

# White Fragility Chapter 10

## *White Fragility and the Rules of Engagement*

### Remember to Feel, Think, Love, Act

1. FEEL.....Let your feelings rise to the surface. Roll them around in your heart and mind. Let them boil or simmer into clarity and...
2. THINK... Think about your feelings, thoughts and actions. What do you want to or can you do?
3. LOVE... Love God... Love your Neighbor (all of them) and Love yourself... We change and grow with love.
4. Act... Do something

**Picking up from last week:**

### **Culpability.....**

*Deserving Blame...*

*Sufficiently responsible to be at fault and liable for the conduct....*

## **Levels of mental state affecting culpability...**

Intent

Recklessness

Carelessness

Negligence

Ignorance

## **When it comes to racism, both personal and societal....**

When do our own actions become culpable?

What actions of others are we culpable for?

When are we culpable for the actions of others?

When have we benefited from the culpable actions of others?

How and when do we accept responsibility for the culpable actions of others?

How do we remedy immoral/racist acts of others done in our name and/or for our benefit?

What punishments or remedies should we engage in?

113 – The dominant conceptualization of racism is individual acts of cruelty.

- Whites insist on unspoken rules of how to give white people feedback.

1. Do not give me feedback on my racism under any circumstances.

If you do...

2. Proper tone is crucial... feedback must be given calmly. If any emotion is displayed the feedback is invalid and can be dismissed.
3. You must trust that I am in no way racist before you can give me feedback on my racism.
4. Our relationship must be issue free.
5. Feedback must be given immediately. Too late is too bad.
6. Feedback must be given privately. Protect me from embarrassment.
7. Feedback must be indirect or it is invalid.
8. You must make me feel safe.
9. You must acknowledge how you oppress me.
10. You must acknowledge my good intentions and agree they cancel out my bad behavior.
11. To accuse my behavior of having racist impact, you have misunderstood, and I will explain your misunderstanding.

124. The rules function to obscure racism, project white dominance and regain white equilibrium.

125 – White fragility punishes the person giving feedback and silences them.

## **- RACISM IS THE NORM... NOT THE ABERRATION....**

We need to resolve to...

- Take feedback any way we can get it.
- Use it to build my racial stamina
- Say Thank You

126 – I did not set the racial system up, and I need help to change it.

- The call for 'Racial Trust' is racist
- Building trust, creating ground rules and guidelines, preserves white fragility.
- The white demand..."I need to trust that you won't think I am racist before I can work on my racism."
- Building Trust Rules:
  - Don't judge
  - Don't make assumptions
  - Assume good intentions
  - Speak your truth – All perspectives are NOT valid.
  - Respect

127 – The building trust rules assume equal power relations between the races.

- The Power Relations are not equal...
- White people insist on conditions that support the racial status quo.
  - White centrality
  - White dominance
  - Professed personal and societal white innocence

128 – RACISTS CAN BE NICE AND STILL BE RACIST...

- The injury to people of color persists

THE ANTIDOTE...



D'Angelo's questions....

## WHITE FRAGILITY AND THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

1. The author presents a set of eleven “cardinal rules” (pp. 123-24) when giving feedback to white people regarding racist assumptions and patterns. For each rule of engagement, provide an example of the rule in action.
2. What assumptions do these rules rest on?
3. DiAngelo presents these rules in a language of critique in order to reveal how they function. Of course the “rules” are rarely explicitly expressed this way. Consider what you hear white people say that communicates “do not give me feedback under any circumstances” etc.? Go through each of the eleven rules and share how you have heard these rules expressed in practice.
4. How would you rewrite these rules from an antiracist framework? (A worksheet for rewriting the rules of engagement can be downloaded from [robindiangelo.com/resources](http://robindiangelo.com/resources).)
5. In your own words, what is problematic about common guidelines for building trust in discussions about racism (e.g., “don’t judge”)? How do these guidelines function? Who are they for? Whose comfort do they protect?
6. The rules of engagement around white fragility have at least three parts: those giving feedback, those receiving feedback, and those witnessing these exchanges. Practice some language for each by preparing your own “sentence starters” such as the silence breakers above. How might you begin to give feedback? How might you respond to feedback given to you? What might you say as you witness an exchange of feedback?

## Ashland Food Co-op Statement on Black Lives Matter

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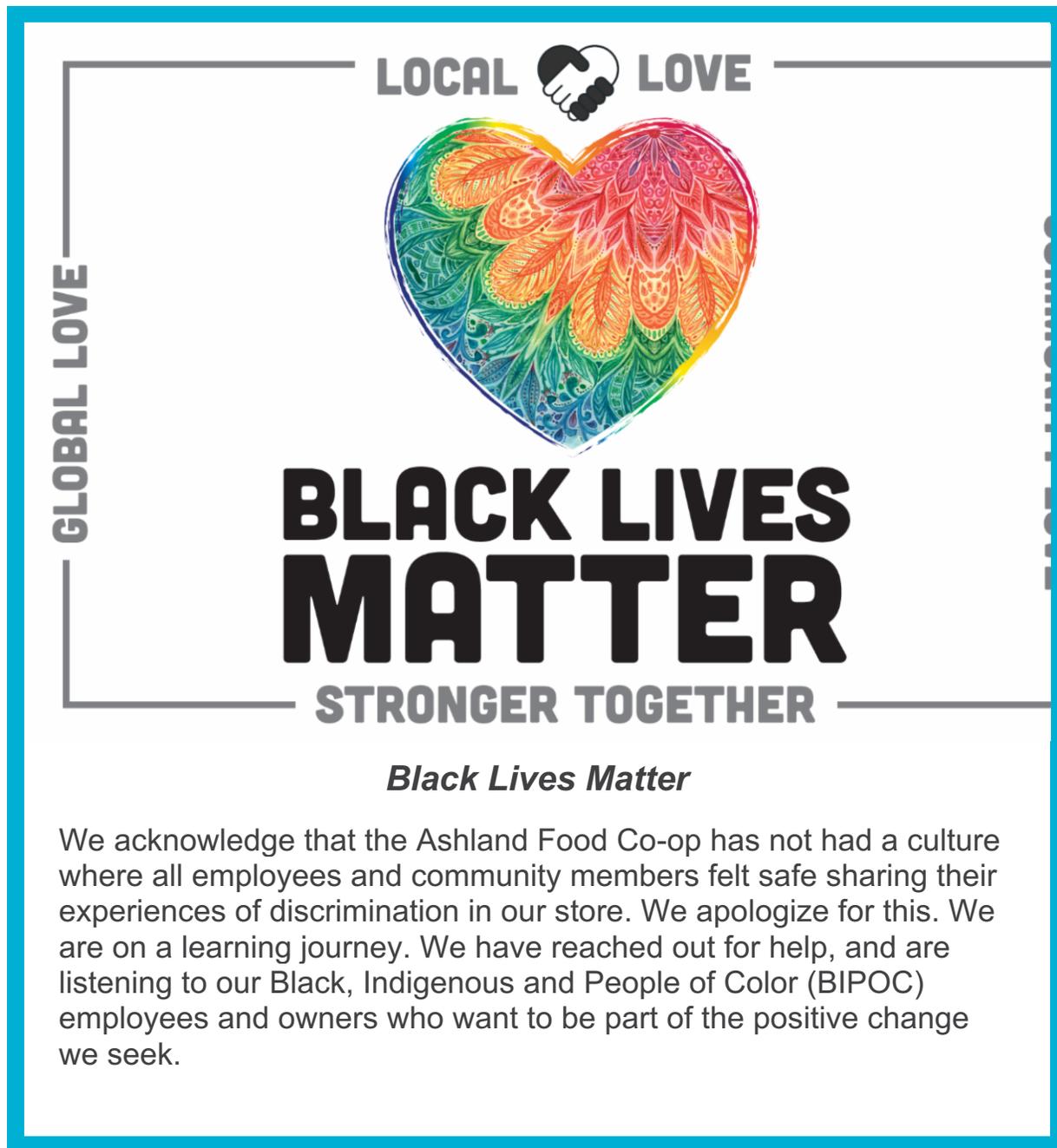
From: "Ashland Food Co-op"

To: [tiaoftalent@charter.net](mailto:tiaoftalent@charter.net)

Cc:

Sent: Wednesday October 7 2020 1:01:27PM

Subject: Black Lives Matter - a message from the GM and Board of Directors



LOCAL LOVE

GLOBAL LOVE

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**

STRONGER TOGETHER

*Black Lives Matter*

We acknowledge that the Ashland Food Co-op has not had a culture where all employees and community members felt safe sharing their experiences of discrimination in our store. We apologize for this. We are on a learning journey. We have reached out for help, and are listening to our Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) employees and owners who want to be part of the positive change we seek.

In choosing to make a public declaration that ***Black Lives Matter***, we believe that it is critical that we be as clear as possible about what we intend in making this statement to our employees, our owners, our customers, and our community at large. We understand that it has the potential to be polarizing and interpreted according to the reader's own experience of the world. So let us say what we, the Ashland Food Cooperative, mean.

What publicly stating that ***Black Lives Matter*** means to us is this:

- It is vital that we as Americans and business owners recognize, acknowledge and address our society's collective history of unjust and inhumane treatment of Black People, many of whom are our own friends, neighbors and family members.
- There is overwhelming evidence that systemic inequity continues to be deeply embedded in our society's structures, practices, and beliefs.
- It is critical that we bring attention, focus and energy to addressing all the ways this inequity gets expressed in our organization, and in our business and community relationships, and then to address them in the best way we can. We will not tolerate discrimination of any kind, nor intimidation based on any type of discrimination.
- As one of hundreds of food cooperatives in America that have joined together to offer healthy food in a way that benefits each of our local communities, we have committed to be a business that cares about far more than our bottom line. We want what is best for our employees, our owners, our customers and our community. To honor that commitment in this time when taking a stand is so important, we proudly declare ***Black Lives Matter***.

We also wish to clarify what this statement is not:

- It is not a political statement intended to serve a political purpose or support any particular organization.
- It is not a statement that places greater value on one set of human lives over another.
- It is not an attempt to claim moral superiority.
- It is not a marketing ploy to attract like-minded patrons.

We are now establishing better communication systems to listen and respond to our employees. In collaboration with some of our BIPOC employees - and recognizing that not all of us have the same lived experience - the board and leadership will implement policies that are responsive to what we are hearing. We are now taking steps to create a safer and more inclusive environment for all of our employees, owners, and community.

On behalf of the Ashland Food Co-op Board of Directors and Management,

Ed Claassen, Board President  
Julie O'Dwyer, Board Vice President  
Emile Amarotico, General Manager

Ashland Food Co-op | 237 N. First St, Ashland, OR 97520

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# 6 Questions to Stop Asking Your Black Friends and Colleagues Right Now



[Dynasti Hunt](#) May 31 · 5 min

*Author Note: If you would like a visual version of the 6 questions, you can find it on [LinkedIn](#) and/or [Instagram](#).*

This week, our country is experiencing both the continued turmoil of a pandemic and also now acts of blatant racism that are traumatizing, triggering, and unacceptable. The reality though is that when you are Black in America, events like this happen all of the time, even if they never make it to be seen in the public eye. Sharing this resource that I shared on my personal platforms in case it is helpful as I think it is equally important to recognize things to be mindful of with not only Black friends but also Black Colleagues in the workplace.

*Want to read this story later? Save it in [Journal](#).*

3 quick things to note before you read and digest this:

1. I do not speak for all Black people in America, in the workplace, nor my own work and therefore, I acknowledge that these suggestions may not be everyone. That being said, please do not go around asking everyone who is Black which ones work for them or not right now as it may be seen as burdensome.
2. If you have asked me these questions this week, I am not angry at you and you do not need to write me an apology (another act of being burdensome). I simply ask that you use this as a learning moment.
3. I mean every word said that I've written below and share them from a place of love, honesty, and full transparency.

The Six:

## **Stop: Asking “ How are you doing?”**

Imagine experiencing first-hand a traumatic death of a loved one and the first text is “How you’re doing?” Then all of the texts afterward are the same. How do you THINK you would be doing? How would it feel to be asked it over and over again and needing

to answer? This question can be traumatizing to have to answer over and over again, especially when you know it may lead to even more questions.

Plus, the reality is for Black People (and all People of Color), experience racism every day. So, unless you plan to ask us this question daily on the topic and/or “check-in” on us daily, it can come across that you only “get it” when it’s in the news.

*Do This Instead:* Use statements and just say you are thinking of us. Acknowledge that you see what’s happening and share your solidarity in dismantling racism. And then, say up front that you do not expect a text, a call, a response back. Take the burden off.

### **Stop: Saying “I’m sorry.”**

Saying I’m sorry that this is happening or that you’re experiencing this is hard to receive as a Black person especially when it’s something you experience every day, not just when a hashtag is trending. Be mindful that we hear apologies daily that are not followed up with actions that indicate the words expressed.

Additionally, when phrases like “I’m sorry” are used, there is typically an expected response from the person who received the apology that shifts the burden back on people of color to say something when we are already burdened by racism in the first place.

*Do This Instead:* Again, acknowledge that you see what’s happening and share your solidarity in dismantling racism. And if you say sorry, name upfront that no response is expected.

### **Stop: Asking “Do you need anything?” or “What can I do?”**

The answer: Dismantle racism.

Many times, what is needed is your action, your voice, your courage, and your willingness to give leave us alone and give us space to practice self-care. Asking this question, again and again, puts the burden back on the already burdened to give a response when many times, what we need from you is already out there in the form of a resource that we want you to tap into, share, and actively use so that we are not trying to dismantle racism alone.

*Do This Instead:* Do the work and your own research. Speak up. Acknowledge that you are here if you are needed but don’t ask what we need. We’ve been sharing the answer to this question all of our lives. We’d appreciate it if you listened.

### **Stop: Asking us to explain “Why x is happening?” or “X is happening; don’t you agree that it’s wrong?”**

These questions put the burden back on the already burdened. And often these questions lead to simply more burdensome questions or debate. And we don't have time to debate you. We are too busy trying not to become the next hashtag. Period.

*Do This Instead:*

Read

“White Fragility” by Robin Diangelo”

Read “ Stamped from the Beginning” by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds

Read” Why We Can't Wait” by Martin Luther King Jr.

And these are just a start. Google resources. They are there for you.

**Stop: Asking us “ Tell me how you've personally experienced racism?”**

This is incredibly traumatic and re-traumatizing as it asks us to re-live our pain and can even put us in a position where we feel like we need to “ prove” to you that we've experienced racism or that we've experienced it so badly, that THIS will be the story that will finally make you believe racism exists and act.

*Do This Instead:* Don't ask this. If we voluntarily choose to share a piece of our story, recognize the privilege you have in being able to hear it. Don't question it, analyze it, or justify it. It's not your story.

**Stop: Saying to us that “ You're uncomfortable or in fear of saying the wrong thing.”**

Wanna know what's uncomfortable? Having a knee in your neck and having the breath literally taken from you as you cry out for your mother and beg to please stand.

It's knowing that you have been judged every single second of your life and the only place free of judgment used to be your home and now that's not safe anymore (and maybe wasn't ever).

I could go on. But look: stop putting your fear on the shoulders of those whose whole life was designed to live in fear. We, again, have zero time to make you feel better about it,

*Do This Instead:* Phone a Friend. A White Friend. And get uncomfortable.

This list is just a start and again, important to note that it's important to check with friends (when the time is appropriate) to ask if it resonates with what they need.

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Written by

## [Dynasti Hunt](#)

**Committed to reaching racial equity for BBIPOC in all workplaces and nothing less. [www.dynastihunt.com](http://www.dynastihunt.com) IG: @dynastihunt**