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# *Learning About Our Racism*

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## **Conditions That Hinder Learning**

- I deny being White and do not see my whiteness supporting racism.
- I believe I have no role in supporting racism.
- For fear of being seen as racist, I avoid potentially difficult conversations.
- I wait until others confront me.
- I fight racism primarily “for Blacks or other people of color.”
- I go in blind and naïve.
- I require an immediate yes-it-is, or no-it-isn’t diagnosis about racism.
- I anticipate getting it all together at some future point.
- I discount the importance of language for my racial learning.
- I don’t find and use role models.
- I seek support for my learning primarily from Blacks whose struggle is different from mine and for whom my needs are an additional energy drain.

## **Conditions That Help Learning**

- I own the positive parts of being White and accept the reality of parts of my whiteness that support racism.
- I recognize the role I play in supporting racism (implicitly or explicitly).
- I allow myself to make mistakes and lean into my discomfort as I learn about my racism.
- I look inside first.
- I understand my self-interest in fighting racism, and I fight for my own benefit.
- I understand and anticipate potential negative consequences in fighting racism.
- I allow the possibility that racism may be a part of the situation and allow myself time to consider that possibility.
- I accept the “onion” theory that I will continue to peel away layers of my own racism for the rest of my life.
- I pay attention to my own language and that of others as a tool to reveal myself to myself.
- I seek out White role models who display non-racist behavior and are in a learning posture about racism.
- I seek support for my learning primarily from Whites who are also learning and who will encourage and support my learning.

- I swallow someone else's theory about the meaning and remedies of my racism
- I articulate my learnings about racism based on my own experience.

*Note: These conditions could be equally helpful for people trying to understand their own cultural bias about women, handicapped persons, gays or any of the other blind spots of our monocultural perspective.*