we eat?

<http://www.soulfirefarm.org/> ·

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/4-not-so-easy-ways-to-dismantle-racism-in-the-food-system-20170427>

16. Getting to the Roots: How are you getting at the roots of land and labor injustice in your work for racial equity in the food system?

Today we invite you to read the second part of Leah Penniman's article [Four Not So Easy Ways to Dismantle Racism in the Food System](http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/4-not-so-easy-ways-to-dismantle-racism-in-the-food-system-20170427), focusing on the last two infographics ("Eliminate Food Apartheid" and "Support Farmers of Color").

Consider the two solutions suggested for each of these. What might you take up in your work/volunteerism/studies? Beyond what Penniman suggests, what else are you doing or might you do to support community food sovereignty and people of color owned businesses?

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/4-not-so-easy-ways-to-dismantle-racism-in-the-food-system-20170427>

17. Reparations: Are you looking at ways that reparations can be made to address economic and other forms of injustice in our food and other systems?

The [National Black Food and Justice Alliance](http://www.nationalblackfoodandjusticealliance.org/), along with a growing number of regional and local groups, including white accomplices, are calling for reparations of land and resources to farmers and communities of color to account for decades of extracted wealth. For more on the history of and some of the numbers associated with the economic damage in the African American community, [see this infographic](#).

In the last several years, the US Government has settled a few lawsuits brought by American Indian tribes for mismanaging natural resources and other tribal assets. This has been a painfully slow process and many recognize that this has not accounted fully for the economic damage done in those communities.

In Connecticut, Food Solutions New England partner CT-CORE has [made a whole systems call for reparations](#) that is inclusive of criminal justice reform, educational equity, environmental justice and health equity, and economic justice.

Clearly there is much work to be done. We invite you to look through the resource links above, as well as [this guide](#) from Coming to the Table that includes a variety of ways to engage in the work of reparations.

What comes up for you as you read these resources and solutions related to reparations? How are you or might you be engaged in reparations through your food systems work/volunteerism/studies?

For a longer read on the case for reparations, you can read [Ta Nehisi Coates' article](#) in The Atlantic.

<http://www.blackfoodjustice.org/> ·
<http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/make-it-right/infographic-40-acres-and-a-mule-would-be-at-least-64-trillion-today> · <http://www.ctcore-organizenow.org/mission/> ·
http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Reparations_Guide_Jan_2018.pdf ·
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

18. Intersectionality: How can you support and collaborate with other movements in your work for food justice and racial equity?

“Intersectionality” is a term used to refer to the ways in which race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, status, and other markers of personal identity connect and interact to impact people’s lives. It is a way of reminding us that *multiple* forms of identity have bearing on the opportunities to which individuals and communities have access. And it is used to point in the direction of more holistic and interconnected approaches to what otherwise might be siloed approaches around single issues.

We invite you to read this article [“Get Intersectional! \(Or, Why Your Movement Can’t Go It Alone\)](#). What are your reactions? What seems relevant to your work/volunteerism/studies in food systems? How are you incorporating intersectionality? How might you? What would that look like? What might it make possible?

For some ideas, you can consider [this Opportunity Agenda resource](#), including ways that different organizations and initiatives have incorporated intersectionality.

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/planet/get-intersectional-why-your-movement-can-t-go-it-alone> ·
<https://opportunityagenda.org/explore/resources-publications/ten-tips-putting-intersectionality-practice#.WmDpHcrlvbk.twitter>

19. Building New Economies: How can you support new economic models that promote justice and sustainability?

There is growing realization that we will be hard-pressed to realize racial justice, and other forms of social justice, without addressing the underlying structures (rules, incentives, practices) of our existing dominant economy that ultimately harm us all. Extractive forms of mainstream economic activity are based largely on “othering” people and natural resources/ ecosystems and relegating harm done to these others as “externalities.”

We need new economic models [in both urban and rural communities](#) at the individual business/firm level, community/economic development level, and political economy level that support human dignity, diverse belonging, and ecosystem vitality. From cooperative models to community-based and sovereignty movements to circular economies and regenerative economics, different alternatives are showing up. And as the Center for Social Inclusion [has pointed out](#), there is need for more collaboration across different lines (geographic, issue area, racial).

For some inspiring examples of those evolving new models of just and sustainable economic prosperity:

- [Detroit Food Commons](#)
<http://www.modeldmedia.com/features/peoples-food-coop-north-end-011518.aspx>
- [Cooperation Jackson](#) <https://cooperationjackson.org/>
- [Field Guide to a Regenerative Economy](#) (multiple stories)
<http://fieldguide.capitalinstitute.org/>

What new models for business and economic development are you experimenting with and/or hearing about that support justice and sustainability?

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/i-was-wrong-about-the-rural-urban-divide-20180222> ·

<https://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/publication/building-the-case-for-racial-equity-in-the-food-system/>

20 – 21. Summary Reflections, Most Important Learning, and Commitments

As you look back on the past three weeks, what would you say are your most important learnings? What do you know now or are aware of that you were not on April 1st? Have you done anything differently in your food systems-related work/volunteerism/studies as a result of your participation. If so, what?

What commitments are you ready to make going beyond the Challenge, in terms of learning, talking with others, taking action? What will it take to deliver on your commitments? What supports would you like?

Perhaps for some encouragement, check out this recording of a conversation between Brené Brown and DeRay Mckesson about the path forward, touching on joy, guilt, shame, gratitude, small wins and more ... - [“The Courage to Show Up”](#) (starts at 25:33 in the longer program) <https://crooked.com/podcast/joy-the-gift/>