



# Questions and Answers

**Q.**

What is Privilege?

**A.**

I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant to remain oblivious. White Privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks.

Peggy McIntosh  
"White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"

**Q. What does it do?**

**A.** It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage is kept strongly inculcated 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.

Peggy McIntosh  
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**Q. Is this about proving how bad white folks are?**

**A.** Our attempts to dismantle dominance and oppression must follow a path other than that of either vilifying or obliterating Whiteness... Whites need to acknowledge and work through the negative historical implications of 'Whiteness' and create for ourselves a transformed identity as White people committed to equality and social change. Our goal is neither to defy or denigrate Whiteness, but to difuse its destructive power.

To teach my white students and my own children that they are 'not White' is to do them a disservice. To teach them that there a different ways of being White, and that they have a choice as White people to become champions fo justice and social healing, is to provide them a positive direction for growth and to grant them the dignity of their own being.

Gary Howard  
We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools

**Q. What does this have to do with me?**

**A.** Come explore the answer to this question and others!