

Week 7 Highlight of Antiracist Work in the World

Throughout How to be an Antiracist, Kendi refers to the need for antiracist criminal justice reform.

The protests for racial justice following the murders of George Floyd, Ahmed Arbery, and Breonna Taylor focus on demands for criminal justice reform. This week's highlight focuses on the work of two organizations, one national and one state.

The national non-profit organization, **Equal Justice Initiative** (<https://eji.org/criminal-justice-reform/>), works for racial justice and criminal justice reform. Led by Bryan Stevenson, public interest lawyer and author, EJI "is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society." Explore the work of the EJI on its [website](https://eji.org/criminal-justice-reform/) (<https://eji.org/criminal-justice-reform/>), in the [book](#), *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*; the [film](https://justmercy.eji.org/) (<https://justmercy.eji.org/>) of the same title.

In Colorado, the **Colorado Coalition for Criminal Justice Reform** (<https://www.ccjrc.org/making-change>) describes itself in this way: "Coloradans from many different experiences and perspectives are joining together to end the era of mass incarceration, racial disparity and a failed drug war. Through a new vision and an aggressive agenda, we're advancing a broader debate and design of public health, safety and funding strategies through collective action." One approach supported by the Coalition is community reinvestment, and a current pilot program is called Transforming Safety. "Transforming Safety is a community development approach to public safety in the pilot communities of North Aurora and Southeast Colorado Springs." Find out more [here](https://transformingsafety.org/) (<https://transformingsafety.org/>).

Week 7 Message from the ABC Curriculum Committee

Undoubtedly, we are each coming to the table this week with some feelings regarding the tenor of society related to the upcoming election. We observe people stepping up into the best and worst versions of themselves. As you navigate the content this week, we encourage each of you to think about how we can learn from and do better. To be a part of the ABCs is one first step in taking antiracist action. How might we extend our learning into our own community, to hold ourselves and others accountable? How are we using our voice and our vote to advocate for antiracist policies and actions? We encourage sharing these explicit antiracist efforts and actions within your ABC this week; we'd love to hear feedback about your own individual experience within the ABC and within your community as we progress through Kendi's text.

In chapter 11, Kendi addresses the powerless defense, a logical fallacy that posits Black individuals cannot be racist because they don't hold power in our society. He describes this racist construction as both an underestimation of Black people and an overestimation of White people. Throughout the chapter, Kendi deconstructs his own duality, "When we stop denying the duality of racist and antiracist, we can take an accurate accounting of the racial ideas and policies we support" (p.144). Linking examples from his own experience to specific racist actions of Black policymakers and other Black individuals in power positions, Kendi urges his readers to resist, "Racist ideas are constantly produced to cage the power of people to resist" (p. 142).

Kendi introduces two important terms with definitions in chapter 12, in which he unpacks classist racism. He defines a class racist as, "One who is racializing the classes, supporting policies of racial capitalism against those race-classes, and justifying them by racist ideas about those race-classes". He defines anti-racist anticapitalist as, "one who is opposing racial capitalism". A love of capitalism can lead to a love of racism. Kendi expands the metaphor of capitalism and racism as the conjoined twins, who are, "...again struggling to stay alive and thrive as their offspring—inequality, war, and climate change—threaten to kill them, and all of us, off" (p. 157). Kendi asserts the only way to dismantle class racism is to embrace antiracism and anticapitalism simultaneously.

Week 7: Chapter 11 (Black) & Chapter 12 (Class)
Pre-ABC Reflection, Discussion Prompts, Actions & Resources

Activity	Suggested Time Estimate*	Reflection, Dialogue, Action	Process Suggestions
<p>Self-Reflection</p> <p><i>Questions to consider prior to ABC meeting</i></p>	<p>5-10 minutes*</p> <p>Prior to meeting</p>	<p>Describing how a conversation with a newspaper editor affected him, Kendi writes: <i>“And I did begin to terminate a part of myself—for the better. I began to silence one half of the war within me, the duel between antiracism and assimilation that W.E.B. DuBois gave voice to, and started embracing the struggle toward a single consciousness of antiracism. I picked up a second major, African American studies.”</i> (p.149)</p> <p>What does Kendi mean that he terminated <i>“a part of myself—for the better.”</i> If you choose/have chosen to <i>“embrace the struggle toward...antiracism”</i>, would you have to <i>“terminate a part of”</i> yourself? If so, what? Have you ever heard a joke about Black people? Or other cultures?</p> <p>Before reading this book, what assumptions did you have about people experiencing homelessness, and about people in the top 1% of household net worth in this country? Has this chapter altered your assumptions?</p>	<p>Read and think about these questions before and after reading the chapter.</p> <p>Read the chapters before the ABC meeting.</p> <p>If you cannot read the chapter(s) before the meeting, come to the ABC meeting anyway. Participate humbly knowing that you have not read the chapter.</p>
<p>Discussion</p> <p>ABC meeting</p>	<p>Greeting and Settling in 10* minutes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check in with each other (How are you?) 2. Welcome and Agenda 3. Review and check on Participation Norms (very brief) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the group doing? Any changes to norms needed? 4. Review chapter to identify a key passage or two (to warm-up get back into the chapter after a busy day) 5. Take turns sharing a passage. 	<p>Arrive early to the meeting so you can catch up</p> <p>Facilitator welcomes everyone and shares the agenda (made at the previous meeting.)</p> <p>Facilitator asks the group to reflect briefly on participation norms. Ideas for how to reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review individual participation and norms silently. Facilitator asks each individual to reflect on one norm the individual has done well and one they need to work on. End. ➤ Review group process while silently reflecting on norms. Facilitator asks for feedback: What is one norm we are

			<p>doing well? One we need to improve on?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review norms by reading them aloud followed by individual reflection or by group discussion: On which one norm should we focus today? ➤ Review norms. Facilitator asks: How are the norms working? What do we need to change, if anything?
	<p>Discussion 50 minutes*</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions for Discussion</u></p> <p>Do people of color have power to eliminate racist policies and racial inequities? Is it possible for People of Color to be racist?</p> <p>How is engaging in antiracist work different for White people than it is for People of Color?</p> <p>What is the powerlessness defense? How does it relate to racist and/or antiracist actions?</p> <p>How are racist ideas perpetuated by humor?</p> <p>Why does Kendi describe capitalism and racism as conjoined twins?</p> <p>How do racist policies connect and intertwine with capitalist policies? Can you think of an example of a policy that is both racist and capitalist? How could the policy be reframed to be anti-racist?</p>	<p>Everyone has a voice. Ideas for making sure all voices are heard:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each person chooses a passage. The discussion begins with each person sharing the passage and why. 2. Round robin, each person talks building on previous speaker—in order, around the room. 3. Each one asks one. After making a comment, the speaker calls on the next person to comment. 4. Pairs. First pairs share their thinking in response to the question. Then each person responds. <p>Return to the chapter/text frequently during the discussion. Remember one purpose is to understand the chapter/book/ideas.</p> <p>Facilitator keeps track of participation and asks questions to ensure that all participants get a chance to talk. In addition, active participants ask questions of their colleagues.</p>
	<p>Reflection and Action 5 minutes*</p>	<p>Reflect individually: Based on the discussion, what personal action will I take this week?</p>	
	<p>Next Steps 5 minutes*</p>	<p>Plan for the next book club meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What chapters are next? • What actions have we committed to for next week's meeting? Restate the plan. 	<p>Facilitator takes notes and reads/restates the plan for the next meeting after the discussion. "We have agreed to..."</p>
	<p>Closing 5 minutes*</p>	<p>Thank each other and say good-bye!</p>	
<p>Action</p>	<p>Will vary**</p>	<p>How are racist ideas perpetuated by humor? Choose one aspect of your life and listen for how people use humor. To what extent does</p>	<p>Never underestimate the power and importance of everyday actions you yourself can take.</p>

		<p>the humor you hear reinforce or challenge racist ideas or images? List possible actions to take, as a bystander, to respond to racist humor.</p> <p>Start compiling a list of stores, providers, and businesses you engage with most often for personal use. Then compile a similar list for holiday shopping, office supplies, school supplies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many are locally- or family-owned? • Do any companies focus on giving back to the local community? Do any of those listed allocate funds to racial equity or social justice causes? • Before your next purchase, explore local and family-owned businesses; expand your purchase behaviors 	
Learn More	Will vary**	<p>Go get active bystander training to learn more about what to do and how!</p> <p>One example is this training by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University.</p> <p><i>Other Articles for Reading:</i></p> <p>https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2020/8/16/doj-yale-admissions-harvard-impact/</p> <p>https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2019/07/the-wealth-gap-taints-americas-success-stories/593719/</p>	

*These are suggested times. Different groups might spend time differently. The main guideline is to spend time intentionally.

** It is expected that more time might be dedicated to action and learning more as the group progresses through the book.