

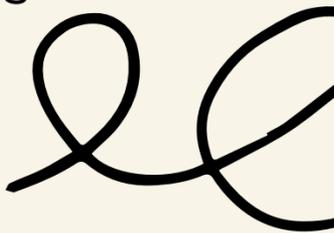
# PRIVILEGE 101



# PEGGY MCINTOSH

"“As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.”

“It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculturated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people props up those in power and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already.”



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# WHITE PRIVILEGE

I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.

I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.

I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials (school materials) that testify to the existence of their race.

I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race.

I can choose blemish cover or plasters in "flesh" colour and have them more or less match my skin.

If a police officer pulls me over, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.

I am not made acutely aware that my shape, bearing or body odour will be taken as a reflection on my race.

# MALE PRIVILEGE

I can be confident that my co-workers won't think I got my job because of my sex - even though that might be true

The odds of my encountering sexual harassment on the job are so low as to be negligible. [This is much more likely to be the case for men perceived to be heterosexual.]

If I choose not to have children, my masculinity will not be called into question.

If I have children and provide primary care for them, I'll be praised for extraordinary parenting if I'm even marginally competent.

I can be somewhat sure that if I ask to see "the person in charge," I will face a person of my own sex. The higher-up in the organization the person is, the surer I can be

I can be confident that the ordinary language of day-to-day existence will always include my sex. "All men are created equal...", mailman, chairman, freshman, he. [And I will not be asked to "get used to it" or made to translate when reading literature or other reading materials which use sexist pronouns and professional terms.]

# CLASS PRIVILEGE

I can choose to make my privileged position as visible or invisible as I want, depending on the situation in which I find myself.

I assume I will be able to meet my basic needs. I take having necessities for granted

I can easily speak with my lawyer or doctor or children's teachers (and get taken seriously)

I have the freedom to waste.

If I break or lose something I can replace it easily. I do not have to shop around for the best buy or wait for sales

I can hide family secrets and family failures behind the doors of my home.

When I watch TV or read the papers I can see people of my own class represented positively.

Chances are the person in charge in any organization is like me or is sympathetic to my status

When I am in the company of people of high socioeconomic status in any social situation I have little discomfort.

# QUESTIONS FOR BREAKOUT ROOMS

1. What are your initial reactions to these lists? Is there something you hadn't thought about before, or something that hit home because you recognised something you had experienced in it?
2. What thoughts do you have about how an understanding of privilege might affect our organising? How does it relate to the classic organising definition of power as being about organised people and organised money?

## SOME CLOSING THOUGHTS

-WHAT DO WE *DO* WITH PRIVILEGE

1. Moving beyond just feeling guilty
2. Moving beyond denial
3. Using privilege to act