

Living the Pledge Workshop

On Making Meaningful Pledge Commitments

Now we are moving from study to making meaningful, actionable commitments.

Below are some things for you to consider and some suggestions for deciding what kinds of meaningful commitments you might make to end racism:

- Make sure you can clearly articulate your values, attitudes, emotions and relationships when it comes to racial matters. Why do you care about this issue?
- Begin to move beyond confessional accounts and personal narratives. Become aware of racial injustice in everyday life that may not personally touch you. For example:
 1. Be aware of how media portrays similar Black and White situations in very different terms. (Ex., Blacks are looting while Whites are foraging for supplies...as seen in disaster areas.)
 2. There is a tremendous amount of anti-Black rhetoric today which is very harmful to our society. Don't let this kind of talk go unchecked...Speak Up!
 3. Use the video camera on your phone if you see what looks like police harassment. It is your right to video tape incidents.
- Draw upon your personal talents, interests, and hobbies as a source for inspiration. For example, if you are a talented writer you might write letters to the editor, to your local representatives when local race issues arise. You might write a play that positively influences people. Or a rap poem...check this kid out! <http://usuncut.com/black-lives-matter/white-boy-privilege/>.
- Take advantage of opportunities available to you that others may not have. For example, if your company or organization is hiring, enlarge the circle of those you might help get a job beyond family and friends to include perhaps the son/daughter of an African American you might know. Do you

have influence at your Alma Mater? Help an African American youngster get enrolled who doesn't have the connections that his/her white friends might have.

- Begin to look at the larger picture of institutional racism. Do you have a keen interest in housing, law, education, etc.? How might you make a difference in these areas? For example, a lawyer I know was deeply moved by the loss of property African Americans in the 9th Ward of New Orleans were experiencing as a result of hurricane Katrina and local laws. She moved from the D.C. area to New Orleans to use her expertise to help people regain and hold onto their property...she continues her work there today. This was a major commitment!!
- Consider how you plan to grow into this work. Eliminating racism is ongoing work. Are you committed to working for justice for the long haul?