



Understanding White Privilege: Creating Pathways to Authentic Relationships Across Race

Frances E. Kendall

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Racial privilege is hard to see for those who were born with access to power and resources. Yet it is very visible for those to whom it was not granted. *Understanding White Privilege* is written for individuals and those in organizations who grapple with race every day, as well as for those who believe they don't need to. It is written for those who have tried to build authentic professional relationships across races but have felt unable to do so. It is written for those who believe strongly in the struggle for racial justice and need additional information to share with their friends and colleagues. Inviting readers to think personally about how race--theirs and others'--frames experiences, relationships, and the way we each see the world, *Understanding White Privilege* focuses squarely on white privilege and its implications by offering specific suggestions for what we each can do to bridge the racial chasm.

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From Reader Review Understanding White Privilege: Creating Pathways to Authentic Relationships Across Race for online ebook

Rhiannon Grant says

This is a clear and accessible read which introduces the topics of white privilege, white supremacy, and racism in a a useful way. Many of the ideas here were already familiar to me, usually from blog posts and other online conversations, and it was helpful to have them put together and expanded upon. For me as a white woman, some of this is challenging - some of the material which was new to me was about the ways in which white women in institutions tend to block rather than expand diversity - but Kendal's steadfast insistence that hurt feelings won't kill you reminded me to set my discomfort aside and continue to engage. The trick is not to stop at the end of the book!

precaf says

This is a wonderful book. The first chapter explains how the author came to believe so strongly in racial justice. The middle explains white privilege. The last chapter contains sage and insightful suggestions for being a good White ally. Kendall writes beautifully, transitioning effortlessly from theory to practice to the personal to the organizational. She also writes honestly and dares to go a few places more timid souls would not. Did I say that this was a wonderful book?

John Forman says

Kendall brilliantly walks a very slippery tight-rope between hard reality and hopeful future possibilities, while skillfully navigating all of my "yeah-buts" and "but-I-don'ts" so that I had to come to terms with the ways that I may be supporting racist systems even without acting with racist behavior or intent.

Jessica says

Excellent, thought provoking ideas given a little too drily and too often. It really did change how I thought about race and gave rise to lots of interesting conversations. Worth the read.

Casey says

I've read this twice and find that I learn a lot each time I read it because I am in a different place in terms of my own awareness about white privilege. I wish there were more books out there like this one. I also wish it hadn't been so expensive and difficult to track down.

Jonny Gerig Meyer says

A great read for anyone interested in better understanding the causes and effects of white privilege.

Diane Ferbrache says

Eye-opening, but lacking much advice (in my opinion), this is a look at "white privilege" and the role we (as whites) play in maintaining the racial divide that subordinated people of color.

A very interesting book, but the author often repeats herself and the overall effect was to leave me depressed, but not really understanding what I can do about the situation. I would have preferred more practical advice.

Miri says

I liked this book and there was little I disagreed with in it. Although I'm pretty knowledgeable about race and white privilege, I did pick up at least one totally new idea in this book--namely, the importance of identifying as white. I hadn't thought about that at all before, but Kendall makes a lot of good points about why white people should think of themselves AS white people and not just as "normal" or "average" or whatever.

My issues with this book were mainly the focus and the writing style. Although the title made it seem like it was going to discuss cross-racial interactions of all types, the book primarily focused on corporate and academic/administrative environments because that seems to be the consulting work that Kendall does. It's an important topic but it doesn't really interest me; I'm more interested in casual, informal relationships and how social groups and communities can become more inclusive and more conscious of white privilege. For instance, I'm involved in various progressive activist movements where white people are nevertheless extremely blind to their privilege, and perhaps consequently few people of color are involved. I had hoped this book would shed some light on solving problems like these, and although Kendall's general ideas are very applicable, almost all of her examples focused on formal, corporate/administrative settings.

The other issue is that the writing is a bit hard to follow sometimes. Not in the sense that it's too academic (it isn't at all), but rather that it was hard to see how the ideas were supposed to flow from one to the other. Kendall would state a one-sentence claim and then follow it up with an example to illustrate it without expanding on the ideas in the brief sentence at all. But yeah, that's a minor thing. Maybe I'm just used to more cohesive writing.

Overall, I'd recommend this book and suggest also reading authors such as bell hooks.

Jamie says

Learned so much from this book.

Erica says

This book challenged me to "become comfortable with the uncomfortable and uncomfortable with the too comfortable." This was assigned for my Race and Ethnic Relations class, but I would recommend it to anyone looking to explore the way race factors into daily life for themselves, as well as others. I will even let you borrow it!

Zawn V says

This book reads like the author sat down, drank some alcohol, then decided to share her thoughts on race. Here's a personal anecdote. Here's a fact. Here's some analysis. Random fact. Now it's the end of the chapter, with no rhyme or reason.

I've no beef with the book's central arguments, but this piece is terribly argued, full of flights of fancy, and poorly organized. I can't even figure out how she decided to end one chapter and begin another. In dire, desperate, urgent need of an editor, but with a good editor, the book's content would probably be cut down to a sentence or two. The rest is just empty fluff.

Alice says

This book does no good sitting on a shelf. When you finish it, give it to a friend, and encourage them to pass it on.

Chelsea says

I wanted to like this book. I didn't disagree with the content. But it was repetitive, meandering, poorly written, poorly laid out. I really wanted to find a "White Privilege 101" book that I could confidently lend to inquisitive friends, but this one isn't it.

Rants and Bants says

Zoë's Top Ten White Privileges:

1. White privilege is having your experiences dismissed and invalidated.
2. White privilege is growing up poor, getting bullied at school, getting abused at home, having friends abandon you, having suicidal thoughts, dealing with anxiety and depression, and STILL being told that you're the privileged ones. Meanwhile, minorities who have loving families, good loyal friends, a stable home, an education, constant encouragement to love themselves, and a nice cozy room with a laptop and a hot cup of cocoa? STILL more victimized than that homeless white man down the street.

3. White privilege is growing up feeling ugly or insecure, yet still being told, "But beauty standards cater to YOU!"
4. White privilege is being told you're not allowed to exist in fiction (and sometimes in real places too) because that's not "diverse" enough for people.
5. White privilege is having murders or hate crimes against your people be ignored and erased from the media.
6. White privilege is the double standard of "If you find a white person attractive, they're privileged, if you find a minority attractive, they're victims of objectification/fetishization."
7. White privilege is also the double standard of "If a joke is made about whites, you should laugh it off and have a sense of humor, if a joke is made about minorities, you're the devil."
8. White privilege is having minority children be allowed to bully and harass you during your childhood however much they want, and not ever having someone stand up for you, because you're "privileged." So therefore they're ALLOWED to treat you like that.
9. White privilege is having your every move be vilified and demonized.
10. White privilege is not being allowed to get angry about any of this, or criticize it, because that in and of itself is what apparently makes you so "privileged" in the first place. In other words, white privilege is being manipulated into keeping quiet rather than disagreeing when someone is attacking you, demeaning you, or saying untrue things about you. And being told that your experiences don't matter and having them belittled by the idea of "privilege."

White privilege is being called privileged when you try to inform ignorant people of your REALITY.

Matt says

Fantastic book. Teaches the basics about white privilege but also challenges the reader to think more critically and provides several vignettes that are moving, thought provoking and insightful. Necessary reading for any person interested in ally work.
