



***BROWN IS THE
NEW WHITE***
**DISCUSSION
GUIDE**

FOR ALL AUDIENCES

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Title

- What was your first reaction to the title of this book?
- What is your interpretation of the phrase “Brown is the New White”?

Names

- Do you agree that names matter?
- What terms do you prefer others to use when referring to your ethnicity/ethnicities or race/s?
- The author explains why he capitalizes “Black” throughout his book when referring to African Americans. What are your thoughts on his choice and reasoning?



INTRODUCTION - “They Said This Day Would Never Come”

New American Majority

- Were you surprised to learn which groups make up the New American Majority? If so, what surprised you the most?
- Do you think it's conventional wisdom that the majority of eligible voters in this country are progressive and not conservative? Why do you think that is the case?
- What type of barriers do you think exist that prevent people from seeing progressive whites and progressive people of color as belonging to one group?

Unfinished Work

- This chapter concludes with Lincoln's quote: “It is for us the living to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.” For you personally, who do you think of as “they”?
- In what ways are you fighting to help finish the unfinished work?



CHAPTER 1: 51% (and Growing Every Day): The New American Majority

1965

- Were you aware that the events of 1965 directly resulted in today's demographic revolution?
- How did the events of 1965 affect your life? Your family's?
- When thinking about the turn of events that followed after 1965, and the changes in this country that resulted, what are you most grateful for?

Demographic Revolution

- According to the author: "Each day, the size of the U.S. population increases by more than 8,000 people, and nearly 90% of that growth consists of people of color." Is this fact surprising to you?
- How do you feel about the above fact?
- How prepared do you feel we are, as a nation, for this current demographic revolution and overall demographic shift?



CHAPTER 2: Meet the New American Majority

Defining Progressive

- Do you identify as progressive?
- What do you think about the author's definition of progressive?
- How would you define "progressive"?

Progressive Majority

- Do you consider yourself a member of the New American Majority? If so, before reading this book, did you think of yourself as part of this majority?
- How does the author's framing of this collective, as the new progressive majority, change the way you feel about your place and role in this country?

Stories and Histories

- Do you share anything in common with any of the individuals whose stories and histories were depicted in this chapter?
- Did any of these individuals' histories remind you of the histories of your own family?



CHAPTER 3: Blinded by the White

White Superiority and History

- Do you agree when the author says, "...this country has been obsessed with White people for 408 years"?
- What comes to mind when you hear the phrase "White supremacy"? How do **you** define this term?
- Did any of the policy and legislative examples from history pointed out in this chapter directly affect your family?

Implicit Bias

- This chapter opens with a quote by David Williams: "As an American raised in this society with negative implicit bias against black people, you are not a bad person. You are simply a normal American." Do you agree?
- Have you ever experienced implicit bias toward you?
- Can you cite an example of when you acted a certain way toward someone based on your own implicit bias about that person based on his or her ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, appearance, accent, ability or other trait?
- Why is implicit bias so difficult to overcome?
- What suggestions do you have for overcoming implicit bias?



CHAPTER 4: Requiem for the White Swing Voter

Democrats and White Swing Voters

- Why do you think Democrats still focus the vast majority of their time and resources on White swing voters when the numbers clearly show that the number of eligible people of color is higher and growing?
- Why do you think midterms experience drop-offs in turnout compared to presidential election cycles?
- Why do you think voter turnout dropped so significantly among Democrats in 2010 and 2014?

Democrats and Messaging

- What are your thoughts on how the Democratic Party handled health care reform, especially in how it was communicated? How do you think they could have handled matters differently?
- What are your thoughts on how the Democratic Party handled immigration reform? How do you think they could have handled matters differently?

CHAPTER 5: Fewer Smart-Ass White Boys

White Men and 90% Control

- The author presents this fact, “White men comprise 31 percent of the American population and just 23 percent of Democratic voters but they control nearly 90 percent of what happens in Democratic politics and progressive advocacy.” Why do you think this is the case?
- Referring to the above fact, did any of these numbers surprising to you?
- Do you see any evidence of what the author calls “Smart-Ass White Boy Syndrome” changing?
- Does “Smart-Ass White Boy Syndrome” affect you and your life? If so, how?

Diversity in Hiring

- What is your response to the question “Diversity in hiring: Why does it matter?”
- Share your experiences working for diverse and non-diverse workplaces, and if applicable, what difference you noticed between working for places that were not very diverse versus places that were diverse.

Obama Campaigns

- What role do you feel technology played in Obama’s first/2008 campaign?
- What role do you feel campaign strategists played?
- What role do you feel Obama played?
- What role do you feel Obama’s race played?

Cultural Competence

- What does cultural competence mean to you?
- Can you give an example of cultural competence?
- Do you try to develop greater cultural competency? And if so, how?



CHAPTER 6: Invest Wisely

Political Spending

- If you were a member of the Democratic Party and knew the party had raised \$200 million for a campaign, what kind of questions would you ask?
- How do you think political money should be spent?
- How much attention do you pay to political TV ads?
- What influences your decision to vote for a particular candidate? Media coverage? Images? Interviews? Brochures? TV ads? Radio ads?
- Do you feel the Democratic Party should release an audit of spending after each cycle?

CHAPTER 7: What Is Justice? Policy Priorities for the New American Majority Justice

- What does justice mean to you? What does justice look like to you?
- What does equity mean to you? What does equity look like to you?
- What are your thoughts on reparations for African Americans?
- What could our country be doing to improve education and increase education equity?
- Do you believe that all immigrants should be offered an efficient pathway to citizenship?
- What does democracy mean to you and look like to you?
- What does criminal justice reform look like to you?
- What does environmental equity and justice look like to you?
- What are your thoughts on the author's "1 percent solution"?



CHAPTER 8: Conservatives Can Count

Conservatives

- Do you think conservatives can count? What evidence suggests this?
- Do you think there is a risk of conservatives “winning over” members of the New American Majority?
- How do you feel about the fact that conservatives have recently placed more people of color into office, and presented more presidential candidates of color in 2016 than Democrats?
- What are your thoughts on the Republican Party’s “autopsy” report? Do you think Republicans are following the roadmap laid out in the “autopsy” report in the 2016 election?
- Democrats came out with their own “autopsy” report in late 2015. What do you think of it? (To see the report, go to: https://uploads.democrats.org/Downloads/DVTF_FinalReport.pdf)



CONCLUSION: From Fear to Hope

- Some people believe an increased population of color will “dilute or destroy the traditional American middle-class way of life”? Do you agree? Disagree? Discuss.
- What legacy would you like to leave behind as a member of your generation?
- What legacy would you like to personally leave behind as an individual here on Earth?

